

**A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS TO  
MAINSTREAMING OF PREGNANT LEARNERS IN FORMAL EDUCATION**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Education Policy Studies)**

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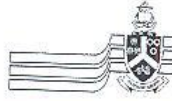
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## **DEDICATION**

First, I dedicate this research to God for all the protection and provision during the study. Second, the study is dedicated to my dear wife, Molina, for her understanding and endurance during the period of my studies. Third, I dedicate this work to all the members of my extended family, to emulate my late hardworking father, Sabhuku Vudege Runhare.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how social institutions in South Africa and Zimbabwe respond to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education. A case study was used as the strategy of inquiry. Utilising a phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretivist lens and guided by a theoretical framework of action science theory, this exploratory qualitative study set out to investigate and compare how various stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe respond to the policy of mainstreaming pregnant learners in schools. Data collection methods took the form of focus group and key participant semi-structured interviews, document analysis and a researcher observation and reflective journal. Two research sites comprised the case study. The sample at each of the identified sites consisted of 12 pregnant and former pregnant learners; 12 mainstream learners; 6 parents/legal guardians; 6 teachers; 6 community representatives on the school governing body. Data analysis consisted of a mix of hermeneutic, content and discourse analysis. Three findings emanated from this study. First, the socio-cultural beliefs, norms, practices and expectations of the community about pregnancy and ideal motherhood were more influential governing variables to educational access and participation of pregnant teenagers than the official school policy. Second, educators at both sites were found to have inadequate capacity to assist pregnant learners with schooling. Third, the South African school was found to provide more access to pregnant learners because of the more liberal and open response to teenage pregnancy. In contrast the conservative tendency to conceal the problem was observed at the Zimbabwean site. This study revealed that institutional policies that do not take into consideration the social, cultural and lived experiences of the relevant stakeholders are difficult to implement. The proposition is that there is usually a split between policy and practice, and that policy can be nothing more than political symbolism. An all-inclusive and consultative approach to policy formulation processes is recommended as an intervention strategy that could be used to counteract the problem.

## KEY WORDS

Teenage pregnancy

Mainstreaming

Responsiveness

Action science theory

Theories-of-action

Single motherhood

Formal education

Institution

Governing variables

Theories-in-use



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## ACRONYMS

<b>ACRWC:</b>	African Charter for the Right and Welfare of the Child
<b>AIDS:</b>	Acquired Immune Deficient Syndrome
<b>B.Ed:</b>	Bachelor of Education
<b>CEDAW:</b>	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CRC:</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>DoE:</b>	Department of Education
<b>EFA:</b>	Education for All
<b>ELRC:</b>	Education, Labour Relations Council
<b>EO</b>	Education Officer
<b>EPC:</b>	Education Policy Consortium
<b>F G:</b>	Focus Group
<b>FAWE:</b>	Forum African for Women Educators
<b>FET:</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>GoZ:</b>	Government of Zimbabwe
<b>HIV:</b>	Human Immune Virus
<b>HoD</b>	Head of Department
<b>HSRC:</b>	Human Sciences Research Council
<b>LO:</b>	Life Orientation
<b>MDG:</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MEC:</b>	Member of the Executive Council
<b>MoESC:</b>	Ministry of Education Sport and Culture
<b>NFS:</b>	New Feature School
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>SA:</b>	South Africa
<b>SADC:</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAFAIDS:</b>	Southern Africa Information Dissemination Services
<b>SASA:</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SCC:</b>	Second Chance Club
<b>SDC:</b>	School Development Committee

<b>SGB:</b>	School Governing Body
<b>TAPP:</b>	Teen-Age Parenting Programmes
<b>UDHR:</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP:</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO:</b>	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children’s Education Fund
<b>WEEA:</b>	Women’s Educational Equity Act
<b>Zim:</b>	Zimbabwe

## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction and background of the study

The constitutions and Acts of parliament on education for both South Africa and Zimbabwe uphold the right to education for every citizen, regardless of any of their differences (Constitution of Republic of South Africa, Number 108, 1996; Prinsloo, 2005; Bray, 1996; The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980; South African Schools Act [SASA] Number 84, 1996; Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25.04, 1996). It is in this respect that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers of school going age are also extended the right to formal schooling in both countries (Department of Education [DoE], 2007; Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Kaufman deWet & Stadler, 2001; Ministry of Education Sport and Culture [MoESC] Circular Minute P.35, 1999; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004). Consequently, in both countries, policies are in place that instruct and guide schools to integrate both pregnant and former pregnant girls, who might fall pregnant while at school. The major objective of this study is to investigate how formal schools have responded to this responsibility, which is aimed at achieving equality of educational access and opportunity for all children, as well as teenagers who might fall pregnant while at school.

In this opening chapter of the study, I present the introduction to the study. This includes among other aspects, the background, the problem statement, statement of purpose, study objectives, research questions, rationale and significance of the study, delimitation, limitations and a brief description of the research design and data gathering methodology used to conduct the study.

The vision for universal basic education or Education for All (EFA) by 2015 is internationally acclaimed as enunciated in the United Nations Millennium Development

Goals (MDG), which both Zimbabwe and South Africa are part to (Government of Zimbabwe [GoZ], 2004; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation 2004; UNESCO, 2005). However, one impediment to the achievement of universal basic education, especially in most of the developing nations, is the high prevalence of gender inequality in educational access, completion and performance rates (Stromquist, 2005; UNESCO, 2004; UNICEF, 2002; UNICEF, 2003a). This implies that any nation that hopes to realise Education for All (EFA) by the targeted date should eliminate all gender related imbalances from both its education policy design and institutional programmes and practices. With the realisation that the education of girls and women is an unfulfilled fundamental human right, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) each have a clause that is exclusively devoted to the principle of gender equality, especially for the enhancement of access to, and completion of education by girls and women at all levels of education by 2015 (UNICEF, 2003a , 2003b; UNESCO, 2000, 2004; Tsanga, Nkiwane, Khan & Nyanungo, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; GoZ, 2004).

One principle that is commonly found in the MDG, EFA, CRC and CEDAW is that girls who might fall pregnant while at school should have the opportunity to continue with their education (Sadie, 2001; Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; Leach, 2000; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; UNICEF, 2003a; UNESCO, 2004). Consequently, to show their commitment to the elimination of gender inequalities in education, both Zimbabwe and South Africa joined the rest of the world in ratifying international conventions that seek to redress gender inequalities in education (UNICEF, 2003b; Tsanga, et al., 2004; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Sadie, 2001). Furthermore, within the South African Development Community (SADC), the two member states of the regional grouping in 2001 committed themselves to reducing all gender related inequalities (education included) by at least 30% in all spheres of socio-economic life by 2005 (Sadie, 2001; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation 2004). Thus, in line with the Dakar framework for action on EFA

and MDG declaration, and Beijing framework for action on gender equality, SADC member states signed the Declaration on Gender and Development aimed at achieving gender parity in educational access and participation by instituting measures that reduce female dropout rates at all levels of education (Sadie, 2001; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004).

At the legislative level, both the Zimbabwe Education Act, Chapter 25:04 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act, Number 84 of 1996, explicitly stipulate that every child has the exclusive right to education, especially at the basic level (Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 1996; Government of Zimbabwe, 1996; Mothata, 2000). However, despite both countries having policy circulars that allow girls who might fall pregnant while at school to continue with their education (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MoESC) Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999; DoE, 2007; Gordon, 2002; Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hall, 2006; Hubbard et al., 2008), the gender parity indices on access, completion and achievement, especially at rural post-primary education have generally remained in favour of male students in both countries (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2004; Nziramasanga, 1999; Hyde, 1999; Truscott, 1994; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; UNDP, 2001; UNICEF, 2003a). However, while it is acknowledged that the population of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools is on the increase due to these positive policy measures (Pandor, 2007; Makwabe, 2007; Booi, 2007), the capacity of schools to cope with this new challenge needs to be established.

Currently, indications are that no study has been hosted in both countries to assess the effectiveness with which the continued enrolment of pregnant and former pregnant learners has been implemented at formal schools. Furthermore, although studies on gender inequalities in education have been undertaken in both countries, most of these studies have tended to generally focus on the nature and causes of female under-representation and under-achievement in education, especially in mathematics, science and technology (Gordon, 1995; Tsanga, et al., 2004; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998), without adequate reference to the day to day challenges faced by pregnant and parenting

schoolgirls in formal education. Studies by Grant and Hallman (2006), Manzini (2001), Mokgalabone (1999), Gordon (2002) and Chigona and Chetty (2008), which also focused on teenage pregnancy and schooling, used school leavers as their samples to investigate how pregnancy and teen motherhood contributed to school dropout, poor performance and grade repetition. With reference to Botswana and Namibian education policies, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996), Meekers and Ahmed (1999), Hubbard et al (2008) only analysed the utility and applicability of the policies to the realisation of the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' equal right to education. My study, therefore, should add value to existing knowledge boundaries by exploring the daily experiences of some of the pregnant girls who choose to remain in formal school, during and after pregnancy.

## **1.2 Rationale and significance of the study**

While available literature, policy circulars and statements reveal that both Zimbabwe and South Africa ratified the major international convention on gender equity (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001; Tsanga et al., 2004), there is need for studies to be undertaken to particularly assess the implementation of policy measures on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in their formal schools. To date, most of the gender equity studies in education undertaken in sub-Saharan Africa have tended to focus on comparing male-female differences in access, drop-out, retention and performance rates, mostly with regard to mathematics, science and technology (Gordon, 1995; Truscott, 1994; Rosser, 1995; Stromquist, 1997a; Dorsey, 1996; Bouya, 1994).

This study, therefore, is unique because it focuses on the implementation of the international principle that seeks to ensure that girls who fall pregnant while at school continue with their education. It will fill the gap in literature on the discussion of interventions on one category of marginalised females in education, the pregnant schoolgirl. It is hoped that this study will initiate new thinking on the existing global and



national policy designs and implementation strategies for the inclusion of teenage pregnant students in mainstream schools.

Available research findings from both Zimbabwe and South Africa, indicate that although efforts to narrow the gender gap in educational access have yielded positive results at the primary school level, the dropout rates for girls at post primary levels, especially those in rural and low income groups, is higher than that of boys (Swainson, 1996; Stromquist, 1998; Dorsey, 1996; Hyde, 1999; UNDP, 2001; Tsanga, et al 2004; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998, Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Nziramasanga, 1999). While poverty, non-payment of fees, child-labour, household chores and illness are explicit causes for the secondary school dropout rate, pregnancy and marriage have continued to feature prominently for pushing more girls out of school in sub-Saharan Africa (Stromquist, 1998, 2005; Hyde, 1999; Dorsey 1996; Singh, 2003; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). It therefore remains a challenge for most developing nations' attempt to achieve the goal of EFA by 2015 (UNESCO, 2005; [Government of Zimbabwe] GoZ, 2004; Stromquist, 2005). Surprisingly, in Zimbabwe, even at primary school level, which takes 7 years to complete in most countries by which time the children will be about 11- 12 years, pregnancy and marriage continue to feature as one of the reasons for leaving formal school (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2004). Over and above exploring reasons for this, my study investigated factors that could promote or hinder teenage pregnant students' educational access, participation and performance in the formal school system. Furthermore, by taking a transnational and comparative approach, the study should reveal in depth, the major challenges and coping strategies for pregnant learners, who choose to remain in formal schooling to continue with their education. In view of their different social and cultural contexts, the strengths, challenges and opportunities, as well as threats, which are identified from the two selected schools' environments, are conceptualised, compared and contrasted.

A disturbing observation on gender inequality in Zimbabwe is that “women do not exercise the rights that laws specifically guarantee them, among other factors; this is due to ignorance of the law and its administration” (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender

and Employment Creation, 2004, p.1). Both the Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25:04 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act Number 84 of 1996, clearly stipulate that no child shall be refused admission to any school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1996; Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 1996). Furthermore, both countries have specific policy directives, which in line with CEDAW, CRC and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, stipulate that girls who may become pregnant in the course of their schooling should be allowed to continue with their education (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation 2004; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; DoE, 2007; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hubbard, et al., 2008; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001).

It is therefore, the objective of this study to evaluate how these policies are conceptualised by education duty bearers and intended beneficiaries and how they have been implemented and with what outcomes in terms of educational access, retention and performance rates for girls who fall pregnant while still in school. The study, therefore, tests the commonly held assumption that policy frameworks alone can change things. This assumption is refuted by Smith (2001) who observes that “there is a split between theory and practice” (p.1). Sutherland (1999) also adds that “Just as schools have a hidden curriculum, so countries may be said to have hidden policies” (p.5). Therefore, one of the issues this study investigated was the relationship between a policy and practice. It also investigated the level of awareness among different education stakeholders on the policies and procedures that aim to protect the educational rights of teenage pregnant school girls. Through this study, the voices of the affected, that is the teenage pregnant school girls, were solicited, listened to and amplified. Data gathered from teenage pregnant girls who are still in school, should help to examine and reveal the social pressures and coping strategies that influence their educational access, participation and performance.

Although in principle girls who fall pregnant while at school are not denied access to education, the intervention strategy for achieving this in most developing has been the non-formal education system (Stromquist, 1998; Hyde, 1999; Diven, 1998; Gordon,

Nkwe & Graven, 1998). Even in developed countries where mainstreaming of pregnant and teenage mothers in formal education has been in place for some time, the debate on whether mainstreaming them in formal schools is the ideal continues to rage on (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). In developing nations like Zimbabwe and South Africa, where the phenomenon is fairly new, there is need to explore workable options that consider the socio-cultural contexts of the local communities. Jansen (2001), and Fink and Stoll (1998) however warn that no one educational policy can be transferable to other situations, no matter how useful it might have proved elsewhere. What might have worked in developed countries or even the internationally pronounced principles may not necessarily apply to some other situations in wholesale manner. Jansen (2001) further warns that,

The heavy citations of English and, to a lesser extent, American social and curriculum theorists in, for example, schools of the rural provinces, are not only inappropriate, they distort the realities of educational change under developing country conditions (p.246).

It is against the background of such thinking that this study was undertaken. The study, therefore, sought to investigate the extent to which the policy of mainstreaming pregnant students in formal schools has worked in South Africa and Zimbabwe, given the existing traditional and socio-cultural factors to teenage pregnancy.

Legally, Zimbabwe started extending the right for continued educational access to pregnant girls after its ratification of CEDAW, but practically after a successful legal battle by a female student who had been expelled from a teachers' training college because of pregnancy (Tsanga et al., 2004; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001). In South Africa this was immediately after the adoption of a democratic constitution, the enactment of the South African Schools Act (SASA) Number 84 of 1996 and the ratification of both CEDAW and CRC (Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998; Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinzen, 1997). In accordance with the democratisation of education, Wolpe, Quinlin and Martinez (1997) note that one of the key recommendations of the first Commission on Gender Equity to the South African government was that?

The national Department of Education should undertake a case study of programmes which encourage and support successfully the re-entry of

young women who have dropped out because of pregnancy, with the view to benchmarking and disseminating good practice (p.116).

This study, therefore, sought to analyse the two countries existing policy frameworks and implementation strategies on the mainstreaming of pregnant girls in conventional schools. The main aim of the analysis is to determine what works and why, in some socio-cultural and situational contexts. In order to recommend best practice, findings of the study will therefore not only be compared between the two countries' study sites, but with studies undertaken elsewhere, (Weiner, 1987; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Duncan, 2007; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Warrick, Christianson, Walruff, & Cook 1993; Montessori & Blixen, 1996; Brindis & Philliber, 1998).

Policies and intervention strategies in education that ignore the meanings and cultures of the local community are doomed to fail (Fink & Stoll, 1998; Blackmore, 1998, Jansen, 2001). In the area of gender equity, feminist scholars and theorists have been criticised for their assumption that all their pro-female ideas and recommendations can be readily applicable and acceptable to all women the world over (Mbilinyi, 1998; Phendla, 2004, 2008). Equally so, the notion that the policies that mandate formal schools to mainstream teenage pregnant girls are for the good of all the intended beneficiaries should be empirically proved. This study, by gathering the views of policy beneficiaries and implementers, is intended to make a valid statement in this regard. It should, therefore, add value to the existing theoretical propositions and policy review process, by making recommendations that are informed, not only by theory, but also by related research findings and the actual views of people who are affected by the policy. These people are either policy duty bearers (parents and teachers) or policy rights bearers<sup>1</sup> (pregnant and former pregnant teenagers).

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<sup>1</sup> Policy duty bearers are people with the responsibility to formulate and implement policy for the benefit of society. Policy rights bearers are the intended beneficiaries of policy (UNICEF, 2003a).

In short, the value of this study is that it extends the opportunity for schools and their communities, in their different social and cultural existence, to respond to the practicability of including pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools.

### **1.3 Research context**

In conducting this study the nature of schooling, prevailing education policy and socio-cultural environments in both South Africa and Zimbabwe were given consideration. In Zimbabwe, schooling consists of eight years of primary education which ranges from grade zero to grade seven; four years of general secondary education from form one to four; and two years of advanced schooling from form five to six (MoESC Permanent Secretary's Policy Circular Number 1 of 2001; Zvobgo, 1997; Nilsson, 1995; Nziramasanga, 1999). In South Africa, there are four main phases of schooling, namely the foundation phase, from grade zero to three; the intermediate phase, from grade four to six; the senior phase, grades seven to nine; and grades ten to twelve which fall under the Further Education Training (FET) band (DoE, 1997). For this study, I selected two secondary schools or grade eight to twelve in the case of South Africa and form one to six in Zimbabwe.

In line with international statutes on gender equality and the principle of education as a basic human right for every child, both Zimbabwe and South Africa have policy guidelines that allow pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education at formal schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999; Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hall, 2006; Hubbard, 2008; Pandor, 2007). In addition, both countries have instituted bodies that monitor gender equity in all sectors of society, namely the Gender Equity Commission in South Africa and the Department of Gender Equality in Zimbabwe (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinzen, 1997). Furthermore, Life Orientation or Guidance and Counselling and HIV and AIDS are substantive subjects that are meant to deal with issues surrounding teenage sexuality, pregnancy and HIV and AIDS in both countries (DoE, 1997; MoESC Permanent Secretary's Policy Circular Number 3 of 2001;

Gordon, 2002). For this reason educators of these subjects at the two schools were selected to participate in the study.

In the South African and Zimbabwean schools, parents or guardians of learners are officially mandated to participate in the school decision and the policy making-process through School Governing Bodies (SGB) or School Development Committees (SDC). In view of this, I included two categories of parents in my study, namely the ordinary parents and members of the SGB in the case of South Africa and SDC, in the case of Zimbabwe (GoZ, 1992; Mncube & Harber, 2008; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2004; Mncube, 2007).

#### **1.4 Problem statement**

The increase in the rate of teenage pregnancy the world over is widely documented (Somers, Gleason, Johnson, & Fahlman, 2001; Gallup-Black & Weitzman, 2004; Darrick, Singh & Frost, 2001; Jackson & Abosi, 2007; Manzini, 2001; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). It is also evident from research that pregnancy is one of the major reasons for girls dropping out of school, especially in developing and African countries (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009; Bennett & Asseffi, 2005; Richters & Mlambo, 2005; Gallup-Black & Weitzman, 2004; Gordon, 2002; GoZ, 2004; MoESC, 2004; Hof & Richters, 1999; UNICEF, 2008; Mitchell, Blaeser, Chilangwa, & Maimbolwa-sinyangwe, 1999).

One of the interventions that is gaining international support to bridge the gap between male and female educational access and participation is the re-enrolment and continued enrolment of learners, who could fall pregnant while at school (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chilisa, 2001; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2008; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2002; Coulter, 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Stromquist, 1999; Burdell, 1996). As a result, most UN member states are signatories to international conventions that seek to safeguard the right of every child to education, including girls who might fall pregnant before completing their education. Apart from being signatories to such conventions,

South Africa and Zimbabwe have gone further to design policy guidelines that direct schools to allow pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Minute Policy Circular P35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Pandor, 2007; Manzini, 2001; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Hubbard et al., 2008). However, while formal policy measures might be in place, the extent to which they are being effectively implemented for the benefit of the affected learners could still be subject to speculation in both countries. It seems there is inadequate research on the responses by both policy duty bearers and the intended rights beneficiaries. It is not uncommon for policies to be in place while implementers and beneficiaries are inadequately informed and empowered to effect the desired change (Jansen, 2002; Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999). The emergence of democratic education policies for the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers also implies that the population of pregnant and former pregnant learners in schools is higher than before (Pandor, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Panday et al., 2009; Makwabe, 2007; Blaine, 2007). Consequently, the capacity of schools to effectively identify and cater for the educational needs of this category of learners should become an area of concern for education policy makers and service providers.

### **1.5 Statement of purpose**

South Africa and Zimbabwe are signatories to international conventions and declarations like the CRC, CADEW, EFA and MDG which all seek to extend and protect every child's right to education to make the goal of universal basic education a reality by 2015 (Sadie, 2001; Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; Leach, 2000; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; UNICEF, 2003a; UNESCO, 2004). EFA and MDG declarations have articles that call upon all UN member states to eliminate all gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2004; GoZ, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; Millennium Development Goals: (MDG) South Africa Country Report, 2005; MDG: SA Mid-Term Country Report, 2007; Subrahmanian, 2005; Stromquist 2005; Daniel, 2003; Stromquist, 1998). For this to be an achievable goal, most UN member states, and the Southern

African Development Community (SADC) regional grouping, which include South Africa and Zimbabwe, agreed to adopt the principle that girls who fall pregnant while at school should be allowed and assisted to continue with their education (Sadie, 2001). Subsequently, both countries formulated relevant policy circulars and guidelines that direct education stakeholders on how to manage cases of schoolgirl pregnancy (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular P35, 1999). The presence of these policy measures implies that the population of, and demand for formal school enrolment by pregnant and former pregnant learners are on the increase (Pandor, 2007; Makwabe, 2007; Blaine, 2007).

However, as an educationist, I have realised that to date, there has not been adequate research to explore the effectiveness of these policy positions, especially with regard to the continued enrolment of pregnant learners in formal schools. Most of the studies in Africa have tended to focus on causes of and preventive measures for teenage pregnancies, pregnancy and school dropout rates, as well as re-enrolment of teenage mothers in education in different countries (Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Panday et al., 2009; Chilisa, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard, 2008; Manzini, 2001; Mitchel et al., 1999; Gordon, 2002; Gordon, 1995; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Mensch, Clark, Lloyd & Erulkar 2001). Since the democratisation of educational access, to include such learners in South Africa and Zimbabwe (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Manzini, 2001; DoE, 2007; Pandor, 2007; Gordon, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; MoESC, Policy Circular P35, 1999), it seems there is no available research that has been conducted to specifically focus on how pregnant learners experience schooling.

In view of this, the main purpose of my study was to explore and compare the effectiveness of the South African and Zimbabwean education policies, implementation strategies and institutional support systems that are designed to assist pregnant school girls cope with formal schooling. Further, the study sought to examine the factors that could influence the conceptualisation and perceptions of education stakeholders in the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at conventional schools. The study also examined the perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners within the school, the home and the community at large. Therefore, the study sought to provide more insight into how



pregnant learners in South Africa and Zimbabwe are coping with formal schooling and how schoolgirl pregnancy policy guidelines could best be utilised to empower both the affected learners and the various duty bearers, who are charged with the responsibility of policy implementation at the school level.

## **1.6 Study objectives**

The following were the objectives for conducting this study:

- To identify the similarities and differences between schoolgirl pregnancy policies and implementation strategies in South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- To explore factors which influence the perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners by education stakeholders in the school, the home and the community.
- To identify factors which positively and negatively affect the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools.
- To explore how the implementation of schoolgirl pregnancy policies in formal schools affect the educational access and participation by pregnant learners.

## **1.7 Research questions**

My main research question is: How do social institutions in South Africa and Zimbabwe respond to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education?

Sub-questions:

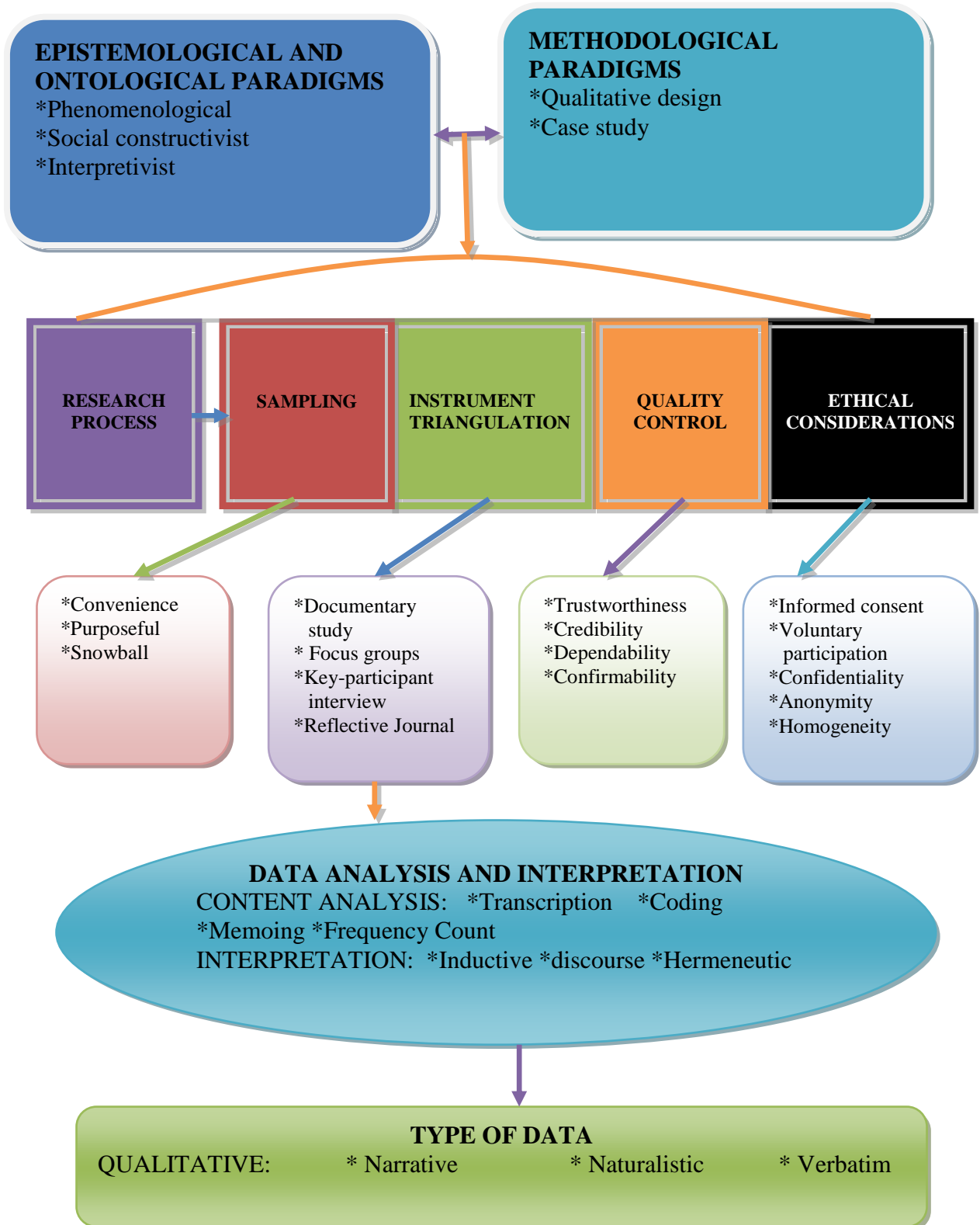
- How do education stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe conceptualise and perceive policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education?
- How are the policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools translated into practice in South African and Zimbabwean schools?
- How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the school, in the family and in the community?

- What factors motivate and demotivate pregnant learners to remain in school during and after pregnancy?

## **1.8 Research design and methodology**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a “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). The design is, therefore, all that the researcher does, from writing the research problem and questions, sampling participants, data gathering to analysis and interpretation of gathered data. I chose the qualitative case study research strategy to conduct an in-depth study of the attitudes of education stakeholders towards pregnant learners in the school, the home and the community (Creswell, 2007; Berg, 2001; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Hanock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 1994). Figure 1.1 summarises the research methodology, data gathering and data presentation and analysis for of study.

**Figure 1.1: Outline of the research methodology and process**



The major purpose of my study was to investigate and have a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that influenced the participants' interpretation of and reactions to intervention policies that seek to redress the school dropout, low participation and performance of pregnant girls at two formal schools (Gordon, 2002; Dorsey, 1996; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998; Hyde, 1998). Accordingly, the case study design was found applicable because "the case method is an extremely useful technique for researching relationships, behaviours, attitudes, motivations, and stressors in organizational settings" (Berg, 2001, p.333).

At the two secondary schools where the study was conducted, subjects were purposively selected (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006) because they were affected in different ways by the policy measures on mainstreaming of pregnant learners and, therefore, were assumed to be knowledgeable about the topic under study. The sample, therefore, included learners who were currently pregnant or had been pregnant, parents or legal guardians of the identified pregnant or former pregnant learners, senior educators, community representatives on the school governing boards, as well as mainstream learners who studied with pregnant and former pregnant girls.

The study generated qualitative and narrative data which were meant to explore the various factors and meanings that the participants of the study revealed on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education. The views of the participants were presented in the form of narrative verbatim accounts or quotations to capture their social construction of meaning from their own perceptions and experiences (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994; Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004; Clandinin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Content, hermeneutic and discourse data analysis and interpretation (Stemler, 2001 Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2001) were applied by arranging the participants' views into themes, codes, categories and sub-categories (Table 5.1) which were then filtered down into findings of the study.

### **1.8.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions**

In this study, as the researcher, I construed that in order to understand how the study participants responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education, it would be important to investigate their social, cultural and life experiences, not only in the school but also in the home and the community. Since reality is socially constructed within a given social and cultural setting, people can respond differently to the same phenomenon, depending on the meaning they give to the phenomenon (Riessman, 2002; Grbich, 2007; Creswell, 2007). In conducting this study, I assumed that although both schools had official policy guidelines on how to respond to the needs of pregnant learners, the implementation of policy could be influenced by the stakeholders' social, cultural and lived experiences, as also observed by Reissman (2002) who says that "The truths we have constructed are meaningful to specific communities" (p. 228). In view of this, I therefore, approached and interpreted the study participants' views from social constructivist, phenomenological and interpretivist paradigms to knowledge generation, which perceive reality from a multifaceted perspective (Seamark & Lings, 2004; Grbich, 2007; Ambert, Adler, Adler & Detzner, 1995; Creswell, 2007:59; Riessman, 2002). I was therefore cognisant of the notion that social reality can be fluid, contextual rather than universal, subjective and qualitative than rigid and positivist (Grbich, 2007; Ambert et al., 1995; Hussey & Hussey, 1997). In this regard, I believed that although attending the same school, pregnant girls and the mainstream learners did not experience schooling in exactly the same way, and therefore it would not be surprising to have different perceptions from the study participants on mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

### **1.8.2 Methodological assumptions**

In order to gather trustworthy, dependable and confirmable data on factors that could influence how the different participants perceived and treated pregnant learners, I chose to employ a qualitative case study research approach so that I could purposively select participants who had all experienced the phenomenon under study. In this regard, I therefore, assumed that the pregnant and former pregnant learners themselves would

provide trustworthy and dependable narratives on how in their condition, they experienced schooling. This assumption was based on the observation that the data collection instruments and procedures that I selected for my study resembled those previously employed by other researchers, with similar samples. For example, in studies that investigated causes of schoolgirl pregnancy in Zimbabwe, Ritchters and Hof (1999) and Gordon (2002) were able to interview pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who had dropped out of school. In South Africa, Chigona and Chetty (2008, 2009) interviewed teenage mothers who had re-enrolled into school on the educational challenges they faced at school and home. Likewise, Grant and Hallman (2006) also used interviews to gather the views of South African women who had given birth to their first child before the age of twenty. The aim of the study was to investigate their pre-pregnancy school attendance, participation and performance. Based on reflections of the data gathering methods used in these studies, I assumed that although schoolgirl pregnancy could be viewed as a sensitive issue (Kutame, 2004; Kutame & Mulaudzi, 2010), the pregnant and former pregnant learners who had come public about their pregnancy and had voluntarily accepted to participate in the study, would articulate their lived experiences as teenagers who had chosen to continue with their education during and after pregnancy. On the basis of these methodological assumptions, I also chose to employ focus group and key-participant interviews (Appendix 7)<sup>2</sup> to gather the views of pregnant and former pregnant learners who agreed to participate in this study.

Both schools where this study was conducted had pregnant and former pregnant learners in their stream. Based on this observation, I assumed that the stakeholders at the schools had a satisfactory understanding and appreciation of the provisions of their respective national policy guidelines, as outlined in DoE (2007) and MoESC, Policy Minute Circular (1999), which extend educational rights to pregnant learners. Therefore, apart from the pregnant and former pregnant learners, I also conducted focus group interviews with their educators, their mainstream counterparts, their parents and community

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 7.3: Participant consent forms

representatives in school administration to gather views on the policy as well as the practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal education.

## **1.9 Theoretical framework**

The major concern of this study was to investigate the attitudes of education stakeholders towards the policy on pregnancy in schools and their treatment of pregnant teenagers in the school, the family and the community, all of which could influence the manner in which such learners can cope with formal schooling. Since this was a study on human attitudes and actions, I chose to apply Chris Argyris and Donald Schon's action science theory which describes two theories of human action, namely the theories-in-use and the espoused theories-of-action (Argyris, Putman & Smith, 1985; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Smith, 2001; Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1990). Argyris and Schon's action science theory explains the underlying factors behind human actions within social groups and formal organisations. The theory-of-action perspective, which falls within the phenomenological and social constructivist epistemological paradigm, specifically posits that human action is constituted by meanings, which are socially and culturally constructed during interaction (Argyris, Putman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Berger & Luckman, 1974).

According to the theory, meanings that people give to given situations and their actions in a formal organisation could be influenced by their social and cultural background more than the organisation's official policy (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993). Argyris and Schon (1974) posit that there is usually a split between an organisation's official policies, which they call espoused theory-of-action and how the organisation's stakeholders actually act, which they term theories-in-use. By theories-of-action, Argyris and Schon refer to the socially and culturally acquired repertoire of concepts, schemas, values, norms and beliefs people use to design or programme their actions in any given situation (Argyris, Putman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Smith, 2001). Action science theory proposes that the social, cultural and life experiences of people of a social group could act as governing variables or control mechanisms that could constrain

organisational stakeholders in implementing the official organisational policy or espoused theory-of-action (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Espoused theories-of-action are what people only refer to in justifying their actions, but which they may not actually apply to guide their actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002). In a formal institutional setting like the school, it is not uncommon for stakeholders to claim to be implementing official policy yet in reality, something different could be happening. I therefore, found such a theoretical proposition applicable in analysing and interpreting what the education stakeholders said about the policy on continued enrolment of pregnant learners at their schools. I thus conceptualised the official school policies that provide for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal educational institutions as complex phenomena that should be understood using a broader consideration of the participants' socio-cultural meanings and lived experiences in their homes and community. I regarded such an approach as more enriching in understanding the attitudes and responses of the study participants to the implementation of the policy on mainstreaming pregnant girls at formal schools.

### **1.10 Research assumptions**

According to Merriam (1998), researchers hold certain preconceptions or assumptions about phenomena under study. Before conducting studies, researchers hold certain expectations which could arise from the extant review literature review and findings from similar studies. Therefore, in conducting this study, I was informed by the following assumptions:

#### *Research assumption 1*

Most pregnant teenagers drop out of school because of an unfriendly school environment (Mensch et al., 2001; Weigand, 2005).



*Research assumption 2*

Negative attitudes to teenage pregnancy in society can result in poor educational access and participation by pregnant learners (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

*Research assumption 3*

Educators are not adequately equipped to implement new education policies at the school level (Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999).

*Research assumption 4*

Pregnant teenagers lack motivation to learn (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999)

### **1.11 Quality assurance measures**

Several measures were taken to ensure that participants were trustworthy and truthful so as to achieve credibility of research findings. The measures included purposeful sampling of the study sites and participants, application of appropriate data gathering strategies and research instruments, and upholding the required ethical standards for carrying out research with human beings.

Validity of qualitative research is judged on the basis of its findings' truthfulness, appropriateness, authenticity, dependability, credibility and trustworthiness in answering the research questions and addressing the research problem (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Drew, Hardman & Hart, 1996; Borg & Gall, 1993). Cohen, Manion and 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).

Therefore, in order to achieve data trustworthiness, I employed triangulation of research instruments, member checking, peer debriefing, verbatim transcriptions and selection of relevant participants (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004; Moss, 2004). Data from the different sources, such as current and previous pregnant learners, their school peers and parents,

school principals, teachers and members of the school governing boards, were compared and contrasted on related issues.

Credibility in qualitative research tests accuracy in data analysis and interpretation by taking into account the context in which the data were gathered and making a distinction between the researcher's interpretation and the actual views of the study participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 19994; Hardman, Drew & Hart, 1996). Credibility was enhanced through critical reflexivity or the researcher's self-examination, in order to avoid bias, and making a distinction between participants' meanings and the researcher's interpretations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006; Clandinin, 1989). As an ethical measure to protect the participants, quoted statements were given pseudonyms (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004; Moss, 2004) and were member-checked and validated by the participants before inclusion in the final report of the study (Moss, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). These measures encouraged participants to be confident and to open up, thus ensuring accurate representation of their views.

### **1.12 Ethical considerations**

Because the subject of schoolgirl pregnancy is viewed as a sensitive issue in schools (Kutame, 2004; Kutame & Mulaudzi, 2010), there was need for measures to ensure the de-construction of any negative perceptions to the study before voluntary participation in focus group interviews was sourced from the targeted population. I therefore, 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 and reporting of the findings of the study. In order to uphold confidentiality, the composition of each focus group was made homogenous in terms of category, gender, age and power differences.

Just like any research that involves human behaviour, measures were taken to ensure that all ethical concerns with regard to voluntary participation, informed consent and

confidentially were adhered to (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2006; Albertse, 2006; Best & Kahn, 1993). Teenagers who fall pregnant were reported to be negatively perceived, especially if they failed to get married (Chilisa, 2002; Weiner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Burdell, 1998). In cases that are similar to the key participants of this study, Cohen & Manion (1994) 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 and confidentiality of the pregnant and former pregnant learners, who were the key participants in the study. This was achieved by first explaining the objectives and nature of the study, how results would be released and used, allowing them to check and confirm their views before and after they were compiled into the report of the study (Albertse, 2006; Moss, 2004; Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004). Furthermore, names of participants were not indicated when their ideas were compiled into a report.

Bennett, Glatter & Levacic (1994) insist that, “research involving human subjects all requires that the participation of individuals be completely voluntary” (p. 93). To demystify any misconceptions, before focus group interviews were conducted, I first sought the permission of all the participating learners’ parents, the relevant departments of education in Zimbabwe and South Africa and school principals where the study was conducted. In seeking such permission I revealed and explained all aspects of the study, research instruments, as well as the University of Pretoria’s Ethical approval to conduct the research. All participants first completed a consent form to indicate their voluntary participation and right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanation.

### **1.13 Delimitations and limitations**

In most African cultures, discussion of sexuality is regarded as taboo, especially between people of the opposite sex (Chiroro, Mashu & Muhwava, 2002; Jackson, 2002; Gordon,

2002: Richter & Mlambo, 2005). It is for this reason that sex education and even HIV and AIDS education have been difficult to firmly establish at some of the public, especially rural and low income group schools, where sexuality issues are not expected to be discussed by young people (Gordon, 2002; Jackson, 2002). While this presented a challenge for collecting data for this study, I managed to build openness on the subject under study by defining pregnancy as more of a psycho-social phenomenon than a reproductive condition. This encouraged participants to only discuss current and past educational experiences, opportunities, expectations, aspirations and challenges in relation to pregnant learners at their school without referring to confidential or personal issues.

Findings of this study were based on data gathered from two schools, one each from South Africa and another from Zimbabwe. The two schools were typical of themselves and I therefore, did not claim that they constituted a representative sample of the universe of schools found in the two countries (Drew & Hardman, 1996; Merriam & Associates, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Wolpe, Quinlin and Martinez (1997) categorise South African schools into co-educational, single sex, specialist, former white and black, farm, rural or former home-land and independent schools. In Zimbabwe, Zvobgo (1997) observes that types of schools range from rural, urban, government, religious and elite or independent. In view of all this, I could not generalise the findings from the study to all the different schools in the two countries even those that also mainstreamed pregnant learners. This was mainly because communities may respond differently to the same social phenomenon. However, I hoped that transferability of the findings to schools which are in similar socio-cultural contexts could be claimed. The study, therefore, left room for further research on how other communities and schools which differ from those selected for this study could perceive and handle problems that relate to teenage pregnancy in education.

## 1.14 Definitions of terms

*Institutional Responsiveness* is how social and formal organisations are expected to take into account the explicitly and implicitly stated needs and interests of all their stakeholders (Bacal, 1996). In this study, institutional responsiveness refers to the behaviour, actions, attitudes, perceptions, feelings, treatment and intervention mechanisms that are stimulated by the presence of pregnant learners in formal schools.

*Mainstreaming*: According to Peresuh (1996), as an educational philosophy, mainstreaming advocates the right of all children to acceptance within school programmes. It entails that schools should adapt their programmes to meeting the unique needs of the child rather than requiring the child to adapt to the established school programme. Warrick, et al (1993) refers to a school-based comprehensive Teenage Pregnant and Parenting Programme (TAPP) “located on the high school campus, where pregnant students were “mainstreamed” with regular students and had access to all academic courses” (p. 149). In this study, I used mainstreaming to refer to the sensitivity of other education stakeholders to the educational needs of pregnant learners, in order for them to equitably participate in the school activities.

A *pregnant learner* is a schoolgirl who has declared her pregnancy to her parents and school officials, and chosen to continue with her education at the same school where she was before becoming pregnant (Mensch et al., 2001). In my study, only those pregnant and former pregnant learners who were open about their situation were included in the focus group interviews. Former pregnant learners were included in the study because they had experienced pregnancy within the school setting.

*Formal education*: According to Barakett and Cleghorn (2000) formal education refers to the set of organised activities that are intended to transmit skills, knowledge, and values as well as to develop mental abilities.

*School community:* A community is a geographically and socially related group (Jary & Jary, 1995). In the context of this study, the school community refers to the neighbourhood or catchment area of the school, and whose parents share common concerns and responsibilities on the objectives and operations of the school.

## **1.15 Structure and outline of chapters**

### **Chapter One:** Orientation to the study

The background, rationale, statement of purpose, research questions, delimitation and limitations of the study are explained.

### **Chapter Two:** Introduction and background of the study

The chapter discusses international conventions on education as a basic right, feminist theories on structure and functioning of education, prevalence and causes of teenage pregnancy, related studies on attitudes and expectations towards teenage pregnancy, origin, nature and objectives of school-based policies and programmes that cater for pregnant and former pregnant learners.

### **Chapter Three:** Positioning the study in action science theory

The theory-in-use and espoused theory-of-action by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon which explains the split between theory/policy and practice is discussed as the underpinning theory for conceptualisation of the study (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

### **Chapter Four:** Research methodology

The chapter includes the justification of case-study design, data gathering strategy, population, sampling, research instruments and procedures, data presentation and analysis.

### **Chapter Five:** Data presentation and analysis

The chapter presents data gathered through focus group and key participant interviews that were conducted at the two schools selected as cases for this study.

### **Chapter Six:** Literature control on emerging themes

The chapter identifies and discusses data from the study in relation to the theoretical framework and findings from other studies.

### **Chapter Seven:** Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion

The last chapter of the study presents a summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **1.16 Chapter Summary**

The increase in the rate of teenage pregnancy the world over is well recorded. One of the interventions that is gaining international support to bridge the gap between male and female educational access, participation and performance is the continued and re-enrolment of teen mothers and pregnant teenagers in formal education (Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Chilisa, 2001; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Gordon, 2002; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Manzini, 2001; Hubbard et al., 2008). Zimbabwe and South Africa, as signatories to international conventions like the CRC, CADEW, EFA and MDG, which all seek to extend and protect every child's right to education, have constitutional, legal and policy provisions that allow pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to continue with their education. However, to date, there has not been adequate research in African countries to explore the effectiveness in the implementation of these provisions at the institutional level.

In this opening chapter, I have presented an introduction to the study. This included, among other aspects, the background, the problem statement, study objectives, research questions, rationale and significance of the study, and delimitation and limitations of my study. I also put the study into perspective by outlining the theoretical framework that underpinned the whole study and the methodological procedures that I employed. The next chapter presents and discusses the main theoretical arguments and research findings based on existing body of knowledge, in order to make new claims for my study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST AND RELATED STUDIES

#### 2.1 Introduction

In chapter one I presented and discussed the introduction to the study, namely the background, statement of the problem and purpose, study objectives, research questions, rationale and significance of the study. The study's theoretical framework, research design, data collection strategies and procedures, sample, delimitations, limitations and ethical considerations were explained. Lastly, I defined the relevant terminologies and outlined the structure of the chapters of this document. In this second chapter, I present a comprehensive review and discussion of related theoretical perceptions and research findings on the topic under study.

According to McMillan and Schummacher (2001), a literature review is a critique of available knowledge on a specifically identified and defined topic. This should be a synthesis and critical analysis of ideas and research findings from other authorities and researchers on the subject under study. It is from the review of literature that the validity of a new study can be justified in terms of its value to the existing body of knowledge on the topic (Mouton, 2001). Hart (1998) contends that a literature review is a selection of information in the form of published or unpublished documents on the topic one proposes to study. Such a review should capture information, ideas, data and findings presented from other researchers, which relate to the current study. The literature review, therefore, helped me to place my study within the existing literature and research and to identify the gaps in existing knowledge.

As a background to the emergence of international and national policy frameworks and programmes that seek to extend formal education to pregnant teenagers, this chapter opens with a brief overview of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in developed and developing states, including South Africa and Zimbabwe where I conducted my study.



The greater part of the chapter is therefore a review of research studies on the rationale and nature of policy frameworks and programmes for the education of pregnant and former pregnant teenage students, and how they have been responded to by different societies.

## **2.2 The policy landscape**

The development of policy frameworks and programmes that allow pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to continue with their education are fairly recent in most countries. This began out of the realisation that teenage pregnancy is one cause of inequalities between men and women educational access and outcomes (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; Gordon, 1995, 2002; Stromquist, 1998, 1999, 2005; Gallup-Black & Weitzman, 2004).

### **2.2.1 Prevalence and effects of teenage pregnancy on women education**

One reason for the growing interest in the right to education for pregnant teenagers is the realisation that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood continue to be major causes for the differences in educational access, transition, attrition and completion rates between females and males in many countries (Weiner, 1987; Stromquist, 1998, 1999; 2005; Gallup-Black & Weitzman, 2004; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006). Teenage pregnancy can, therefore, be a hurdle to the achievement of the global goals of eliminating gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015 (Stromquist, 2005; UNICEF, 2004; Subrahmanian, 2005).

Research studies have indicated that even developed countries have continued to face the problem of teenage pregnancy, especially among the low income social groups. Darrick, Singh and Frost (2001) conducted a quantitative comparative study on the differences in teenage pregnancy rates among five developed countries, namely the USA, the UK, Canada and Sweden. The results indicated that the USA had the highest teenage pregnancy rate of 22%, followed by the UK with 15%, Canada with 11% and Sweden

with the lowest rate of 4%. Further findings by Arai (2003), Seamark and Lings (2004) and Hawkes (2004) corroborated that Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands had lower teenage pregnancy rates compared to Britain, Canada and USA. The reason given for the low pregnancy rates is that these countries were more open and liberal on sexuality and reproductive health issues like access to contraception, pregnancy termination and abortion services by teenagers. Societies that kept to traditional values on marriage, sex and did not give adequate information on these issues to their teenagers were found to have a higher rate of unwanted teen pregnancies (Arai, 2003).

With regard to the USA, around one million teenagers, mostly from poor African-American communities are reported to fall pregnant annually (Gallup-Black & Weitzman, 2004; Bennett & Asseffi, 2005; McGee & Blank, 1989; Somers et al., 2001; Black & De Blassie, 1985; Seamark & Lings, 2004). In the case of Britain, Arai (2003) concluded that “youthful childbearing is undoubtedly more prevalent in the UK compared with many other European nations and teenage pregnancy rates are also relatively high” (p. 91). It was, therefore, because of necessity that the developed countries were the first to institutionalise policies and programmes aimed at assisting teenage mothers to stay in school (Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Montessoro & Blixen, 1996; Adler, Bates & Merdinger, 1985; Zellman, 1982).

In Africa, studies by Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996), and Jackson and Abosi (2007) indicated that it is not unusual for girls to marry or have their first birth before the age of eighteen. This is because in countries like Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland a girl can consent to marriage and sex at the age of sixteen. Table 2.1 summarises the rate of teenage pregnancy in selected African countries, including South Africa and Zimbabwe.

**Table 2.1: Average teenage pregnancy rate in sub-Saharan Africa**

Country	%
Mali	45
Liberia	35
Botswana	24
Kenya	21
Togo	21
Ghana	19
Zimbabwe	16
South Africa	15.7

Adapted from Jackson and Abosi (2007), Kaufman, deWet and Stadler (2001) Panday, et al. (2009) and Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996)

At face value, a comparison of statistics between the developed and African countries indicates that, with the exception of the USA, African countries have higher teenage pregnancy rates. Generally, it is noted that most African societies have teenage pregnancy rates of over 15%. The figures could, however, be estimates because in most African societies, teenage pregnancy is usually considered a social problem if the pregnant girl is unmarried and so most cases of teenage pregnancy may not be captured (Boyona & Kadji-Murangi, 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001).

A South African study in KwaZulu Natal by Manzini (2001) found that teenage pregnancy differed according to race and location. It emerged from the study that Blacks had a higher rate of teenage pregnancies than Asian and white communities. The study also found that rural and low income group settlements had higher teenage pregnancies than middle and upper income social groups. The tabled data indicates that the average rate of teenage pregnancy for South Africa and Zimbabwe can be rounded off to the same figure of 16%. This could imply that if both countries are effectively giving equal educational access to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, the population of pregnant teenagers in their schools should not be significantly different.

Most of the data on teenage pregnancy in Africa are drawn from either school drop-out rates or studies on sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Meekers and Ahmed (1999) observed that “in some African regions up to ten percent of schoolgirls drop out of school

because of pregnancy” (p. 195). With specific reference to sub-Saharan Africa, statistical data from a study by the Forum for the African Women Educators (FAWE) indicated that an average of only 34% and 10% of the girls in sub-Saharan Africa uninterruptedly completed primary and secondary schooling respectively (Chilisa, 2002).

In Zimbabwe, Lloyd and Mensch (2006) indicated that 7% of the girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy related reasons in 1994. Recent official figures seem to concur with Lloyd and Mensch, as they indicated that in 2004, pregnancy and marriage accounted for 2.13% of the girls who dropped out at primary school level and 10.4% at secondary school level (MoESC, 2004). Using figures released in 1998, Lloyd and Mensch (2006) made a distinction between dropouts due to pregnancy (34%) and marriage (9%) in South Africa. Available data, therefore, show that although, re-entry or continuous schoolgirl pregnancy policies could be in place, there could still be a significant educational attrition rate due to pregnancy related causes in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. This could be indicative of the negative effect pregnancy continues to have on educational access, as well as the gap between policy and practice.

### **2.2.2 The impetus to international policy on educational rights for pregnant teenagers**

The right to education is one of the core human rights specified in almost every international declaration and convention like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, Education for All (EFA) of 1990 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000. These international declarations all define education as a fundamental human right for every member of society (Taylor, Smith & Nairin, 2001; Dandet & Singh, 2001; Detrick, 1999; Ochalita & Espinasa, 2001). Because of the realisation that equal rights to, within and through education for girls is one unfulfilled fundamental human right, the provisions of CEDAW, CRC, EFA and MDG all have a provision on the principle of gender equity and measures to enhance equal access to and completion of education by girls and women at all levels by 2015 (Submaranian, 2005; UNICEF, 2003; UNESCO, 2001; Tsanga et al.,

2004). Consequently, to show their commitment to the elimination of gender inequalities in education, both South Africa and Zimbabwe unreservedly ratified all these international declarations that seek to redress all gender inequalities in education (Tsanga et al., 2004; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Prinsloo, 2005; Daniel, 2003; MDG: South Africa Country Report, 2005; MDG: SA Mid-Term Country Report, 2007; UNICEF, 2004).

Since education is a key determinant for women emancipation, UN member states that consented to international instruments on gender equality have the obligation to progressively extend equal rights to, within and through education for pregnant learners, who are at risk of leaving school prematurely (Subrahmanian, 2005; Chilisa, 2002; Stromquist, 2005; Leach, 2000). In this regard, countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe which ratified international conventions on gender equality and have continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant teenagers and adolescent mothers, are consistent with international expectations on observing education as a basic human right. However, extending equal right to schooling alone, which Subrahmanian (2005) calls formal gender equality may not be adequate in fulfilling the educational needs of the enrolled pregnant learners. It is the process of education or right within education (Subrahmanian, 2005) which is more influential to the educational performance of the enrolled pregnant learners.

### **2.2.3 International conventions and pregnant teenagers' right to education**

Gender equity policies that sought to integrate or mainstream pregnant and former pregnant teenagers had their origin from the agitation by feminist scholars and activists in countries like Canada, USA, England, Wales and Netherlands who called for gender equality in educational provision (Wilson & Dekkers, 1999; Coulter, 1999; Coulter, 1999). The gender equity principles, which later found their way and got adopted into international conventions on women rights according to Coulter (1999), Stronguist (1999) and Wilson & Dekkers (1999) focused on the following educational concerns for women:

- Promotion of an inclusive school curriculum that is free from sex stereotyping and sexist sentiments;
- Promotion of girls and women access to and achievement in mathematics, sciences and technology areas of study;
- Elimination of all forms of harassment against women in education and appointment of women into positions of educational leadership, to act as role models for schoolgirls; and
- Review and re-evaluation of traditional customs and perceptions that could be harmful to equality of access to education and career development for men and women.

The elimination of all forms of discrimination in human society is therefore one major objective of international conventions and declarations. Table 2.2 summarises the international conventions with provisions that seek to redress gender inequality in education and other spheres of life, most of which incorporated the concerns raised by feminist and gender equity civic groups.

**Table 2.2: International policy frameworks on equal right to education**

Convention	Article	Provision
CEDAW	5(a)	Both men and women to have common responsibilities in child care, upbringing and development.
	5(b)	Elimination of social and cultural practices that promote gender stereotyping and discrimination.
	10(h)	Promotion of policies and measures for equal access to education, health and family wellbeing.
	10 (f)	Policies, measure and programmes for girls and women who may prematurely leave school.
CRC	2(1).	Non-discrimination of children in all spheres of life.
	19 (1).	Protection of children against violence, injury, negligence, maltreatment and sexual abuse.
	34 (a), (b), (c).	Protection of children from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, prostitution, exposure to pornographic materials and performances.
EFA	7(ii)	Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at other levels of education by 2015.
MDG	2	Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.
	3	Achievement of gender equality at other levels of education by 2015.

Adapted from Stronguist (1999), Submaranian (2005) and Tsanga et al. (2004).

Stromquist (1997) observes that it was the UN decade on women (1976 – 1985) which gave impetus to the inclusion of gender sensitive clauses into international conventions that seek to redress policy level disparities in educational access and completion between men and women (see Table 2.2). The common principle on gender equality cuts across all international conventions and declarations, and is the foundation upon which the expulsion policies for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from formal schooling began to be challenged. It is in this regard that some of the UN member states that ratified gender-equity international conventions on education have come up with national policies that incorporate some of the provisions. In the case of South Africa and Zimbabwe, where this study was conducted, there are policy guidelines that prohibit the expulsion of

pregnant learners from school (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999). Therefore, in line with both international and national statutes, pregnant teenagers in South Africa and Zimbabwe are legally guaranteed the right to education just like any other child. The enactment of re-entry and continuation policies for girls who fall pregnant while at school could contribute to the achievement of both the 2005 and 2015 EFA and MDG goals of gender equality in education in the two countries. However, for the purpose of this study, the mere ratification and domestication of international conventions should not be viewed as an end in itself.

This study, therefore, sought to investigate how pregnant learners at two formal schools drawn from South Africa and Zimbabwe exercised their right to education. In the next section, I therefore, examine national education statutes that conform to the international principle of gender equality in education and that could benefit pregnant teenagers and allow them to continue with their education, in both developed and developing nations.

#### **2.2.4 Schoolgirl pregnancy policies in developed nations**

Although this study was undertaken in South African and Zimbabwe, it is also important to briefly outline schoolgirl pregnancy management policies from elsewhere in the world. Therefore, in the following section I give a brief outline of policies from two selected developed countries, namely the United States of America and Britain. Developing countries whose policies will be outlined include Botswana, Namibia and Malawi.

Britain was among the first countries to enact laws that prohibit any form of discrimination against women in education after the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, which states that education is a fundamental human right (Ladner, 1987; Weiner, 1987; Truscott, 1994; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Coulter, 1999; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Even before 1948, the British Education Act of 1944 had enshrined the principle of equal access to education (Stromquist, 1999; Coulter, 1999; Truscott, 1994). By making basic education free and compulsory for every child, the Act made it legally possible for pregnant teenagers to attend school.



In the USA, the right of pregnant learners to continued education is based on two Acts of parliament, which all American states and districts are compelled to adopt and implement in their schools. Through the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, referred to as Title IX and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975, any discrimination against pregnant teens in schools is prohibited (Ladner, 1987; Kay, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Weimer, 1987; McGaha-Garnett, 2007:15). Because of this legal obligation in the USA, "Teen parents are mandated to attend school (despite circumstances) and are prosecuted/finer when unexpected absence becomes problematic" (McGaha-Garnett, 2007, p.15). Additional features to the statutory instruments include flexible timetables to help pregnant learners adopt self-pace learning, on-site day care and health facilities, counselling and parenting laboratories for all schools with pregnant and former pregnant learners (McGaha-Garnett, 2007; Kay, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Weimer, 1987; Adler, Bates & Merginger 1985).

Out of the realisation that the girl child was more disadvantaged in terms of access to education and career development, feminist activists in the USA used the provisions of the 1972 Educational Amendments Act (Title IX) and the 1975 Women Educational Equity Act (WEEA) to call for school and college campus-based educational programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (McGee & Blank 1989; Burdell, 1996; Stromquist, 1999). Stromquist (1999) adds that in order to enforce the legal provision, each school had a voluntary Title IX co-coordinating committee that played the role of facilitating communication between schools and communities. Issues handled by the committee included gender equity, explaining the provisions and implications of Title IX to students, handling grievances on sex discrimination, adjusting facilities to comply with non-discrimination of pregnant and former pregnant learners, and making recommendations on affirmative action school policies and procedures on gender equity. Title IX was, therefore, influential in the democratisation of education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from the USA, to Canada, England and other Western European countries.

According to Zellman (1982), Adler, Bates and Merdinger (1985), Weiner, 1987, McGee and Blank (1989), Montessori and Blixen (1996) and Burdell (1996) the main provisions of Title IX, which extend the right to equal educational access and treatment to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are that:

- Pregnant and former pregnant learners should have same rights and responsibilities as any other students;
- It is prohibited to exclude or expel pregnant and former pregnant learners from any school programme, course or extra-curricula activity. This affirms their right to legally remain in all regular school programmes; and
- Districts and schools are mandated to develop policies and implementation strategies for the elimination of any form of sex and gender discrimination in education.

Montessori and Blixen (1996) further observe that Title IX has a provision that stipulates that, where special programmes for pregnant and former pregnant adolescents were offered outside the formal school system, these were to be comparable in quality to those for non-pregnant students. A pregnant student is allowed to remain in school as long as she desires, or until the eighth month of pregnancy or when she is unable to remain in school for any medically proven reasons. While she is away to deliver, she is entitled to relevant and consistent homebound tuition (Adler, Bates & Merdinger, 1985). Adler, Bates and Merdinger (1985) outline a section of Title IX, which directly caters for the educational right of American pregnant teenagers:

Legally, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments is the one provision which gives pregnant adolescents and teenage parents the same rights as other students. Based on Title IX (Part 86.40) a school may not discriminate against any student in its educational program because of the student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, or termination of pregnancy unless the student requests participation in a different, but comparable program (p. 185).

### **2.2.5 Impact of Title IX on education of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers**

Before the enactment and adoption of the Educational Amendments Act in the USA, a study by Foltz, Klerman & Jekel (1972) had revealed that “Pregnancy is a major reason for dropping out of school. Most school systems do not permit pregnant students to continue attending regular classes” (p.1612). A similar observation was made later in a study by Burdell (1998), who concluded that:

Up until the 1970s, most public schools did not tolerate adolescent pregnancies. Pregnant students, even married ones, were usually forced to drop out of school, and mothers were discouraged from re-entering on their regular high class. Throughout the Post-World War II period, tens of thousands of girls were expelled (p. 221).

Since pregnant and former pregnant girls were obliged to dropout, the only workable alternative for those who had educational aspirations was to receive home-bound instruction from well-wishers (Foltz, Klerman & Jekel, 1972; Ladner, 1987). However, later developments indicated that the total denial of the pregnant girl child’s right to formal schooling was challenged by feminist activists who made reference to provisions of Title IX (Weiner, 1987; McGee & Blank, 1989; Burdell, 1996; Montessori & Blixen, 1996).

Stromquist (1999) observes that the prevention of sexual discrimination in education through Title IX or Educational Amendments Act of 1972 contain rules and regulations that prohibit all forms of sex discrimination in education policies, programmes and activities. Specifically, the Act stipulates that sex and gender discrimination with respect to admission; recruitment and selection of students and staff, subject and career education, access to sporting activities, education facilities and accommodation are to be guarded against. There are Title IX inspectors and coordinators that work through the Equal Opportunities Commission at district and school levels, to monitor the implementation of the Act. In order to enforce the implementation of Title IX, the USA government passed and invoked the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975. This Act stipulates that, all educational institutions be provided with financial and technical assistance to design, adopt and implement new policies, programmes and

practices that promote gender-egalitarian settings, specifically targeted to benefit pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Stromquist, 1999; Truscott, 1994). Education institutions that fail to comply with these regulations could, therefore, face cuts in federal government funding. However, the disadvantage of this obligatory condition is that schools and colleges that do not depend on federal funding are not affected by the penalty, and therefore, may continue to discriminate against pregnant and former pregnant teenagers.

With time, the positive results of Title IX began to gradually take effect in the USA. Before the passing of the Prevention of Sexual Discrimination in Education Act, Burdell (1996) observed that only 18, 6% of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers graduated from high school. However, this increased to 29.2% in 1975 and by 1985 the figure had risen to 55%. This rapid increase within the first decade of the Title IX Amendment Act could be attributed to the implementation of the Act in school, in such a way that most teens who fell pregnant or got married while at school were most unlikely to drop out. Due to the social justice which society began to realise in the Title IX, the campaign against child sexual abuse and teen pregnancy received similar attention as that given to child labour in the USA and other developed countries (Testa, 1992; Burdell, 1996).

However, despite changes in law, some conservative and negative attitudes against Title IX took time to change. These were seen through poor commitment to serve pregnant and former pregnant teenagers by some schools. This came to be called the ‘curriculum of concealment’, whereby schools only paid lip service to the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Burdell, 1998). Therefore, while gender equity legal instruments could be there to benefit pregnant learners, there may not be enough political will from the community and bureaucratic experts, who like in the case of the USA, believed that school-based programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were diverting scarce resources away from more deserving students (Burdell, 1998; McGee & Blank, 1989). It is, therefore, worth noting that policies that aim to achieve equal educational opportunities for pregnant teenagers may initially meet with resistance from

the community because of some negative traditional and conservative perceptions about giving social rights to pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers.

### **2.2.6 Schoolgirl pregnancy policies in African nations**

With the ratification of international conventions that call for gender equity in education, some African countries have designed national education policies that protect pregnant and former pregnant teenagers against discrimination. However, most of the policies require a girl to suspend schooling for at least a year after falling pregnant (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Besides South Africa and Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi and Namibia are some of the SADC member states with policies that allow pregnant teenagers access to formal schooling.

One of the first African countries to formulate and implement a policy meant to assist pregnant and former pregnant learners is Botswana. Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) observe that Botswana formulated an education policy on school pregnancies in 1967, only a year after attainment of national independence. However, Chilisa (2002) adds that the policy was only adopted in 1977 after a recommendation from the National Commission on Education. According to Chilisa (2002), “The policy requires the girl to withdraw from school immediately her pregnancy is discovered, only to return 12 months after delivery” (p. 29-30). By definition, this is what has come to be called a re-entry policy because the exclusion requirement is mandatory as a punitive measure to what is viewed as the girl’s unbecoming behaviour (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996). Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) outline the following four provisions of the Botswana policy:

- A pregnant girl is to be withdrawn from school and re-admitted at another school at least after 12 months;
- A former pregnant girl is only allowed to write examinations after 6 months from date of delivery; and

- If a male student is responsible for the pregnancy, the boy is also withdrawn from school and returns or writes examination with the approval of the Minister of Education.

The provisions are both punitive and discriminatory to the girl child, while lenient to the boy child who can seek the Minister's approval to return to school or write examinations within any given time after suspension. The requirement for re-admission at another school and the long break from school has been found to de-motivate former pregnant teens' educational aspirations (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Chilisa, 2002).

The Malawian and Namibian schoolgirl pregnancy policies are similar to that of Botswana in that they both require the former pregnant learner to re-enrol after at least one year of maternity leave from school (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; UNICEF, 2004; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Countries with restrictive re-entry as opposed to more liberal continuation policies have been found to have low school completion rates:

...because of their connectedness to traditional and institutional repressive ideologies, re-entry policies have failed to address the quality of life of the girl mothers in the school, their retention and other structural barriers that militate against retention (Chilisa, 2002, p.25).

Table 2.3 below, summarises the main policy provisions that have been formulated to manage teenage pregnancy in some of the African countries.

**Table 2.3: Types of school girl pregnancy policies in African countries**

Country	Policy	Main Conditions
Botswana	Re-entry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Former pregnant to be re-admitted in same grade after at least one year absence from school.</li> <li>2. Date of application for re-admission calculated from date of delivery (evidence required).</li> <li>3. Application for re-admission to comply with age of school entry (evidence required).</li> </ol>
Malawi	Re-entry.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A former pregnant learner can apply to be re-admitted after at least one year from date of giving birth.</li> <li>2. Application for re-admission to have proof of safe custody for the baby while at school.</li> <li>3. Re-admission after pregnancy only allowed once in one's school life.</li> </ol>
Zambia	Re-entry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-admission allowed at least after one year from date of delivery.</li> <li>2. Re-admission after pregnancy only allowed once in one's school life.</li> </ol>
Cameron	Continuous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Period of absence to give birth is negotiable.</li> <li>2. Extra-tuition given during period of absence from school.</li> </ol>
Madagascar	Continuous	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pregnant learner allowed to return to school immediately after delivery.</li> <li>2. No stipulated period of absence from school to deliver.</li> </ol>
Swaziland	Re-entry.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Former pregnant learner can be allowed to continue with schooling at another school after a period of nursing the baby.</li> </ol>

Adapted from Chilisa (2002) and Hubbard et al. (2008).

### 2.2.7 Schoolgirl pregnancy policies in South Africa and Zimbabwe

A review of most international conventions and declarations revealed that signatory states parties are required to take appropriate measures to incorporate and implement the international provisions of the ratified global principles (Zimbabwe Human Rights Non-

government Organisations (NGO) Forum, 2001). For this reason, an examination of South African and Zimbabwean national policy frameworks that have implications on the pregnant and former pregnant learners' right to, within and through education (Subrahmanian, 2005) is relevant for my study. The major purpose of the examination is to establish any correlation between international and national principles on gender equity, especially those with a bearing on the educability of pregnant and former pregnant learners.

According to Bray (1996) and Prinsloo (2005) the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Number 108 of 1996 includes a Bill of Rights which protects every person from unfair discrimination and unequal treatment. In fact the first chapter of the South African constitution indicates that non-racialism, non-sexism and equality are the principles upon which the constitution is founded (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). That the constitution points to non-sexism and equality is important in that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' rights are guaranteed just like those of every other person. Section 9 of Chapter 2, (Bill of Rights) has relevant clauses that protect pregnant and former pregnant teenage learners from any form of discrimination in education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; Mothata, 2000; Prinsloo, 2005). Sub-sections 9(1) indicates that "Everyone is equal before the law and has right to equal protection and benefit of the law" and sub-section 9(3) instructs that "The State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status" (Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997, p.26; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.1247). Furthermore, the state is required by sub-section 9(4) to make national legislation that prevents unfair discrimination against anyone, and that includes pregnant/former pregnant teen learners. The direct reference to gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status in this section legally protects pregnant teenagers over and above the protection granted by equality of treatment and unfair discrimination. Thus, the provision for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy is legitimated by the country's supreme law.



After the ratification of both the CRC and ACRWC, it can be observed that the South African constitution committed Section 28 exclusively to Children's Rights (Prinsloo, 2005). Of relevance to this study is sub-section 28(f) (ii) which seeks to protect children from any work or services that could risk their right to education and social development (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This clause is particularly protective to former pregnant learners, who could risk dropping out from school due to the pressure of looking after the baby. In this regard, parents, who are required by law to ensure that their children must attend school, should assist with child care, while the former pregnant teenagers attend school (DoE, 2007; SASA, 1996).

Prinsloo (2005) and Bray (1996) both observe that the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution unreservedly grants every person the right to basic education and equal access to further educational institutions. This provision is stated in Section 29 (Education), sub-sections (i)(a) and (i)(b) of the constitution, which means that learners who fall pregnant while at school should be assisted to exercise this fundamental human right by all the child rights duty bearers.

Although the Constitution of Zimbabwe (1980) has come under criticism from many civic organisations (Zimbabwe, Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001:6), it has sections that could be useful in assisting pregnant learners to exercise their right to education. Article 20 (5) directs that "No person shall be prevented from sending to any school a child of whom that person is a parent or guardian" (The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980, p.14). This guarantees the right for every child to enrol at any school, irrespective of his/her origin, sex, gender, race or any other difference. In other words, a pregnant or former pregnant teenager cannot be denied the right to further her educational interests if she chooses to attend a formal school. From the constitution's Declaration of Rights, Articles 20 to 24, it is therefore evident that every Zimbabwean child has a right to education (The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). This includes those who fall pregnant while at school.

The principle of non-discrimination in all spheres of life is catered for in Article 23 of the Zimbabwean constitution. Sub-section 23(i) (b) directs that no person shall be treated in a

discriminatory manner by any person, even when acting by virtue of a written law or performing public functions or authority. Sub-section 23(i) (a) adds that no law shall make discriminatory provisions while subsection 23(2) outlaws any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, tribe, and place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or gender (The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). Accordingly, discrimination of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in any way is prohibited. For example, one college student who had been unfairly expelled won her case against the expulsion using the constitutional clause (Tsanga, et al., 2004). This was, however, before the new education policy circular prohibiting the expulsion of pregnant learners from school was put in place (MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35, 1999).

However, compared to a similar South African non-discriminatory clause, one can observe that the Zimbabwean article omits non-discrimination on the basis of sex, pregnancy, marital status, which would have enhanced the case for pregnant or former pregnant learners, who wish to continue with formal schooling. It can also be observed that one weakness of the constitution of Zimbabwe's Declaration of Rights is that, "Section 23, sub-sections 3(a) and (b) of the Constitution have since 1980 exempted all customary, family and personal law from constitutional regulation" (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001, p.6). This restriction implies that cases of forced marriages, sexual abuse and rape of minors, which are common in most African societies (Gordon, 2002; Mitchell & Mathobi-Tapela, 2004) could lead to teenage girls losing out on educational access. However, it is encouraging to note that Article 24 (i) allows any person whose of rights have been contravened in any way, to appeal up to the supreme court of law for redress. In this regard, discrimination or marginalisation of pregnant and former pregnant learners at school can be legally challenged. Unfortunately this can only be accessed by people from privileged socio-economic backgrounds, who have adequate information on legal channels and the financial means to seek such legal protection.

Again, in comparison with the South African Bill of Rights, the Zimbabwean Declaration of Rights has two important omissions. First, there is no explicit declaration on every person's right to education, which according to international conventions is defined as a

fundamental human right. Second, the constitution is silent on the rights of children. This is inconsistent with the CRC which Zimbabwe ratified in 1991 (Tsanga et al., 2004). A further criticism of the constitution of Zimbabwe is that it has a provision that international agreements ratified by the government are not legally binding unless they are formally incorporated into law as Acts of parliament (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001; The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). This leaves marginalised people such as pregnant and former pregnant teenagers exposed because, where national policies are silent, one cannot refer to international law to challenge discriminatory practices.

SASA Number 84 of 1996, like the country's constitution protects the right of every learner from any form of discrimination (Prinsloo, 2005; SASA, 1996). The preamble of the Act states that its objective is to combat racism, sexism and any other unfair discrimination, as well as to “protect and uphold the rights of all the learners” (SASA, 1996, p.1). This preamble's provision is useful in safeguarding pregnant and former pregnant learners from any form of discriminatory service provision, since they are part of “all the learners”.

Chapter two of the SASA outlaws any unfair discrimination in schools, extends the right for every learner to enrol at any school and to appeal against unfair admission practices. More specifically, sub-sections 3(3), 5(1) and 5(9) of the Act (SASA, 1996), provides the following rights to all learners:

- Members of the Executive Council (MEC) should ensure that there are enough places for every child to attend school in their province;
- A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without any unfair discrimination; and
- Any learner or parent of a learner who has been refused admission to a public school may appeal against the decision to the MEC.

These legal provisions implicitly indicate that with regard to educational access and participation, pregnant and former pregnant learners can also claim the same educational rights. However, public schools, mostly in rural and urban townships are generally

defined as state established and maintained, (Mncube, 2007). In this regard, private, independent or former group C schools, which usually serve middle and upper class children (West & Currie, 2008; Mncube, 2007) could claim that they are not legally obliged to admit every learner who applies to attend at such schools. On the same grounds, West and Currie (2008) observe that independent schools had highly selective admission policies that ranged from class, religion, IQ tests to language proficiency. Nevertheless, although not specifically pointing to discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, the SASA is satisfactorily consistent with the global principle of non-discrimination and every child's right to education.

Like the South African Schools Act (1996), the Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25.04 of 1996 extends to all children's exclusive right to education, though without making specific reference to sex, gender, pregnancy or former pregnant teenagers. To uphold the international principle of non-discrimination in education, Part II sub-section 4(1) of the act states that "every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education" (Education Act, 1996, p.619). However, sub-section 4(2) does not include sex and gender as grounds on which discrimination in school admission is prohibited. This omission, also found in the constitution's Declaration of Rights (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001) could result in some schools denying admission to pregnant or former pregnant teenagers without fear of being prosecuted.

In support of every child's right to school admission, section 10 of the Education Act directs that:

Every child of school-going age shall be entitled to be enrolled at the Government primary or secondary school, as the case may be, nearest to the place where he/she is ordinarily resident" (Education Act, 1996, p.619).

Although this is extended to every child (pregnant and former pregnant learners included), the provision is only legally obligatory to Government schools and not other types of schools like faith, and elitist private schools. This is a weakness also similar to

one found in SASA (1996), which requires only public schools to desist from discriminatory admission practices.

In line with the legal right of pregnant and former pregnant learners to education, both South Africa and Zimbabwe have each come up with a policy measure or circular specific to that (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute, P35, 1999). Thus in South Africa, DoE (2007) declares that:

In accordance with the Constitution, the South African Schools Act, and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000, school children who are pregnant shall not be unfairly discriminated against (p. 2).

Commenting on the new measures for the management of learner pregnancy in school at a national youth conference, the then South African Minister of Education clarified that “pregnant schoolgirls have a right to education and cannot be expelled from school because they are pregnant” (Pandor, 2007, p.4). According to the Minister, such gender equity policies had already started to score positive results as the South African school system had began to register higher female enrolment (Pandor, 2007). Such a development is of relevance to my study. However, of greater importance to the study is the nature of educational experiences, participation, perceptions and treatment that influence pregnant and former pregnant learners’ educational outcomes and life chances. In other words, while policy is important in guiding action, policy alone without implementation strategies and political will, cannot change things no matter how well crafted it may be (Jansen, 2002; Hess, 1999). The issue of concern in my study is not only provision for access to school by pregnant teenagers, but the quality of service delivery provided to them in formal schools.

Although the South African Department of Education produced formal and detailed measures to help schools manage learner pregnancy in 2007, the policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education has been in place since the achievement of democracy in South Africa. For example, Grant and Hallman (2006) note that, “a policy formalised in South Africa in 1996 ... allows pregnant girls to

stay in school and also allows young mothers to do so if they can manage logistically and financially” (p. 3). They further observe that while the policy resulted in closing the gender difference in educational access between males and females, it also implied there could be delayed completion rates for girls due to grade repetition by former pregnant teenagers, who could suspend schooling due to child care responsibilities. To avoid grade repetition, Manzini (2001, p.48) indicates that, “The existing schools policy allows pregnant girls to continue with schooling both during the pregnancy and after the birth”. Such a provision facilitates continuous school attendance, unlike in Botswana, Namibia and Malawi, where there is a requirement for the pregnant learner to be excluded from school for a stipulated period of time ranging from one to two years (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

In the case of South Africa, while it is permissible dropout of school for up to two years, in order to look after the baby, this is not obligatory. It is, however, up to the affected learner and her parents to decide (Pandor, 2007; DoE, 2007). The policy guideline outlines the roles and responsibilities of the three main stakeholders, namely the school, learners and parents in the management of schoolgirl pregnancy (DoE, 2007). Schools are required to shoulder the following responsibilities:

- To strongly encourage learners to continue with their education prior to and after delivery;
- To avoid any action that may constitute unfair discrimination against a pregnant or former pregnant learner;
- To take measures against any discrimination, hate speech, harassment, and name-calling, and jokes that might destroy the self-esteem or break confidentiality of pregnant or former pregnant learners;
- To provide counselling and guidance services to pregnant learners and their parents in the best interest of the learner and the baby; and
- To extend academic support by giving and monitoring the learner’s school work during the period she has broken away from school to deliver or care for the baby.

The DoE (2007), however states in its policy that pregnant learners should be prepared that the community might not readily accept and support their situation because of society's values. The inclusion of this comment by the Department is pre-judgmental and could have a negative influence on pregnant learners' duty bearers who could claim that the negative perceptions and treatment of pregnant teens is a normal phenomenon in society. Although inclusion is the basis upon which the management of schoolgirl pregnancy measures are instituted, pregnant stakeholders are reminded that schools have no medical staff and child care facilities. For this reason, pregnant learners and the father-to be (if also a learner) may take absence from school to look after the baby for a period of up to two years, depending on personal circumstances of each case (DoE, 2007). During the period of absence from school, it is expected that the learner continues to get tuition from teachers and to do all school work that is assigned to her.

The major responsibility of the parents and guardians of pregnant learners is to assist with child care so that the learner can continue with her schooling both during the period of absence from school and when she reports back for formal learning (DoE, 2007). In view of the high rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa (Manzini, 2001; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Rutenburg, 2003; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001), these democratic measures have assisted to have more pregnant learners continue with their education (Pandor, 2007). For this study, however, the major concern is the extent to which pregnant learners are accessing quality service delivery in schools where they are enrolled.

Through the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 (1999), the government of Zimbabwe outlines provisions that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education. This policy is in line with the country's National Gender Policy which directs education and training sectors to "Provide facilities and a policy framework to enable girls who fall pregnant to continue with their education" (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004, p.8). According to subsection 5.2 of the policy circular, pregnant girls should be assisted to stay in school as long as possible. However, it is permissible for the girl and the boy (if the pregnancy is a result of a relationship between

two learners) to take up to three months absence from school in order to look after the new baby (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). Like the South African policy measures (DoE, 2007), the period of absence from school is not rigidly enforced because the situations of affected learners differ. What is, however, more positive about the Zimbabwean policy is that the period of absence is short and also in line with legal conditions on maternity leave. This affords more continuity to learning by pregnant learners and therefore the requirement that former pregnant learners resume classes in the same grade they were when they left school to deliver is logical (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999).

As a way of reducing stigma, school heads are directed to counsel pregnant learners as well as their parents, and to assist with the transfer of the pregnant girl to another school (MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35 (1999)). However, studies elsewhere have indicated that stigmatisation cannot be redressed through a “curriculum of concealment” (Kelly, 1998, p.229; Burdell, 1996, p.197; Burdell, 1998, p.12). Table 2.4 summarises the existing constitutional and educational policy measures in South Africa and Zimbabwe, which I have discussed.



**Table 2.4: South African and Zimbabwean policy frameworks on gender equity in education**

South Africa		Zimbabwe	
Act/Policy	Provisions	Act/Policy	Provisions
<b>Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Number 108</b>	<p><b>9(a)</b> Equality before the law.</p> <p><b>9(3)</b> No unfair discrimination on any grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status.</p> <p><b>28(f) (ii)</b> Protection of children's right to education and social development.</p> <p><b>29(i) (a) (b)</b> Right to basic education and equal access to further education.</p>	<b>Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980</b>	<p><b>20(5)</b> Freedom to send a child to any school.</p> <p><b>21(1)</b> Freedom of assembly and association.</p> <p><b>23(i) (a)</b> No law to have discriminatory provisions.</p> <p><b>23(i) (b)</b> No discriminated against by a person.</p> <p><b>23(2)</b> No discrimination on basis of race, tribe, and place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or gender.</p> <p><b>24(i)</b> Right to appeal if rights are violated.</p>
<b>South African Schools Act 1996, Number 84</b>	<p><b>3(3)</b> Provincial MEC to ensure enough schooling for all.</p> <p><b>5(1)</b> Public school to admit without unfair discrimination.</p> <p><b>5(9)</b> Right to appeal to MEC. for unfair enrolment</p>	<b>The Education Act Chapter 25.04 of 1987</b>	<p><b>4(1)</b> Every child has right to education.</p> <p><b>4(2)</b> No discrimination in school admission.</p> <p><b>(10)</b> Every child has right for admission to nearest government primary and secondary school.</p>
<b>DoE (2007) Prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools</b>	<p><b>School responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage pregnant learners to continue with schooling.</li> <li>To prevent discrimination against pregnant learners.</li> <li>Take measures against any hate speech.</li> <li>To provide counselling services and academic support during period of break from school for delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learners and parents responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both pregnant learner and father-to-be can take up to two years absence from school.</li> <li>Learners submit all school assignments for marking during absence.</li> <li>Parents to assist with child care.</li> </ul>	<b>MoESC (1999) Discipline in schools</b>	<p>Pregnant learners to be assisted to stay in school as long as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnant learner and father of baby (if also a pupil) can take up to 3 months absence from school.</li> <li>Pregnant learner allowed writing public examinations.</li> <li>After leaving to deliver, the young mother should return to the same grade she was before taking leave.</li> <li>If pregnancy is a result of rape, the learner and parents should be counselled and helped to transfer learner to another school.</li> </ul>

## **2.3 Translating policy into practice**

The implementation of international and national policy frameworks that extend equal educational rights to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers has different faces from one country to another. It appears from available literature that the differences in translating policy into practice are founded on the differences of the policies and political will for implementation among different societies.

One area of concern for my study is to find out how schools in the South African and Zimbabwean contexts have so far responded to the policy provisions that mandate formal schools to mainstream or integrate pregnant and former pregnant learners. Since my study focused on the responsiveness of formal schools to the educational needs of pregnant learners, in the next section I present and discuss the nature of school-based programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers offered at formal educational institutions. These will be categorised according to developed and developing nations, and also in terms of their strengths, weaknesses and lessons learnt or implications for my study.

### **2.3.1 Education programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in developed nations**

In the initial stages of the formal institutionalisation of education programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, McGee and Blank (1989) and Foltz, Klerman and Jekel (1972) acknowledged the role of special programmes which were named Second Chance Clubs (SCC) or New Feature Schools (NFS). These were located out of the formal school premises. They were ‘special’ in two respects: first, they were initiated and established by well-wishers in the non-formal education system; and second, they concentrate more on social, emotional, health and human development issues than academic and career development. Their curriculum focuses on aspects like contraception, pre- and post-antenatal care, baby care, child development and good parenting methods. According to McGee and Blank (1989), when school-based child care-centres were established at special schools, informal networks by staff and service

providers resulted in agitation and efforts for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners at formal schools, so that they could benefit from academic tuition.

Thus, despite the persistence of conservative attitudes, the inclusion of pregnant and teenage mothers in the formal school system spread its roots because of the legal right to education enshrined in Title IX. Earlier on, Foltz, Klerman and Jekel (1972) had observed that special schools were initially established as a bridge by which pregnant and former pregnant teenagers could find their way back into the formal school system:

...girls who attended the special school were more likely to return to regular school postpartum than girls who had not attended any school during pregnancy (p.1612).

Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001) noted that besides the objective of preventing subsequent pregnancies, the SCC also assisted by minimising the negative impact of adolescent parenting on both the teen mother and the baby. The stakeholders of these family-life education programmes include service providers like social workers, medical staff, community volunteers and family members. Their major activities according to Brundis and Philliber (1998) and Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001), include:

- Group meetings between social workers and former pregnant teenagers on issues like good parenting and career planning;
- Medical care for both the pregnant or former pregnant teen and the infant, through school or community based clinics;
- Counselling services to teens and their family members;
- Home visits to individual teens to give specific psycho-social support and deal with at-risk cases like depression, anxiety, family dysfunctionality, drug abuse and absenteeism from school; and
- Advocating for the academic, career, health, financial and material needs of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers.

Another type of similar education programme for pregnant and former pregnant learners in the USA is what has come to be called New Feature Schools (NFS) (Weiner, 1987). The 'new feature' in these schools is that they were initiated with the full participation of

the community and, therefore, operate on the basis of school and community partnership. The services to pregnant and former pregnant learners are not wholly school-based as some are provided by NGOs and voluntary community members like doctors, nurses, counsellors and social workers from outside the school system (Weiner, 1987). Like the SCCs, the NFSs put less emphasis on academic and career education because teens could spend a lot of time seeking services away from school. However, Weiner (1987) indicated that at their best, some NFSs offer various on-campus specialist services such as residential care for pregnant teens, parental and infant health care, top-up tuition and flexible schedules that allow pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to attend regular classes. Home-bound or extension tuition can be provided for those who may break away from school due to their own or their baby's illness, so that they can return to school at any time of the year without much loss in tuition.

Another dimension to SCC and NFS is that they may not necessarily replace the academic school, but are meant to empower the pregnant and former pregnant teens to continue with their academic aspirations within or alongside the regular school. In other words, the formal school and the special programme could complement each other, with the SCC or NFS offering un-accredited areas of study to psycho-socially empower the pregnant and former pregnant learners, to enable them to cope with the academic offerings in the regular school. Consequently, the pregnant and former pregnant learners are forced to operate between the two programmes, which could be located close to each other or even within the same premises. According to observations made by Weiner (1987) this form of integration could lead to stigmatisation of the pregnant learner because attending the special programme could be interpreted by mainstream learners as a form of social handicap.

In the same vein, Roosa (1986) also identified three types of non-academic special programmes that differed in terms of their location and objectives. These are hospital-based, community-based and school-based Teen-Age Parenting Programmes (TAPPs).

An analysis of the objectives of TAPPs made Roosa, (1989) to conclude that:

The stated goals of each program were to help young mothers continue with their education, to help them learn to control their fertility and to help them become better parents (p.313).

To show the different objectives in offering educational services to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, Zellman (1981) and Burdell (1996) made a distinction between non-curricula, supplementary curricula and inclusive curricula school programmes. The non-curricula programmes offer regular but unaccredited courses to assist the pregnant teenagers with life skills only. These programmes do not promote any career development and, thus, do not empower teenagers with any career focused skills. While they operate on a formal school basis, the students graduate from the school without any marketable skills for the job market. To this end, most women who gave birth before reaching the age of twenty, have been found to have remained poor or if employed were found in unprofessional and low paying jobs.

The supplementary curriculum programmes offer special courses in general education, as well as accredited courses in regular classes within the same school (Burdell, 1996). This requires pregnant or teenage mothers to follow two curricula within the same school. This could be a challenge for both school management and teachers who have to strike a balance between academic and life skills education.

The inclusive curriculum programmes have been found more beneficial to pregnant and former pregnant learners than the supplementary programmes because:

...students in these programmes [inclusive] attend them in place of regular classes, thus, despite the term inclusive they are separate (but equal to) the regular school program (Burdell, 1996, p.184).

They are termed inclusive because they offer a wide range of accredited courses and special services for pregnant and former pregnant learners only, and, therefore, are in a sense isolationist in nature. This means that when the student gets pregnant, she can choose to transfer to the inclusive programme where she can remain for the rest of her schooling. The main reason inclusive programmes are more popular among educators and

school management is that, the problems of pregnancy disappear from them once the pregnant students transfer from the regular school to the inclusive programme (Zellman, 1981; Burdell, 1996). This was observed by Burdell (1996) who said that, “principals, often seek to exclude pregnant students and are pleased to be able to send them to separate programmes” (p. 184). Added to that, most inclusive programmes have been found to offer lip-service to the provision of equal educational opportunity to pregnant and former pregnant learners because most of them concentrate on parental and child development education at the expense of academic and career focused offerings (Weatherly, Perlman, Levine, & Klerman, 1985; Burdell, 1996; Zellman, 1981). Administrators and staff in such programmes think that because their clients are exclusively pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers, what they need most are parental life skills. As a result, it has been found that most of the students who attended inclusive programmes failed to graduate from high school to colleges (Weatherly et al., 1985; Burdell, 1996). This could indicate a discriminatory motive for establishing inclusive programmes that are meant exclusively for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, which are set up under the pretext of extending equal educational opportunities to such students.

Therefore, inclusive programmes could be a form of political symbolism to legislations like Title IX, which forbid any form of discrimination to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in education. For this reason, supplementary programmes which integrate and mainstream pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools could be of better educational value than this type of inclusion which in actual fact turns out to be a form of exclusion. My study therefore sought to investigate and come up with an informed statement on how two formal schools that mainstream pregnant learners in South Africa and Zimbabwe were sensitive to the educational needs of these learners. For this reason the study is informed by Argyris and Schon’s (1974) theoretical proposition that there is usually a split between an organisation’s official policy, or the espoused theory-of-action, and practice or the stakeholders’ theories-in-use. I therefore investigated how the different education stakeholders at the two study sites conceptualised the policy on school

girl pregnancy, and treated pregnant learners within the school, the home and the community at large.

Single-sex schools are one form of special inclusive programmes that can be employed to empower pregnant and former pregnant teenagers for a number of reasons (Mitchell, 1999). First and foremost, such programmes can be more focused and, therefore, more sensitive to the specific educational and social needs of their targeted clients. Second, regular schools that integrate pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been found to neglect their unique needs because of the staff's lack of political will and specialised skills (Weiner, 1987; Roosa, 1986). An evaluation study by Montessori and Blixen (1996) indicated that regular schools that integrated and mainstreamed pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in their formal classes had lower high school graduation rates of 60% for teen mothers, compared to 90% for their mainstream peers. Montessori and Blixen (1996), therefore, concluded that regular schools could be agents of reproducing poverty and unemployment among early motherhood type of households, especially those managed by single teen mothers.

Contrary to this, special inclusive schools which are exclusively for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been found to be more de-stigmatising and empowering because the teen mothers on their own can unite to become each other's best support system (Kelly, 1996). As a team, they can motivate each other to graduate, recognise and fight back different forms of stigma and segregatory practices. They can gain self-confidence from within their school system where some of them are role-models in student leadership councils. This does not often happen in formal schools that integrate pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. However, isolation can deny them the opportunity to encounter, learn and deal with different forms of discriminatory practices found within a more real life setting offered by regular schools.

Due to the complexity and interrelated nature of factors that could influence the educational experiences of pregnant and former pregnant learners, it may not be the existence of policy or type of programme that are of uttermost importance to achieve the

desired goals. Rather, I believe that positive attitudes and treatment of the pregnant learners should be the major avenue for successful integration. This is why I chose to explore the perceptions of different education stakeholders within a formal school system, which integrates learners who choose to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy.

### **2.3.2 Effects of TAPPs on pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' educational opportunity**

Due to stigma, Roosa (1985) found that TAPPs which are established at formal schools faced difficulty in meeting the major goal of reducing the school dropout rates among teenage mothers in USA. The nature of school environment has been found to be an important variable for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' determination to continue with schooling or drop out from school altogether. However, high school dropout rates were found to be higher among those who had not joined TAPPs than those who remained in the special support schemes (Roosa, 1985).

With regard to the objective of career development and school completion Brindis and Philliber (1998) conducted an evaluation of 16 school-based TAPPs and reported that "in most programmes, only a minority of the young mothers completed school, got formal employment, or avoided welfare" (p.248). Job creation through TAPPs was found to have been successful for between 43% and 48% of the teenage mothers (Brindis & Philliber, 1998). This implies that most teen mothers do not access professional or well paying jobs. This corroborates with the findings that most of the teen mothers, especially those that remain single, are in the low socio-economic social group (Warrick et al., 1993; Hawkes, 2004; UNICEF, 2004).

To assess the impact of special programmes on repeat pregnancy, Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001) conducted a comparative evaluation of SCCs participants and non-participants, to determine if there was any difference in their rate of repeat pregnancy over a period of three years. They used a comparative and longitudinal experimental



research strategy with SCC participants as an experimental group and non-participants as the control group. Results indicated that SCC participants recorded only 6% repeat pregnancy compared to 37% of their non-participant counterparts. The study seemed to indicate that SCC programmes are valuable. Before that, a documentary survey by Brindis and Philliber (1998) had reported high rates of teenage repeat pregnancy. The evaluation by Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001), therefore, revealed the positive effect of SCCs in changing the lives of teenage mothers.

A number of studies revealed that there is more success in reducing pregnancy complications, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and stress among teens who attended special programmes than those who did not (Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Duncan, 2007). Teenagers who attended special or intervention programmes on family life and reproductive health were found to score more success in these areas compared to their non-participant counterparts. However, little success was recorded in the academic and career development spheres (McGee & Blank, 1989). The academic component of the programmes could be compromised by the lack of depth and uniformity at special schools compared to conventional schools. Added to this, students have to spend most of the time seeking an array of pre- and post-antenatal health services that pregnant and teen mothers require (Burdell 1996; McGee & Blank, 1989).

McGee and Blank (1989) reported that special programmes tend to take a “crisis intervention approach, few work with teens for a long period of time” (p. 30). It was found that once a girl becomes pregnant and gets enrolled into a special programme, the service providers expected to offload her after a short stint. This could result in minimal benefits and a high likelihood of dropping out from the academic programme altogether. This implies that the quality of service to pregnant and former pregnant teenage learners lies not in the white paper policies or plans that could be well formulated, but in the political will and attitudes of service providers. This is why I chose to study the daily experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the key stakeholders at formal schools that actually had pregnant and former pregnant learners in their systems.

### **2.3.3 Educational programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in sub-Saharan Africa**

The inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal education is a recent phenomenon in the African continent. In fact, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990 only came into force on 29 November 1999 (Organisation of African Unity [OAU] DOC. CAB/LEG/249/49, 1990). To date the ACRWC has been ratified by only 35 of the continent's 53 countries that constitute the African Union (7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 2005:2). Furthermore, not many African countries have come up with legislative measures that directly protect pregnant and former pregnant girls and women from discrimination in formal education. With the exception of Botswana, all the other countries with pregnant and parenting education policies had such policies instituted after 1990 (Hubbard et al., 2008; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Mgalla, Schapink & Boerma, 1998; Hudel, 1999; Gordon, 2002; Mitchell et al., 1999).

As can be seen from Table 2.3, most countries' policies cater for the re-entry of former pregnant teens after giving birth and so serve teen mothers more than pregnant teenagers. Zimbabwe, South Africa, Madagascar and Cameroon are the only few countries whose policies do not limit attendance to the period after giving birth. An analysis of the provisions of the available policies (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1997; DoE, 2007; Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Hubbard et al., 2008) indicates that there is lack of detail on specific implementation strategies or methodological approaches at school level. The most common feature is that the re-enrolled teen mothers or pregnant learners should be fully included in all the learning activities in the school. To this end, only the principle of non-discrimination is addressed without going any further to provide extra assistance or interventions to the conditions of pregnancy and parenting which can present challenges to learning.

In the case of South Africa, it is clear that child care is the responsibility of the girl child and her parents, while by implication, the Zimbabwean policy circular sends the same message since the decision to continue or withdrew from school is to be arrived at by the pregnant learner with the full concurrence of her parents (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). That being the case, there are no campus-based child care services or pre- and post-natal health care facilities for the pregnant and former pregnant learners similar to those provided for, by SCCs, NFS and the inclusive programmes in the USA. The DoE (2007) specifies that no medical assistance will be rendered by the school to both the mother-to-be and the new born child. It is, however, worth noting that counselling to both the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers and their parents can be undertaken by the school through life orientation in the case of South Africa, Guidance and Counselling in the case of Zimbabwe and Family Life Education in the case of Namibia (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; MBEC, 1997).

While these general education courses could cater for the learners' knowledge on parenting skills, HIV and AIDS and pregnancy prevention, the focus remains on the academic development. The pregnant and former pregnant learners take these courses together with their mainstream peers, unlike in the American supplementary curriculum where the teen mothers take such courses as separate, non-accredited general education subjects. The extent, to which the various specific needs of the pregnant and former pregnant learners are catered for in the general life skills education courses in South Africa and Zimbabwe, is what my study investigated. The perspectives of the learners, educators and parents informed the study.

The programmes in most of the African countries do not specify the extra-tuition assistance that should be provided to the pregnant learner during the period of absence from school, in order to give birth or care for the baby. However, the South African measures on learner pregnancy do clearly cater for this. In this regard the DoE (2007) instructs that educators should continue offering academic support to pregnant learners and assess all submitted tasks and assignments by the learners during the period of absence from school.

In Cameroon the period of absence from school is negotiable and extra-lessons during this period are compulsory (Hubbard et al., 2008). This type of home bound support clearly requires a school-family partnership. This is also clearly indicated in the Zimbabwean system as parents are highly involved once a schoolgirl becomes pregnant (MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). In this study, since parents are important stakeholders in monitoring both the behaviour and academic work of their child, I therefore, decided to include parents or guardians of pregnant learners as key informants in my study.

Most of the available studies on teenage pregnancy and schooling in Africa are on policy evaluation, especially the extent to which African governments have passed laws that are consistent with international and regional provisions and declarations that call for measures which would ensure continued education for girls who may fall pregnant while at school (Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Mitchell et al., 1999; Hubbard et al., 2008; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). Studies by Chilisa (2002), Bayona and Kadji-Murangi (1996) and Meekers and Ahmed, (1999) on school girl pregnancy policy in Botswana analyse stakeholders' views on the structural policy frameworks. They do not focus on the daily educational experiences of pregnant and former pregnant learners enrolled in formal schools such as the ones which my study investigated.

The main focus of the Namibian schoolgirl pregnancy policy is on the legality and implementability of the policy, its strengths and weaknesses from a legal, human rights and stakeholders' point of view (Hubbard, et al., 2008). Hubbard et al (2008) show how the Namibia policy of 1997 is generally in line with the CRC, EFA and CEDAW provisions on gender equality to educational access. They also show how the policy has legal loop-holes that can be used by schools to discriminate against female teen parents and not against their male counterparts (Hubbard et al., 2008). The study is largely conceptualised from a legal perspective and highlights aspects of the policy which violate international legal provisions on education as a human right. Its case studies illustrate largely how the policy has been successfully challenged in courts of law by former pregnant girls, who had been denied re-enrolment before the required one year period of

absence from school (Hubbard et al., 2008). Hubbard et al, (2008) outline a number of pregnancy policies that are similar to the Namibian re-enrolment policy as well as continuation policies. That the study was undertaken by only a team of legal experts is enough to indicate the gap it leaves with regard to the educational perspective.

Likewise, the Botswana schoolgirl pregnancy policy evaluations by Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) and Meeker and Ahmed (1999) are meant to assess the practical legitimacy and legality of the policy in view of negative and traditional perceptions to teenage pregnancy and single motherhood. To this, Chilisa (2002) adds a feminist and human rights analysis of the Botswana re-entry school girl policy, which she views as partially democratic to women's right to education. The views expressed by stakeholders like parents, education officers, principals, former pregnant girls and teachers focus on the extent to which the policy is structurally just (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999).

Therefore, while the Botswana and Namibia studies are to date the only African studies that have evaluated school girl pregnancy policies, my case study of two schools that mainstream pregnant and former pregnant teenage students will add value to this dimension by exploring the views of pregnant and former pregnant learners, their peers, parents and teachers on their educational experiences within the formal school, and natural social and cultural environments.

With regard to benefits of the policy implementation to former pregnant teenagers' access to education, results from Botswana and Namibia indicate that in both countries, there are more challenges than opportunities. In Botswana, for example, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) concluded that the policy has not benefited the former pregnant girls because of opposition from the community and lack of political will from education administrators. They observed that some heads of schools would take these girls unconditionally while others would apply restrictions and excuses to refuse entry into their schools by former pregnant girls. They also noted that community members felt that the act of allowing former pregnant school girls back into schools does not help in

building responsible sex-attitudes and practices. Similar sentiments were expressed by Meekers and Ahmed (1999) and Chilisa (2002) on the same policy. Hubbard et al, (2008) also concluded that the Namibian policy that allows teen mothers back into school has met with positive criticism from human right activists and legal experts, but was surprisingly opposed by local communities that hold traditional views on pre-marital and teenage sexuality.

Since in most African states, the re-enrolment of teen mothers into school is not yet compulsory, the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' right to education remains open to violation. For example, although Malawi instituted a similar re-entry policy for former pregnant girls in 1995, Chigona and Chetty (2008), Hubbard et al. (2008), Chilisa (2002), Hyde (1999) and Brabin et al. (1998) observed that about 73, 3% of pregnant teens who sought antenatal services at health clinics in the country were found to be semi-literate and only 5% of them were in school.

Reviewed literature indicates that to date, comprehensive studies to assess the implementation of school girl pregnancy policies in Africa have been undertaken in Botswana and Namibia (Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996; Chilisa, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Hubbard, et al., 2008). However, these studies seemed not to have focused on the day to day experiences of pregnant or former pregnant learners who were currently enrolled in formal schools at the time the studies were undertaken. Instead, they focused on the structural and social justice, relevance and legal implications of the policies. My study differs from these others in that its participants are drawn from a population of pregnant and former pregnant learners, who were attending formal schools at the time when the study was conducted.

#### **2.3.4 Educational programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in South Africa and Zimbabwe**

There has been growing interest on the effects of schoolgirl pregnancy on education in South Africa, and some studies with valuable findings have been undertaken on the

subject (Hof & Richters, 1999; Mokgalabone, 1999; Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday et al., 2009; Grant & Hallman, 2006). First, many researchers point out that in democratic South Africa, school girls who become pregnant are allowed to continue with their education for as long as their medical condition allows them to do so (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001; Chigoma & Chetty, 2008; Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hubbard et al., 2008). A study by Mokgalabone (1999) focused on how socio-cultural conditions caused school disruption among poor rural teen mothers, who had dropped from school. Grant and Hallman (2006) studied how the pre-pregnancy academic performance could cause school dropout and delay completion among South African women, who had given birth as teenagers. Both studies, therefore, did not include pregnant teenagers who were currently in school as their subjects of study. Chigona and Chetty (2008) studied the views of South African teenage mothers on the home and school environments. They found that South African teenage mothers described both the home and school as unsupportive to their educational needs. Although the study did not include pregnant teenage girls who were enrolled in formal schools, as my study did, its main finding that both the school and home could create some hurdles to school participation and academic performance of teen mothers are of value and relevance to my study.

In Zimbabwe, earlier studies by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1998), and Hof and Richters (1999) largely focused on gender inequalities in primary, secondary and tertiary education, which they viewed as the cause of schoolgirl dropout and poor performance compared to boys. In all these studies pregnancy and sexual abuse are highlighted as major causes of girls and women's poor access, completion and achievement at different levels of education. The studies did not investigate the experiences of pregnant learners, who were enrolled in a formal school set up. Like the South African study by Grant and Hallman (2006), Hof and Ritchens (1999) studied Zimbabwean teenage mothers who had left school due to pregnancy and also concluded that there seemed to be a correlation between poor school performance and schoolgirl pregnancy.

Gordon (2002) explored the different causes of school girl pregnancy in Zimbabwe and why some girls who fell pregnant while at school had dropped out in spite of the existence of the policy that allows them to continue with their education (Gordon, 2002; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). However, unlike the current study, available studies on schoolgirl pregnancy in Zimbabwe did not investigate the daily experiences and challenges of pregnant learners who were in school. Therefore with regard to Zimbabwe, my study is the first to investigate how formal school stakeholders respond to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who choose to continue with their education at formal schools. While Gordon (2002) studied pregnant teens that had dropped out of school, my study gathered the views of those who were still in school at the time the study was undertaken. This study is, therefore, the first to evaluate the extent to which pregnant and former pregnant learners who chose to continue with school could be benefiting from the policy that allows them to remain in school during and after pregnancy (Gordon, 2002; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999).

#### **2.4 Responses to education policies and programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers**

A review of the available literature indicates that there are socially constructed discourses that inform most societies' perceptions, attitudes and treatment of teenage pregnancy and parenting. Kelly (1998, 1996) identified the conservative, liberal and critical or oppositional discourses to teenage pregnancy and motherhood. In the same vein, Burdell (1998) uses the terms "curriculum of concealment and curriculum of redemption" to refer to how pregnant and former pregnant learners were treated at American schools following conservative and liberal discourses (p. 212). Because such discourses could be found at schools where my study was conducted, I present a critique of these perspectives in their contextual settings.



#### **2.4.1 Conservative and liberal discourses to educational programmes for pregnant teenagers**

Carlson (1992) and Kelly (1998, 1996) categorise schools and teachers into two groups, namely conservative or traditionalist and liberal or progressive in terms of how they perceived and treated pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. To the conservatives, unmarried teen mothers symbolised the wrong family model and therefore giving them social welfare grants or school-based child care services was like sanctioning and promoting their wrong behaviour. The pregnant teens and teen mothers are viewed as having made the wrong choice and, therefore, should accept the consequences of their irresponsibility. To this end, Kelly (1996) observes that “conservatives ... aim to exclude teen mothers from public places like schools and return the responsibility for sex education to parents” (p. 432). Burdell (1998) also supports the observation that the curriculum of concealment concurs within the conservative discourse which seeks to maintain traditional family values where premarital sex has no place. The conservative discourse to teen motherhood according to Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998) is informed by the perceptions that:

- Teen motherhood distorted the traditional definition of a family of two parents, independent of state aid and where sex only occurred in marriage;
- All motherhood should be home-based and so teen mothers should receive education by correspondence as a way of discouraging distortions to traditional family; and
- School-based child care programmes had the negative impact of making babies a “status symbol” among school children and also a waste of tax-payers’ money.

In line with these negative perceptions, Kelly (1998) found that conservative teachers were against the inclusion of the pregnant teens and teen mothers in school because:

...students who observe pregnant girls getting attention or teen mothers with “cute” babies receiving government subsidies (in the form of free day care) might be influenced to become teen parents (p. 229).

Such views, according to Burdell (1998), are the basis upon which the “curriculum of concealment” is founded (p.212). This is where pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are only accommodated as a policy obligation but without substantive benefit from school engagement.

Whereas the conservative discourse calls for punitive measures to teen pregnancy and early motherhood, the liberal or democratic discourse is based on the premise that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have an equal right to education just like any other children (Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998). Schools, therefore, should not expect to remain institutions for only single and childless adolescents because teen pregnancy and motherhood have become current social problems, which societies the world over cannot afford to ignore (Burdell, 1998). To the liberals, society has a duty to positively respond to pregnant teens and teen parents’ need to achieve their potential through empathetic nurturing of self-discipline, self-respect and self-reliance (Kelly, 1998). In this respect, liberals, therefore, support pregnant teenagers and mothers’ education programmes that integrated them into formal schools, and welfare support grants, not as public charity but their social right.

In concurrence with the liberal discourse to teen pregnancy is what Kelly (1996) calls “critical or oppositional discourse”, which is critical of feminists for not directly highlighting the voices of pregnant teens and teen mothers in their discourses (p. 434). The oppositional paradigm proposes that family types should be diverse, and include single motherhood as a way of de-stigmatising single and teen parents. From the oppositional point of view, women should have the right to choose when, where, how and with whom to give birth, as well as access to free sexuality education. Societal myths about good motherhood as characterised by a woman who should be homebound, dependant and passive, are viewed as forms of stigmatisation which make women lose their self-esteem (Kelly, 1996). The critical or oppositional discourse strongly opposes both the bureaucratic experts’ notion that teen mothers are careless children who waste government resources, which should be reserved for more deserving cases like the elderly and physically handicapped. Kelly (1996) summarises the oppositional paradigm to teen

motherhood by observing that “Oppositional movements have created an alternative discourse that aims to reduce the stigma of teen pregnancy” (p. 434). In view of the observation that stigma could be one of the main challenges faced by pregnant and former pregnant learners (Kelly, 1996, 1998; Burdell, 1996; Brabin, et al., 1998; Miller, Cur, Shanok, & Weissman 2008), my study investigated and inferred into the perceptions and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who chose to pursue their educational ambitions within the South African and Zimbabwean school contexts.

#### **2.4.2 Curriculum of ‘protection’ and curriculum of ‘redemption’**

Because the conservative perspective aims at restoring the “traditional motherhood cult” in society, whenever teen mothers are enrolled at school, it encourages school programmes that promote a “mother-centred pedagogy”, which Burdell (1998) calls a “curriculum of protection” (p.216). Such a curriculum seeks to promote motherhood capabilities among the teen mothers at the expense of academic and career development. Burdell (1998) observes that in such a programme, which is usually isolated from the mainstream or formal school “staff were typically proud of the parenting requirements and the progress they were making in teaching enrollees how to be good mothers” (p.216).

In cases where such teen motherhood education programmes did not take an explicitly isolationist nature, concealment of pregnant and former pregnant learners could take place. Burdell (1998) observed that there can be two faces to the curriculum of concealment:

Concealment, either by giving the programmes obscure names or by keeping the programmes physically out of sight in separate facilities away from schools, in alternative adult education facilities, or in self-contained units of campus, is common, as is only publicizing the existence of the program by word of mouth (p. 12-13).

The above is similar to what Jansen (2002) terms political symbolism to define policies that are formulated without specific implementation strategies and the political will by policy duty bearers or implementers. Political symbolism to the policy of inclusion of pregnant and parenting in formal education is one area of investigation for my study. I

applied action science theory as the theoretical framework that explains the split between policy (espoused theory-of-action) and practice (theory-in-use), which is indicative of political symbolism to policy (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Jansen, 2001).

In contrast to the more negative curriculum of concealment or protection is what Burdell (1998) has termed the “bright prospects” approach to teen mothers’ education programmes, which are offered to deconstruct the notion that pregnant teens are sexually irresponsible, and are likely to become bad, fruitless and dependent mothers (p. 218). A Canadian case study conducted by Burdell (1998) proved that teen mothers could successfully be trained to become good decision makers on both their careers and sexuality. Like the American second chance clubs or new feature schools, the bright prospects curriculum is a form of curriculum of redemption, whereby pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are motivated to regain their self-esteem, and are also empowered to take new perspectives and initiatives to life through career focused education. Such strategies proved that the teen mothers could redeem themselves from any past mistakes, de-stigmatise their situation and change their lives altogether. The teen mothers needed help to regain their self-esteem, which is necessary for fulfilment of their academic and career aspirations. The curriculum of redemption is founded on the realisation that pregnant learners negotiated their needs with both teachers and parents from a disempowered position with regard to their educational and resource needs (Burdell, 1996). This has resulted in pregnant and former pregnant teenagers keeping their situation relatively secret from school officials, teachers and parents or guardians, who are likely to view the teenagers lowly, and, therefore, not help them. To this end, Burdell (1996) recommends that, “We must listen at length to the logics and strengths of young mothers’ hopes, plans and desires for their lives and the lives of their children” (p. 197).

In line with this, I chose pregnant and former pregnant learners, and their parents or guardians, to be key informants for my study.

## 2.5 Implications of pregnancy on pregnant teenagers' education

In order for the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schooling to achieve its intended goals, service providers should be well informed about the challenges that militate against such students' motivation to continue with, participate in and perform well in education. School absenteeism, failure to complete school work, delayed completion, poor academic achievement, and even choosing to drop out altogether, have been associated with teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. These are, however, only symptoms that conceal some underlying challenges faced by pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in their educational endeavour. Research studies indicate a multiplicity of hurdles in the new lives of teenagers once they become pregnant. These are influenced by heterogeneous social factors like age, social class, health and type of school home or parental attitudes (Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Miller et al., 2008; Weigand, 2005; Emihovic & Fromme, 1998; Ahn, 1994; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

Studies by Richter and Mlambo (2005) and Miller et al. (2008) found that first pregnancy, especially the unplanned type, among teenagers, resulted in stress, depression, loss of self-esteem and identity diffusion. A South African study of pregnant teenagers by Richter and Mlambo (2005) revealed that:

Teenage pregnancy can lead to depression, poor school performance and emotional instability. The teenager develops fear of the unknown with regards to abandonment by a boy friend, deprivation, or reduced family sanction (p.62).

In a similar study Miller et al. (2008) conducted a quantitative survey in which they compared depression rates of pregnant adolescents, non-pregnant adolescents and pregnant adults and found that:

Rates of depression in pregnant adolescents have been reported between 26 – 44%, with the upper range found among urban minorities of low socio-economic status. Prevalence of depressive disorder in pregnant adolescents is over twice that of 10 – 12% found among pregnant adults ... or that of 8 – 12% found in non-pregnant adolescents (p.733).

These are negative effects not only on the well-being and health of the baby, but also on the pregnant adolescents' perceptions to life, and schooling in particular.

In Malawi, a longitudinal survey of pregnant teens by Brabin et al. (1998) indicated that pregnant teens received poorer antenatal care than their adult counterparts, especially if they were unmarried. The pregnant teens felt marginalised and stigmatised to the extent that few of them were keen to voluntarily visit clinics for pre-natal health care services. This means that without de-constructing the stigma associated with teen pregnancy and single motherhood, and restoring the self-esteem of pregnant teenagers, efforts to integrate and mainstream them may not achieve the desired goals of improving their school completion and performance outcomes.

Related to depression and low self-esteem is the observation that early pregnancy and parenthood are accompanied by premature limitation to social freedom, sudden and heightened responsibility and social dislocation from other teen peers as the girl is expected to leave the social context of adolescence to become a parent (Miller et al., 2008; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). According to Miller et al. (2008), and Richter and Mlambo (2005) pregnancy related depression among teenagers was found to occur from the immediate social context due to relational ruptures with parents or guardian, father of the baby, stigmatising and abusive situations in the immediate family and community at large. To help such socially constructed depression, Miller et al (2008) recommended the use of interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) whereby the immediate publics of the pregnant adolescent are counselled, so as to restore good relations and deconstruct stigmatising attitudes and practices between them and the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. In my study, apart from the pregnant and former pregnant learners themselves, their parents, classmates and teachers were included as research informants. This aimed at assisting me to gather attitudinal data that could reveal why pregnant and former pregnant learners behave as they do.

A project report from a survey carried out in the USA schools in the district of Illinois came up with a comprehensive overview of some major challenges faced by pregnant and

former pregnant learners (Weigand, 2005). According to the report, which concurs with findings made by Mensch et al. (2001), lack of pregnant friendly schools that provide a hospitable learning environment could result in 30% to 50% of the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers dropping out of school. As a result, it was noticed that pregnant and former pregnant learners did not seek counselling and guidance services from school personnel, even if such services were available in the school.

Circumstances surrounding pregnancy have been found to haunt and emotionally unsettle the pregnantee in some cases. Statistical data from a USA survey indicated that over 50% of the pregnant teens had been sexually abused, 20% remained sexually abused and 10% were physically abused (Weigand, 2005). This finding corroborated with research carried out in most African societies where, because of gender violence, sexual intercourse is usually a forced experience upon women even in marriage. This was found to be usually perpetrated by male partners who are usually older than the female victims (Rosenburg, 2002; Kaufman, deWet & Adler, 2001; Hof & Richters, 1999; Mgalla, Schapink & Boerma, 1998).

The importance of these findings for my study is that, although I did not investigate the pregnant and parenting participants' personal lives, they provide broad perspectives of looking at what pregnant and former pregnant learners go through in their out-of-school lives. Furthermore, while abused in their private lives, some of the pregnant and former pregnant learners could encounter informal discrimination in school, even if they are protected by official legal instruments like Title IX, schoolgirl pregnancy management policies, now almost formulated and instituted in almost every African country (Manzini, 2001; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chilisa, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Weigand, 2005). This is why in my study, instead of just focusing on the official schoolgirl pregnancy white paper policy, I chose to investigate the experiences and perceptions of pregnant and former pregnant learners, their peers, parents and teachers within the school system, the home and the community.

A number of studies have revealed some of the barriers to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' education completion and achievement, which if redressed could change their life chances. These include inadequate child care and health services, displacement from home, inadequate transportation system between school and child care centres, inflexible school timetables and policies on absenteeism, social discomfort at school, spousal pressure to drop from school and seek full-time employment for the baby, insufficient financial and material resources for baby care and school fees, and negative societal and school attitudes (Weigand, 2005; Ahn, 1994; Miller et al., 2008; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hubbard, et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). All these problems are in most cases compounded by the fact that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been found to be one of the marginalised groups that has not yet gained power for self-advocacy on their own concerns (Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Weigand, 2005). These challenges should be considered when coming up with both policy frameworks and implementation strategies on education programmes that seek to accommodate or mainstream the needs and concerns of pregnant and parent teens. My study, therefore, also investigated the manner and extent to which these concerns are addressed at the two schools where the case study was conducted.

## **2.6 Social factors to pregnant teenagers' school participation**

On the surface, it is generally assumed that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are major causes of girls' decision to drop out of school (Gordon, 1997, 2002; Manzini, 2001). However, latest research findings indicate that it is the socio-economic, gender inequalities, poor school environment and performance, which result in pregnant and former pregnant teenagers dropping out of school (Grant & Hallman, 2005; McGaha-Garnett: 2007; Mokgalabone, 1996; Ahn, 1994; Hof & Richters, 1999). In this regard, and with reference to the findings from a South African study, Grant & Hallman (2006) revealed that:

Rather than pregnancy causing girls to drop out, the lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and the domestic demands placed on them, coupled with the gender inequalities of the education system, may result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic



performance, and acquiescence in or endorsement of early motherhood (p. 5).

In Grant and Hallman's view, it was the pre-pregnant socio-economic environment and poor school performance which caused schoolgirl pregnancy and consequently influenced the pregnant student's decision drop out. McGaha-Garnett (2007) concurs with Grant and Hallman (2006) and adds that, "Prior to having a child, many teenage mothers struggle with poor academic achievement" (p. 4). This is further supported by Seamark and Lings (2004) and Hof and Richters (1999), who found that most teen girls who were pregnant and parenting had in fact first dropped out of school before their pregnancy. Most pregnant or former pregnant teenagers that dropped out of school were found to have a pre-pregnancy school history of grade repetition, temporary withdrawals, poor attendance, poor class participation and achievement and disruptive behaviour (Mokgalabone, 1996; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Seamark & Lings, 2004; McGaha-Barnett, 2007; McGee & Blank 1989). To find out the extent to which this research observation could also apply to my study, each participating pregnant or parenting school-girl's records of attendance, school performance and curricula participation were examined for the period before and after pregnancy.

Besides the poor academic performance of the pregnant learners themselves, poor social support systems within both the school and the home can also be one reason why some pregnant girls chose to dropout from school. Students who felt rejected at school were found to develop low self-esteem, lack motivation to learn and higher likelihood of dropping out of school even before getting pregnant (Mensch, Clark, Lloyd & Erulkar, 2001; McGee & Blank, 1989; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; McGaha-Barnett 2007; Brindis & Philliber, 1998). In this respect, Brindis and Philliber (1998) observed that in the USA school policies and the attitudes expressed by administrators and teachers are primarily responsible for pregnant students leaving school. This is why in my study, the mere existence of positive schoolgirl pregnancy management policies or admission of pregnant learners, is not the central issue of the study. Instead, it is the perceptions and treatment of

pregnant or former pregnant learners aimed at helping them to fulfil their educational needs and aspirations which need scrutiny.

With regard to challenges brought about by early motherhood on school attendance, there are indications from research that lack of parental or spousal support is one determinant variable which determines whether a pregnant or former pregnant learner continues with her education or drops out of school (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; McGraha-Garnett, 2007; Madhavan & Thomas, 2005; Marsh & Wirick, 1991; Warrick et al., 1993). In a study conducted in the USA, Warrick et al. (1993) found that male partners in most cases were jealous of their young female partners being at school where they could get into contact with other younger men. McGrath-Garnett (2007) on the same note found that, “Adolescent mothers who dropped out evidenced greater distance in their involvement with their parents” (p. 109). Such learners reported less trust of home environment, nuclear understanding of their parents’ expectations and disbelief that their parents still trusted them after pregnancy. This was found to be especially so for parents who took too long to accept the new condition of their daughter, to the extent that they would not give maximum financial, material and childcare support for the girl to adequately meet school attendance requirements (Madhavan & Thomas, 2005; Grant & Halman, 2006; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; McGee & Blank, 1989; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Meekers and Ahmed (1999), therefore, concluded that:

Because school attendance, like labour force participation, may not be compatible with raising a child, doing so at a very young age is likely to be more of a problem to girls who want to continue their education (p. 196).

The value of family support in this regard, cannot be overemphasised.

Pregnancy takes place within a socio-cultural context, which McDade (1992) calls “social pregnancy” (p. 50). This is when society makes a distinction is made between a normal and a teen pregnant girl who has violated the social rituals by becoming pregnant. This could raise conflict between cultural values on pregnancy and the pregnant teenager’s educational needs (Emihovich & Fromme, 1998). According to this view teachers, other

learners and parents might hold certain culturally informed scripts about women sexuality and marriage, which could contradict the provision of formalised school services to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. For example, a study in Botswana revealed that a breastfeeding mother is viewed as too ‘unclean’ to mix with the public and, therefore, should be excluded from schooling (Chilisa, 2002). This creates a limitation to young mothers’ rights to education. Burdell (1996) also posits that there are cultural and social discourses that construct in pregnant teens, limitations on their capacity for autonomous decision-making and participation in the public domain.

Research findings by Miller et al. (2008), Jackson and Abosi (2007), and Richter and Mlambo (2005) all concur that teenage pregnant girls had higher depression and stress due to pregnancy than adult pregnant women. Miller et al. (2008) cite maternal conflict, paternal rejection, conflict and relational ruptures with the baby’s father as major sources of pregnant adolescents’ depressive conditions. Early motherhood can be marked by sudden change in social roles and expectations, such as premature limitations to freedom, unexpected high responsibility, and sudden social-emotional dislocation from peers and forging new alliances with older experienced mothers. All these are changes and societal expectations that the teen mother faces, as she tries to satisfy her educational aspirations. These were found to cause identity diffusion and confusion among teen mothers (McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

A conflict between school requirements and societal expectation could ruin the educational aspirations of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers because:

The daily social relations of high school women (relations involving family, church, media, and street life), which inform their ideas about identity, are not sliced out of their lives while at school (Burdell, 1996, p.181).

For example, in some more conservative cultural groups, parents can withdraw social and material support to a former pregnant daughter who is not married (Geronimus, 2004). The problems faced by teenage mothers need interventions that have broader social considerations. Emihovich and Fromme (1998) propose that:

...the problems teen parents present for school and society cannot be adequately addressed without an understanding of the cultural and social frames that have led to their prominence in society (p.140).

These views imply that pregnancy is socially defined, and that there are underlying socio-cultural factors that could implicitly influence how education stakeholders perceive and treat pregnant and former pregnant learners. These are some of the issues that I also investigated as I explored how pregnant learners were perceived and treated in the school, the home and the family.

## **2.7 Considerations for intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers**

After an evaluation of 16 American schools that had intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenage students, Brindis and Philliber (1998) made recommendations for consideration for intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. Based on the observations made from the different types of programmes that were evaluated, it would seem that sensitivity to individual needs and circumstances should be the key determinant factor for the type of services should be provided.

Brindis and Philliber (1998) recommend four factors for consideration when designing intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant students (see Figure 2.1).

*Client characteristics:* It should be acknowledged that the population of pregnant and former pregnant learners is usually heterogeneous in terms of age, social status and motivation to learn. This call for schools that mainstream pregnant learners to create flexible attendance policies that can enable them to achieve their goals at their individual paces.

*Intended service delivery:* Services to be provided should vary and be comprehensive to match individuals in the targeted population. The success of this relies on the appropriateness of staff skills, political will to give both home-based and centralised

services, and preparedness to develop good rapport with their clients. Brindis and Philliber (1998) emphasise that:

...personnel should be assessed in terms of their training and previous work experience, their rapport with clients, their expectations for clients, and how comfortable they are in delivering all the services needed by the young parents (p.256).

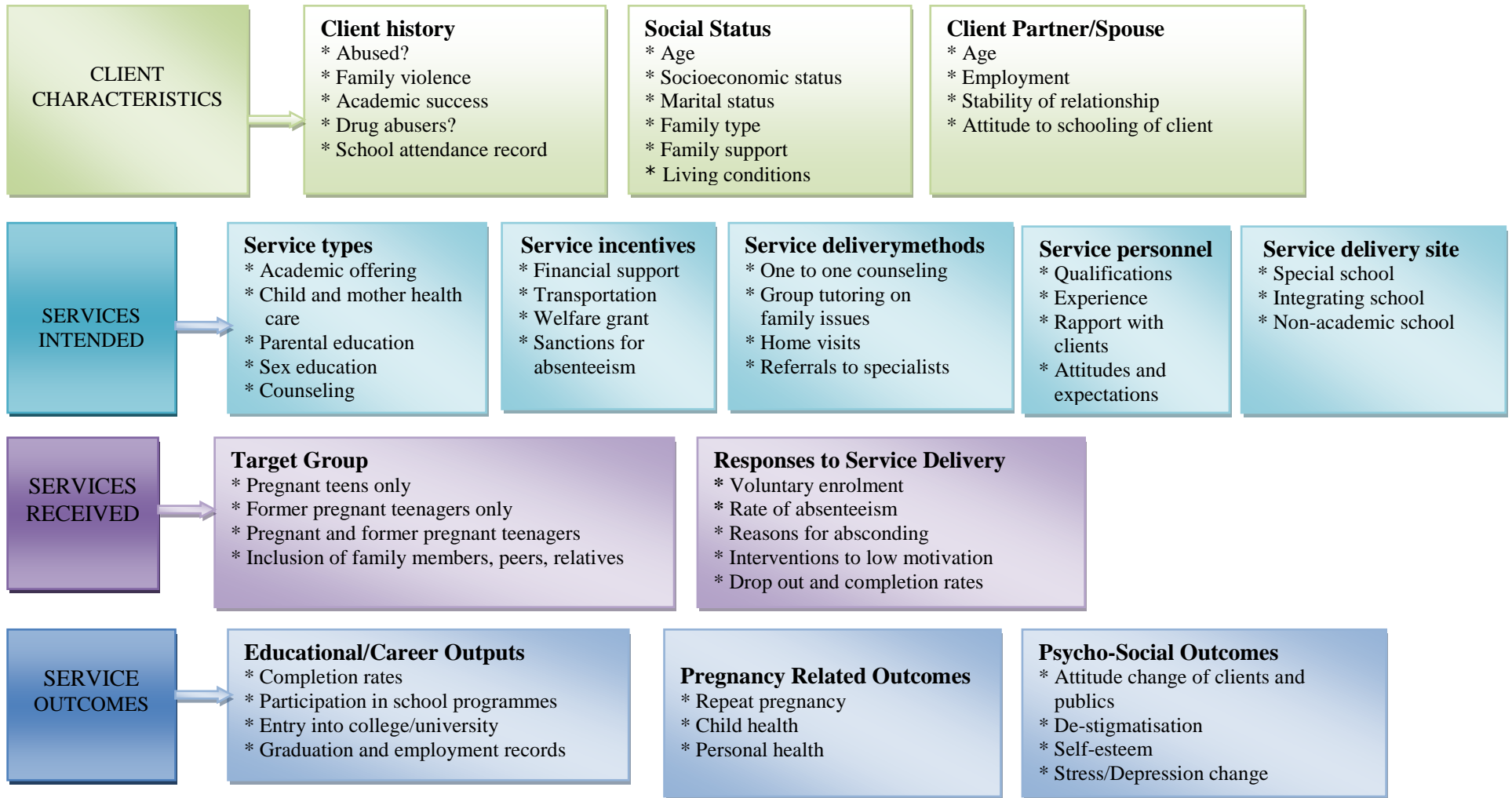
Such training could be applied to assist clients develop cordial relationships with their significant others like parents, siblings, other learners, spouses and community members. All these people can affect the pregnant and former pregnant learners' attitude to schooling and life in general.

*Services received:* There is need to assess and take note of services that the clients are comfortable and uncomfortable with. Reasons why some of the clients are not keen to accept services provided should be investigated, taking into consideration that pregnant teens require additional support. For example, absenteeism should not be taken for granted to mean lack of interest in school. Causes should be investigated in and out of school settings. The curriculum should cater for academic, career development and family life skills.

*Service outcomes:* Each service provided to the pregnant teens should be periodically evaluated against individual contexts and needs. A statistical data base on school completion, performance and employment rates of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers should be developed

In support of the view that a broad approach which is sensitive to individual circumstances of each pregnant and former pregnant teenagers should be applied for service provision, Emihovich and Fromme (1998) add that teen pregnancy is more than a health issue and, that there is need for a multifaceted approach in responding to the various needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for designing intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Brindis & Philliber, 1998).**



## **2.8 An overview of findings from reviewed literature on teenage pregnancy and education**

To illustrate the value of the literature study which was undertaken, I conclude this chapter by presenting a summary of theoretical perceptions and research findings.

Available research findings from both the distant and recent past indicate that teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood are a social problem in both developed and developing societies (Ladner, 1987; Weiner, 1987; UICEF, 2008). Among the industrialised countries, the USA has the highest teenage pregnancy rate; the UK has the highest rate in Western Europe, while South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have the highest number of teenagers who get married (UNICEF, 2008; Darrick, Singh & Frost, 2001; Hawkes, 2004; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Mcgaha-Ganett, 2007). Teenage pregnancy, therefore, poses a challenge for the educational access and participation of girls, especially in developing countries where there are no adequate intervention educational provisions.

Due to agitation from feminist researchers and scholars at different UN forums, the right to education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers began to filter into international conventions during the 1976 - 1985 UN decade on women (Stromquist, 1997, 2005; Submaharanian, 2005; Leach, 2000). To date, many UN member states, including South Africa and Zimbabwe where this study was conducted, have instituted specific policies that prohibit the expulsion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from school (DoE, 2007; MoESC Minute Circular, P35, 1999; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Mitchell, et al., 1999). However, studies conducted in Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Malawi revealed that there were inconsistencies in the manner in which education officials within the same country interpreted national education policies. Contrary to stated policy, some pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were denied school admission (Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hyde, 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Manzini, 2001; Hubbard, et al., 2008).

Most recent research findings indicate that while pregnancy is one major cause of dropping out of school and low education completion rates among women, it is the pre-pregnancy conditions that were found the most common cause of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' decision to either continue or drop out of school (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Gordon, 2002; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; McGaha-Garnnet, 2007; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Mensch et al., 2001; Zellman, 1982:15; Hof & Richters, 1999). In this regard, lack of interest in schooling, poor academic performance, poor school attendance, and poor girl-friendly school environment, were found to be some of the factors which pushed pregnant teenagers out of school.

Because of the enactment of constitutional, legal and policy provisions on continued and re-enrolment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in schools and colleges, a number of education programmes that cater for these students are now available in many countries, especially the developed nations, like the USA, Canada and the UK. Most of the programmes aim to reduce repeat pregnancy and low education completion rates among former pregnant teenagers (McGee & Blank, 1989; Roosa, 1989; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). In the USA where 'Second Chance Clubs' and 'New Feature Schools' were established to cater for the pre-natal and post-natal health, psychological, emotional and educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners, there was reduction in repeat pregnancies, as well as better school and college completion rates for the participating girls compared to their non-participating counterparts (Weiner, 1987; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). However, due to negative and conservative discourses found among the community, teachers and school administrators, some of the programmes have been found to exist only as a structural requirement of policies that prohibit expulsion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Weatherly et al., 1985; Burdell, 1996; Zellman, 1981; Montessori & Blixen, 1996). To this end, the educational experiences and outcomes intended for the beneficiaries were found to be on the negative side.

Most research studies on education programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been conducted in the USA, where they have been in place for a while. By contrast, most studies in Africa focus on the nature, strengths and weaknesses of



policies that aim to extend educational rights to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard, et al., 2008). Furthermore, most of the studies conducted in Africa have tended to focus on school dropouts in relation to teen pregnancy than pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who are in the system. With reference to South Africa, Grant and Hallman (2006:4) observed that “Few studies examine the direct association between continued school enrolment and adolescent pregnancy”. My study should fill these identified gaps in research since I investigated how formal schools are responding to the inclusion of pregnant learners within African socio-cultural settings.

## **2.9 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the views and research findings from books, related research articles and policy documents on issues that surround the provision of education to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. The provisions of international conventions and declarations that uphold every child’s right to education, which both South Africa and Zimbabwe ratified, were outlined and discussed in relation to their implications on the education of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. A review and analysis of different constitutional and policy provisions that have implications for the provision of formal education to pregnant and former pregnant adolescents was undertaken. The larger part of the chapter discussed related research studies on education programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in various countries. This included socio-cultural perceptions that could influence the provision of education to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, the nature, strengths and weaknesses of different education policies and programmes that cater for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. A section on considerations to be made when planning to implement education programmes that accommodate pregnant and former pregnant teenagers was also presented.

In chapter three, I present and discuss the theoretical framework that informed how I conceptualised and analysed the data obtained from the study. Since I sought to

investigate how the treatment of pregnant and former pregnant learners by different stakeholders could affect their educability, Argyris and Schon's action science theory, which explains the relationship between human behaviour (theory-in-use) and policy (espoused theory-of-action) (Argyris & Schon, 1974) is outlined and discussed in the next chapter. The theory has particular relevance to my study since I investigated the social factors in the school, the home and the community that could influence attitudes towards and implementation of the official policy on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### POSITIONING THE STUDY IN ACTION SCIENCE THEORY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the conceptual and empirical studies on the democratisation of education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. These studies focused on the international, South African and Zimbabwean policy landscapes. I explored existing knowledge and research conducted in developed and developing nations. Particular attention was given to studies conducted in South Africa and Zimbabwe from where the two cases for the study were drawn. From this, I positioned my study in terms of the value it adds to the identified knowledge gaps. In this third chapter of the study, I outline, discuss and justify the theoretical framework that informed my conceptualisation of this research study.

According to Camp (2001), "...the theoretical framework of a study is really the researcher's pre-conceived conceptual perspective" (p.16). No researcher, even in qualitative research where there may not be a hypothesis to prove, would begin a study without any assumptions. Such assumptions or pre-conceptions should, however, be informed by a theory or a theoretical framework (Marriam, 1998; Camp, 2001; Radhakrishna, Yoder & Ewing, 2007). A theoretical framework guides the researcher in giving meaning to every stage and the related aspects of the study. It gives the big picture of the study, rational explanation of the relationships in related factors of the study, directs study objectives, data gathering and research findings. Studies that seek to explore and explain a phenomenon should be positioned within a relevant theoretical perspective (Marriam, 1998; Camp, 2001; Radhakrishna, Yoder & Ewing, 2007; Best & Kahn, 1993; Vithal & Jansen, 2003).

In this study, since I sought to explain how formal schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners, I chose Argyris and Schon's theory-of-

action. The theory helped me to understand the attitudes of study participants towards school girl pregnancy policy and their treatment of pregnant learners within the school, the home and the community settings. Argyris and Schon's theory-of-action is useful in the interpretation of human actions or theories-in-use (practice) in relation to espoused theories-of-action (policy). In this chapter, I therefore, explain how Argyris and Schon's theory-of-action or action science theory was found relevant and applicable for the interpretation of the issues that I sought to examine on the topic under study.

### **3.2 Choosing the theoretical framework**

The major question that my study sought to investigate was how education stakeholders conceptualised and perceived national policies on management of schoolgirl pregnancy, as well as their attitudes and treatment of pregnant learners within a formal school setting. I also sought to explore how the attitudes towards and treatment of pregnant teenagers in the school, the home and the community could affect such learners' resilience to cope with schooling. In conducting the study, I took cognisance of the fact that both South Africa and Zimbabwe, where the two cases for the study were drawn, had policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Minute Policy Circular, P35, 1999).

However, while such policy frameworks are congruent with international standards on education as a fundamental human right and the goal of gender equity in education, I based my study on the assumption that the social, cultural and lived experiences of the participants could influence policy implementation. My study therefore was premised on the phenomenological, social constructivist and interpretivist epistemological paradigm to knowledge generation, which posits that human action, is constituted by meanings which are socially and culturally constructed (Tierney, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Berger & Luckman, 1974).

According to this view, the historical and social situations into which individual members of social groups find themselves, as well as their belief systems, guide their perceptions,

attitudes, actions and understanding of their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Tierney, 1996; Berger & Luckman, 1974). Since I sought to investigate and understand, the meanings of the study participants on the policy of mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in the formal school system, my study was informed by Argyris and Schon's action science theory or theory-of-action which among other views posits that there is usually a split between the espoused organisational policy and practice (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982). I therefore did not take it for granted that just because there were official policy guidelines on mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant learners at both schools where the study was conducted, the stakeholders at schools had a uniform approach to policy implementation. Rather, because of the interpretive approach to knowledge generation, I approached data gathering, interpretation and analysis on the premise that there are multiple meanings and realities, which originate from people's socio-cultural historical existence.

### **3.3 Positioning the study into Argyris and Schon's theory-of-action**

According to Argyris and Schon (1974), theory-of-action or action science is a subject of professionals like teachers, police, social workers and psychiatrists, who study the relationship between thought and action or theory and practice in human behaviour. Argyris and Schon posit that the consequences of human behaviour can mostly be understood, explained and even predicted, if human action is studied in the context of a given situation. They provide a simple equation for social action: If a person wants to achieve a certain consequence (*c*) one should act (*a*) in a certain manner within a given situation (*s*):  $(s + a = c)$ . They, however, warn that the formula of their theory-of-action should not be taken in a positivist manner because different people act in a given situation on the basis of the meanings they give to the situation. In this regard, they accept that while a person's theory-of-action makes behaviour normative as a theory of social control due to the cultural world, human behaviour still remains subjective but at the same time predictable in given socio-cultural contexts. Human action is, therefore, attributed to

some mental consciousness or theory, which Argyris and Schon call a theory-of-action. In their theoretical proposition Argyris and Schon (1974) posit that:

A theory-of-action is a theory of deliberate human behaviour which is for the agent a theory of control but which when attributed to the agent, also serves to explain or predict the behaviour (p.6).

Given that I sought to investigate and explain the basis of the responses of education stakeholders to the educational needs of pregnant teenagers within their socio-cultural institutions like the school, the home and the community, I chose to approach my research from the social action or action science theoretical perspective (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). I found this theory relevant for my study because I assumed that the actions of formal school stakeholders like teachers, mainstream learners and parents might not be only informed by the official policy directives on management of school girl pregnancy in schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC Minute Policy Circular, 1999). They could also be influenced by the beliefs, norms, values and expectations on pregnancy which are socially constructed over a period of time.

Al-Kazemi and Zajac (1999) argued that there are always two faces to organisational behaviour. On the one hand, there is what they call the “statements of moral principles” or “organisational codes of ethics”, which represent the official policy or moral ideal (p.353). This is what Argyris and Schon would equate to an espoused theory-of-action. On the other hand, Al-Kazemi and Zajac see the moral reality of an organisation as how management and employees actually act on the ground. To Argyris and Schon, this is the organisation’s theory-in-use (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985).

Therefore, guided by such empirical validation of Argyris and Schon’s action science theory or theory-of-action, I conducted my study being cognisant of the notion that formal schools’ implementation of policies on mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers could be affected by the stakeholders’ historical and socio-cultural

existence. My data gathering instruments were, therefore, structured to explore this phenomenon from the sampled respondents.

### **3.4 Argyris and Schon's action science theory**

As already alluded to in the previous section, there are two components to Argyris and Schon's conception of theory-of-action, which implies a split between theory (policy) and action (practice) (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Smith, 2001). Anderson (1997) makes this distinction in terms of what people say or the "ideal self" and what they actually do or the "actual self" (p.1). In the following sections, I therefore, outline Argyris and Schon's action science theory and discuss how I applied it to conceptualise my study.

#### **3.4.1 The espoused theories-of-action and theories-in-use**

In their definition of espoused theory-of-action and theory-in-use, Argyris and Schon (1974) provide a clear distinction between the two theories-of-action:

When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory-of-action for that situation. This is the theory-of-action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory (p.6-7).

Therefore, the theory-in-use is the overt behaviour, which is observed from how people act. Theories-in-use are socially constructed or learnt early in life from one's immediate publics (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). To this end, people within the same cultural group are more likely to have similar theories-in-use. This is observed by Argyris and Schon (1974), that "versions of the same model of theories-in-use result from similar upbringing within a culture" (p.11).

This proposition has an important implication for my study because I sought to investigate how the study participants' cultural contextualities influenced their perceptions of both the school girl pregnancy policy and the pregnant or teenage mothers who chose to continue with their education. This is in view of the premise that one's theory-in-use determines and shapes one's perceptions of the behavioural world and actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Furthermore, if theories-in-use are socially learnt, this implies that people have the capacity to de-construct poor theories-in-use and replace them with more acceptable theories-in-use. This means that if a person holds negative attitudes towards pregnant and former pregnant learners, there is room for positive change through a learning process. The implication of this for my study is that, the adoption and implementation of the policy guidelines on inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education should encompass a learning process that rationalises the policies, in order to replace any negative traditional practices and values on pregnant learners from education stakeholders. I therefore, argue that it is not enough to ratify international conventions on gender equity and design policy measures that aim to uphold pregnant and former pregnant teenagers' right to education. The policies should be accompanied by a paradigm shift from any negative governing values, which social actors in schools might hold towards pregnant girls who choose to pursue their educational aspirations through the formal school system.

Based on their action science theory and with specific reference to the process of implementing curriculum change, Argyris & Schon (1974) observe that:

Originally, most of the schemes for changing the curriculum assumed that a clear, rational picture, effectively presented, to individual teachers would result in the programmes' acceptance. Ignored were the feelings, attitudes, values that had developed around the old curriculum, the group norms that protected them, and the bureaucratic arrangements that had evolved over the years to protect individual feelings and values as well as the group norms (p. 175).

Therefore, it does not matter how rationally sound a policy may appear in addressing the problem at hand. It will only be practically relevant and applicable if it considers the lived experiences of the intended beneficiaries and people who could influence policy



implementation, that is, the policy duty bearers (UNICEF, 2003a). In this study, pregnant learners are the policy rights bearers, while educators, parents and school administration are the policy duty bearers.

In this regard, I believe that the democratisation of education for the pregnant and former pregnant learners, though important, is not in itself adequate without the inculcation of positive values towards pregnant learners among education stakeholders. Argyris and Schon (1974) posit that people can re-examine or reflect on their theories-in-use, in order to change them since “the formation or modification of a theory-in-use is itself a learning process” (p.18). In the next section of this chapter, I therefore, discuss how people can learn new theories-in-use and the implications this understanding means to my study.

The espoused theory-of-action is what a person believes in but does not implement in his/her actions. However, people justify their behaviour in given situations by referring to the espoused theory-of-action because it is more reasonable and acceptable to human standards. Anderson (1997) holds the view that the espoused theory and theory-in-use signify the split between policy and practice. Within an organisational setting, the major objective of action science theorists is to promote the implementation of professionals’ espoused theory because “it is desirable to hold an espoused theory and a theory-in-use that tend to become congruent over [sic] the long run” (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p.24). Implementing the espoused theory-of-action is like implementing the organisation’s policy, which Al-Kazemi and Zajac (1999) call the “organizational ethics code” or the “espoused moral theory of the organization” (p.353). This theoretical proposition was important for my study because one of my research questions sought to investigate factors that militated against the implementation of the policy regulations on the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers at the two schools where the study was conducted. From a study that tested the importance of congruence between an organisation’s espoused theory and its theory-in-use, Al-Kazemi and Zajac (1999) concluded that “the degree of congruence between an organization’s espoused moral theory and its theory-in-use does serve as one indication of its integrity and health” (p.354). For my study, therefore, participants’ attitudes towards the policy that direct

formal schools to mainstream learners who may fall pregnant while at school, was one of the research questions that I investigated. The reason I included this aspect in the research is that stakeholders' attitudes towards policy has a bearing on their political will to implement policy change (Fink & Stoll, 1998). For without that political will and implementation strategies, change could remain an illusion or a form of political symbolism (Jansen, 2001, 2002; Hess, 1999).

### **3.4.2 Learning new theories-of-action and theories-in-use**

Both the espoused theories-of-action and theories-in-use are not static, but can be modified and new ones can be acquired during the process of interaction (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schon, 1990; Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Crossan, 1993). In fact, the theory-of-action perspective is an interventionist theory. The main purpose of the theory is to detect and correct human error in organisational behaviour (Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). In conducting this study, I began with an assumption that some education stakeholders in the school, the family and the community could hold negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, especially if it occurs outside marriage (Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002). My study, therefore, investigated social factors that could militate against positive attitudes towards learners, who choose to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy. I therefore, positioned my study into the action science theoretical framework since learning positive attitudes involves learning new or modifying existing theories-in-use. Furthermore, I viewed the official policy guidelines on school girl pregnancy in both South African and Zimbabwean schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Minute Policy Circular, P35, 1999) as the espoused theories-of-action or organisational moral codes which needed to be debated and rationalised for the benefit of the pregnant and former pregnant learners. In this regard, Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) justify such a process and propose that:

The action scientist is an interventionist, seeking not only to describe the world but to change it ... to help members of the client systems reflect on the world they create and learn to change it in ways more congruent with the values and theories they espouse (p. 98).

Theory-of-action scientists posit that people should reflect-on their actions, in order to learn new theories-of-action and modify or change their theories-of-action, particularly their theories-in-use. Schon (1982) uses the terms “reflection-in-action” and “knowing-in-action” to refer to how people re-examine their actions (p. 50). Argyris (1976) adds that:

...learning to become aware of one’s present theory-in-use and then altering it ... requires that individuals question the theories-of-action that have formed the framework for their actions (p.370).

The process of reflecting on and learning new or modifying existing theories-in-use which constitute behavioural change, involves what Argyris and Schon define as single-loop and double-loop learning (Argyris, 1976; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Smith, 2001; Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1990).

### **3.4.3 Single-loop and double-loop learning of new theories-in-use**

According to Argyris and Schon’s action science theory, there are two ways in which people acquire their theories-in-use, namely single-loop and double-loop learning. Argyris (1990) adds that, “Single-loop learning solves the presenting problems. It does not solve the more basic problem of why these problems existed in the first place” (p.92). Such a process is like a thermostat which only reacts to the water temperature by just switching electricity on and off without doing anything to what causes water temperature. In other words, a single-loop learner may only use new actions to solve a problem without doing anything to the value system or governing variables that could be the root of the problem. What this theoretical explanation implies to my study is that putting in place official policy guidelines on management of pregnancy in schools without attending to the social and cultural values may not be a lasting solution to problems that pregnant and former pregnant learners face in formal education. This is why I sought to investigate the link between official school policies on mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools, and society’s values on teenage pregnancy. It is such values that inform stakeholders’ attitudes towards school girl pregnancy policy or treatment of pregnant learners.

Double-loop learning on the other hand, is whereby a person changes both the governing variables or value system and the actions, in order to achieve new consequences or desired results. This addresses both the problem and its causes, Argyris (1990) therefore, advises that:

...errors cannot be corrected simply by designing new actions. To correct these actions, we must first alter the governing values. This means we have to learn a new theory-in-use. This is double-loop learning (p. 94).

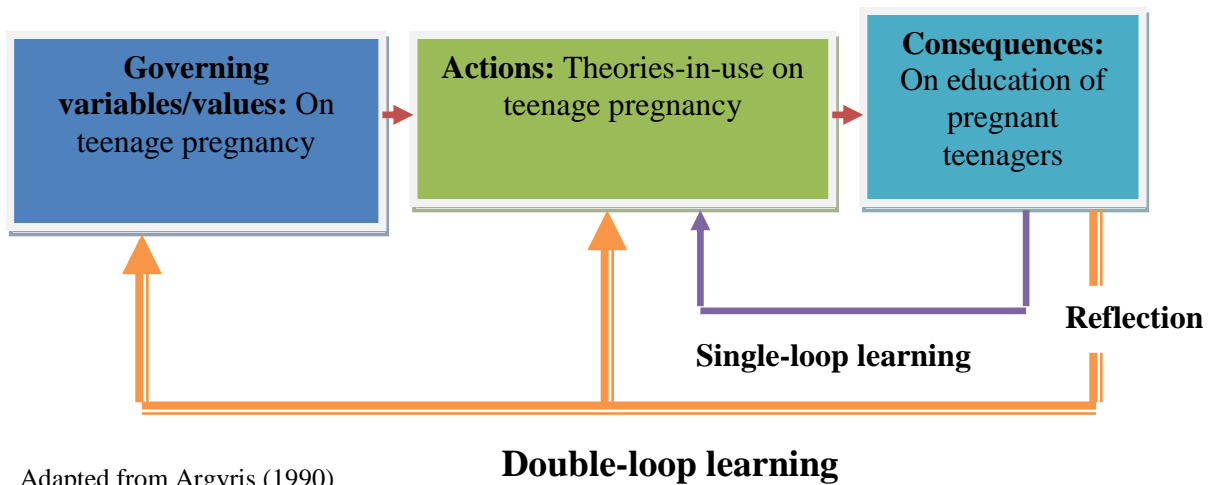
Double-loop learning means that a person develops productive reasoning; reflects on what has been taken for granted and changes social virtues. Anderson (1997) further explains the difference between single-loop and double-loop learning by citing Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974) who argue that:

First Order Change exists when the norms of the system remain the same and changes are made within the existing norms. Second Order Change describes a situation where the norms of the system themselves are challenged and changed (p.7).

To this end, I argue that policy change that does not inform people to also change their values, norms and traditions is most likely to maintain levels of rigidity, defensiveness and the status quo. What this means to my study is that, effective implementation of the policy guidelines on mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education could be achieved if teachers, mainstream learners, pregnant and former pregnant learners, and the school community are helped to learn and acquire positive attitudes and values towards teenage pregnancy within the school and the family settings, and in the context of every child's right to education.

Figure 3.1 summarises how the two types of learning could be influenced by one's social and cultural background, which Argyris and Schon call governing variables or cultural values (Argyris, 1990; Anderson, 1997; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Smith, 2001).

**Figure 3.1: Single-loop and double-loop learning modes**



Adapted from Argyris (1990)

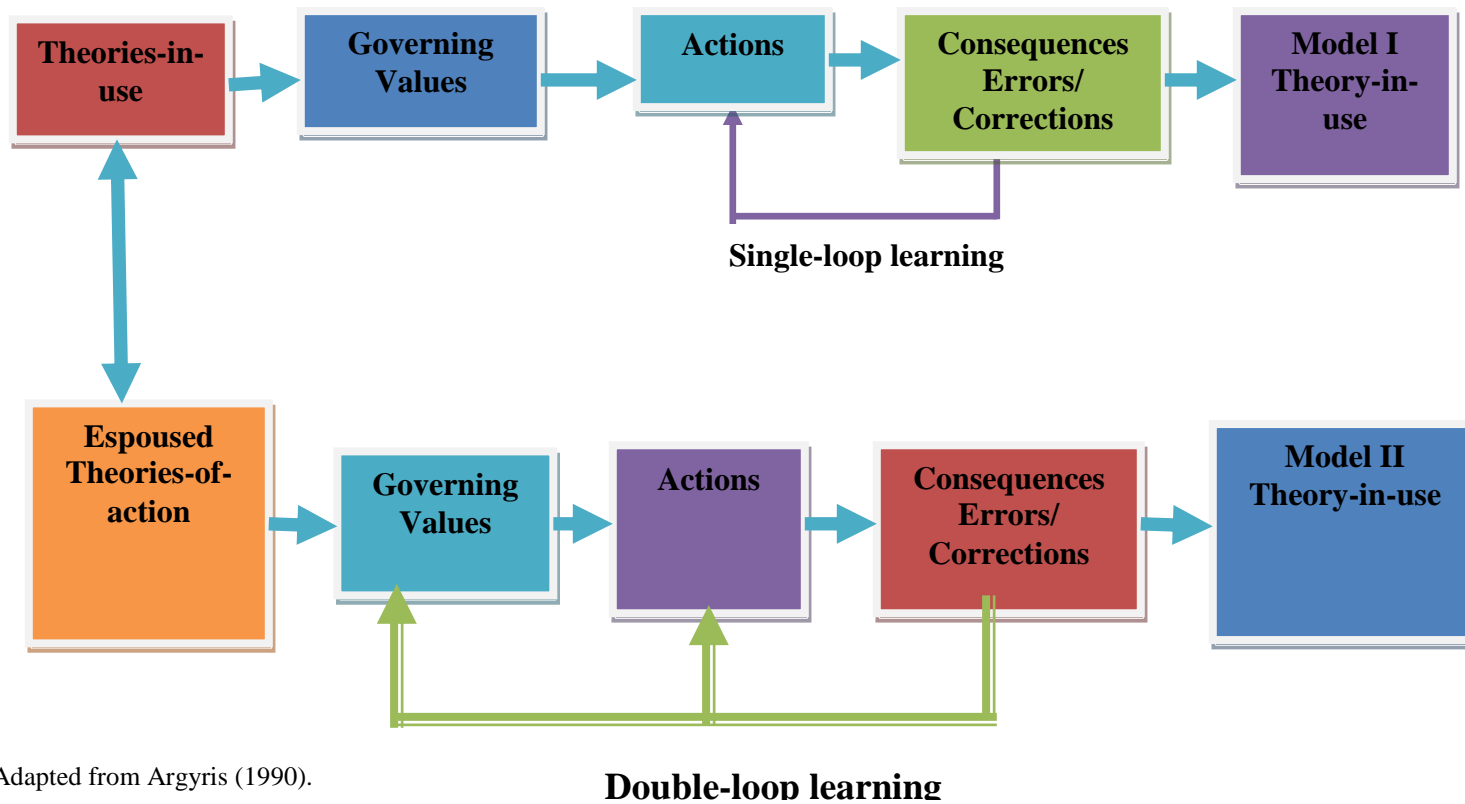
### 3.5 Model I and Model II theories-in-use

The changes in behavioural actions that result from single-loop and double-loop learning are reflected in what Argyris and Schon define as Model I and Model II theories-in-use respectively (Argyris, 1990; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985).

Just as every individual has both theories-in-use and espoused theories-of-action, equally so, both single-loop learning and double-loop learning occurs within each individual. This means that all people have varying degrees of behavioural actions that reflect both Model I and Model II theories-in-use. However, research has indicated that most people generally operate at the Model I theories-in-use, which are learnt early in life and are characterised by inhibited reflection and critique of one’s actions and governing values. Such characteristics are consistent with and are a result of single-loop learning. Argyris (1990) observes that “Human beings cannot learn Model II without a lot of support from the society in which they live. The support comes from the social virtues” (p.19). Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) add that “people have been socialized to produce Model I because the world continues to operate largely according to Model I” (p.102).

This being the case, therefore, the main objective of theory-of-action practitioners is to stimulate reflective processes in human actions, which can encourage double-loop learning and Model II theories-in-use. This objective is also stated by Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) who propose that, “The action scientist intends to produce action consistent with Model II” (p.98). In my study, I took this to mean that schools should help educators, mainstream learners and the community to critically reflect on, re-examine and critique their interaction with and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who choose to continue with their education at formal schools in line with their legitimate right to education. Figure 3.2 summarises the two models of theories-in-use, which can both exist within one individual.

**Figure 3.2: Congruence between Model I theories-in-use and single-loop learning, and Model II theories-in-use and double loop learning**



Adapted from Argyris (1990).

It is important to distinguish between the characteristics of Model I and Model II theories-in-use so as to realise the benefits of Model II mode of behaviour. The main differences between the two are summarised in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of Model I and Model II theories-in-use**

Model I theories-in-use/social virtues	Model II theories-in-use/social virtues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppression of all negative feelings.</li> <li>• Always acting to win not to lose.</li> <li>• Acting and controlling environment and others unilaterally.</li> <li>• Unjustified attributions and evaluations.</li> <li>• Advocating courses of action that discourage inquiry.</li> <li>• Taking one’s own views as obviously correct.</li> <li>• Making prompt attribution and evaluations.</li> <li>• Face-saving, leaving potentially embarrassing facts/situations unstated or dealt with.</li> <li>• Little public testing of ideas.</li> <li>• Reduced search for valid information.</li> <li>• Defensive, rigid and low freedom of choice.</li> <li>• Resistant to change.</li> <li>• Increased likelihood of single-loop-learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for valid information.</li> <li>• Making free and informed choices.</li> <li>• Flexible and willingness to share information.</li> <li>• High freedom of choice.</li> <li>• Encouraging public testing of attributions and evaluations.</li> <li>• Surfacing of conflicting views and accommodating others.</li> <li>• Increased rationalisation of one’s actions.</li> <li>• Increased self-introspection.</li> <li>• Taking care of what could distort situations and actions.</li> <li>• Saying what one know but would fear to say.</li> <li>• Explaining and exposing principles, values, and beliefs.</li> <li>• Accepting and creating alternative world view.</li> <li>• Increased capacity to face unsurfaced assumptions, biases, fears (openness).</li> <li>• Increased likelihood of double-loop learning.</li> </ul>

Adapted from Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985)

Because Model II values are more palatable with accommodation of social change and growth, I positioned my study within Argyris and Schon’s action science theoretical



perspective. This was because I sought to find out if participants of the study critiqued their interaction with and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who chose to continue with their education at formal schools. In other words, the recommendations from this study give emphasis to actions that encourage double-loop learning and Model II world mode, in which views and actions are rationally validated (Anderson, 1997; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, 1976; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

With reference to teaching and learning settings, Fleming and Rutherford (1986:266) applied the theory-of-action perspective to analyse classroom interaction processes. They found that Model II theories-in-use stimulated objective class discussions, more learner-participation, and better application of curriculum knowledge to reality, wider research and introspection of issues. Based on these findings, it is my contention therefore, that schools that mainstream pregnant and former pregnant teenagers need stakeholders, who critique themselves, others and society's value system and traditional practices on pregnancy might negatively affect educational access and provision. This is why Argyris and Schon's action science theoretical ideas on espoused theories-of-action, theories-in-use, single-loop and double-loop learning, Model I and Model II theories-in-use were applicable in informing my data gathering strategy (Chapter 4), as well as my conceptualisation of, and giving meaning to gathered data (Chapter 6).

### **3.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I outlined the theoretical framework that I used to conceptualise my study, namely Argyris and Schon's action science theory, which is particularly referred to as the theory-of-action or action science theory. Conceptualisation of the theory and some research findings seemed to indicate that human behaviour is influenced by two theories-of-action, namely the espoused theories-of-action and theories-in-use. Within an organisational setting, these two elements of human behaviour could mean that there is a split between policy and practice or what people should or claim to do and what they

actually do (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Smith, 2001; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Malen, et al., 2002; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

Since my study investigated the extent to which formal schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners, I premised my study on the assumption that although South Africa and Zimbabwe have democratic policy guidelines, which extend educational rights to girls who might fall pregnant while at school (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Minute Policy Circular, P35, 1999), not many benefits could be realised due to the negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy (Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2000). Informed by Argyris and Schon's theoretical view that there is usually a split between policy (espoused theories-of-action) and practice (theories-in-use), my study investigated and discussed how the participants' lived experiences might have influenced their perceptions towards and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal education.

With this in mind, I therefore proceed to the next chapter, where I outline and justify the meta-theoretical and methodological paradigms, research design, data gathering and data analysis strategies that I employed to achieve my study's objectives and research questions, namely to explore the relationship between pregnant and former pregnant learners, and other education stakeholders in the school, the home and the community.

## 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**

<b>PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS</b>	
<b>Epistemological paradigm</b>	Phenomenological, interpretivist, social constructivist approaches.
<b>Methodological paradigm</b>	Qualitative case study.
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	
Qualitative case study using interactive and non-interactive data gathering methods.	
<b>SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	
<b>Convenience sampling</b>	Selection of two schools that mainstream pregnant learners as information rich sites.
<b>Purposeful sampling</b>	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.
<b>DATA GENERATION</b>	
<b>Data collection techniques</b>	<b>Data documentation techniques</b>
Focus groups, key participant interviews, researcher reflections, documentary analysis.	Verbatim transcripts, research reflection diary and memos, school documents.
<b>DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>	
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.	
<b>QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY</b>	
Credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, authenticity	
<b>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
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)<sup>3</sup> 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)<sup>4</sup> on the interaction patterns that emerged during the interviews.

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<sup>3</sup> School Records on the population and school participation of pregnant and former pregnant learners

<sup>4</sup> 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)<sup>5</sup>. I then approached the circuit manager for permission to carry out research at the identified and selected school (Appendix 4)<sup>6</sup>.

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)<sup>7</sup> that I approached the Provincial Education Director (PED), who then referred me to the District Education Officer (DEO) of the school (Appendix 6)<sup>8</sup>, 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

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<sup>5</sup> District senior manager letter of permission to conduct research (South Africa)

<sup>6</sup> Circuit manager's letter of permission to conduct research (South Africa)

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

<sup>8</sup> 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)<sup>9</sup>.
- The main objective of this study is to explore the social factors that could influence the perceptions of education stakeholders on policy guidelines that

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<sup>9</sup> 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)<sup>10</sup>.
- 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.

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<sup>10</sup> 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 (Appendix11<sup>11</sup>), 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 (Appendix12<sup>12</sup>) 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).

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix 11: Example of Atlas ti free quotations

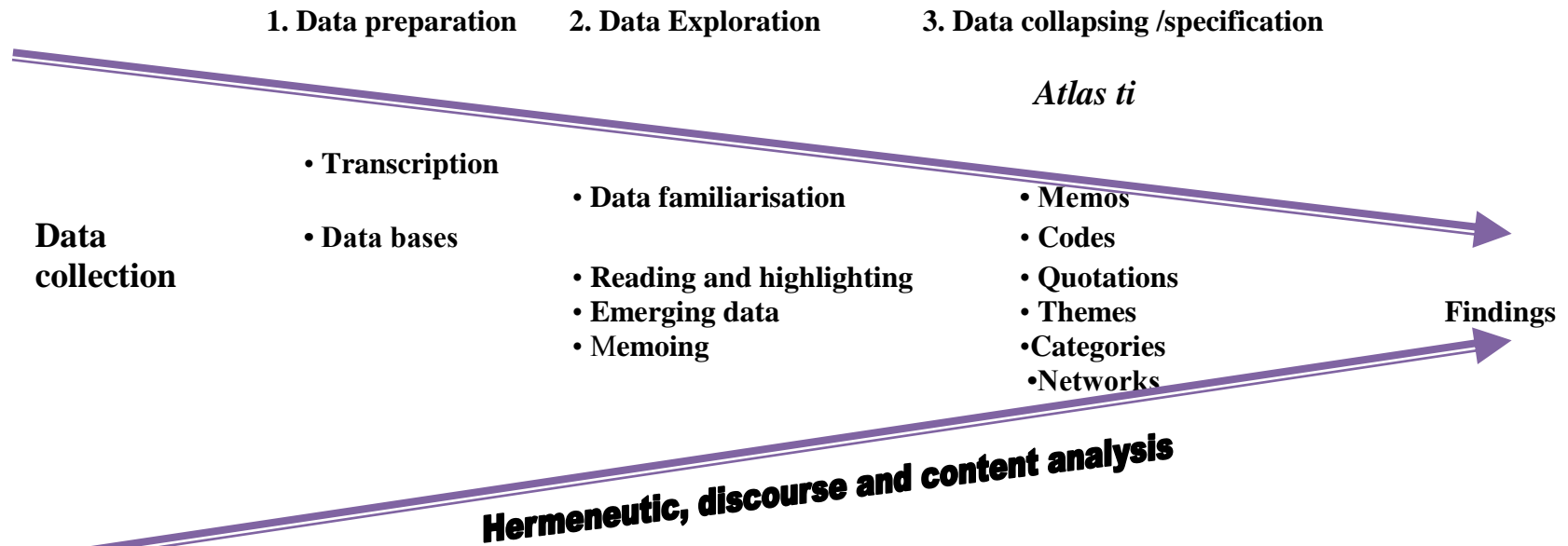
<sup>12</sup> Appendix 12: Example of data codes

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 9<sup>13</sup>) 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).

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<sup>13</sup> 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 12<sup>14</sup>)

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

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<sup>14</sup> 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 12<sup>15</sup>).

#### **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

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<sup>15</sup> 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 Committee<sup>16</sup>, 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

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<sup>16</sup> 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 forms<sup>17</sup>.

#### **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.

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<sup>17</sup> 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 13.1<sup>18</sup>). 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).

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Appendix 13.1:<sup>18</sup> 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 member<sup>1</sup> 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 Mbilwi<sup>19</sup>, do you think you will find any pregnant girl there? Or private schools where people with money send their

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<sup>19</sup>Mbilwi 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:

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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 Mujuru<sup>20</sup>, 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

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<sup>20</sup> 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

Literacy<sup>21</sup>, 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

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<sup>21</sup> 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 13.1<sup>22</sup>).

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

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<sup>22</sup> 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 13.1<sup>23</sup>).

### **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:

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<sup>23</sup> 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 13.1<sup>24</sup>).

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).

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<sup>24</sup> 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**

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
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**

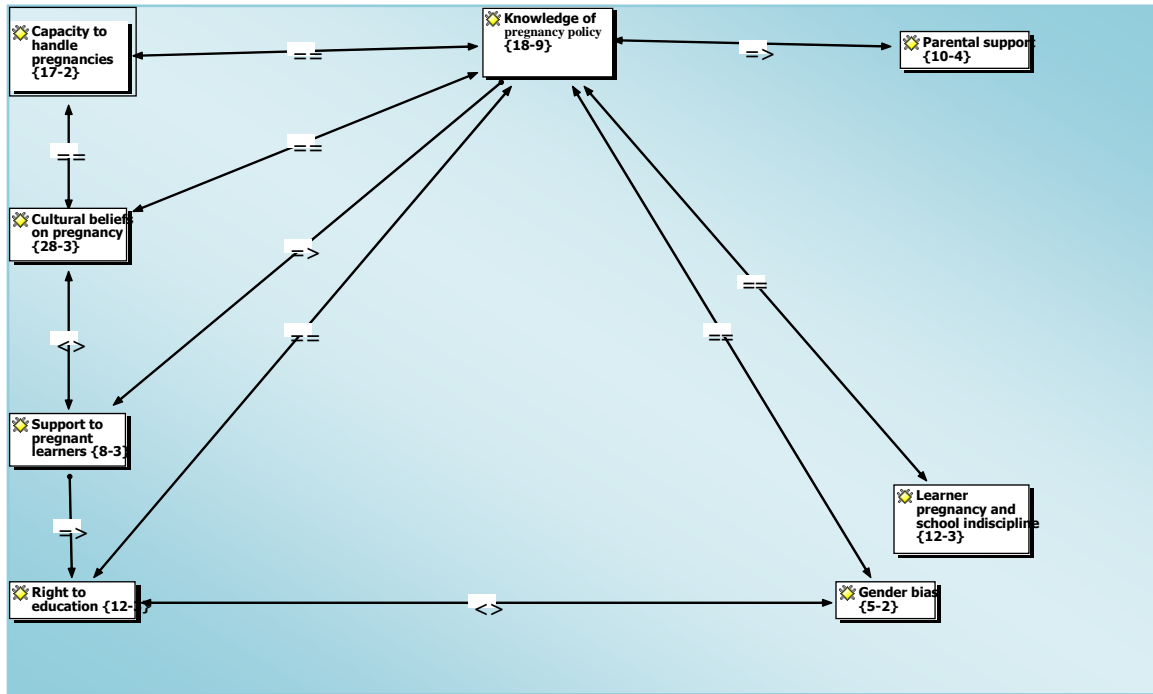


Figure 5.1 shows that knowledge of learner pregnancy policy is inter-related to all the other factors in different ways. For example, gender bias, support to pregnant learners, right to education, capacity to handle pregnancies at school and parental support can have a causal relationship with participants' 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**

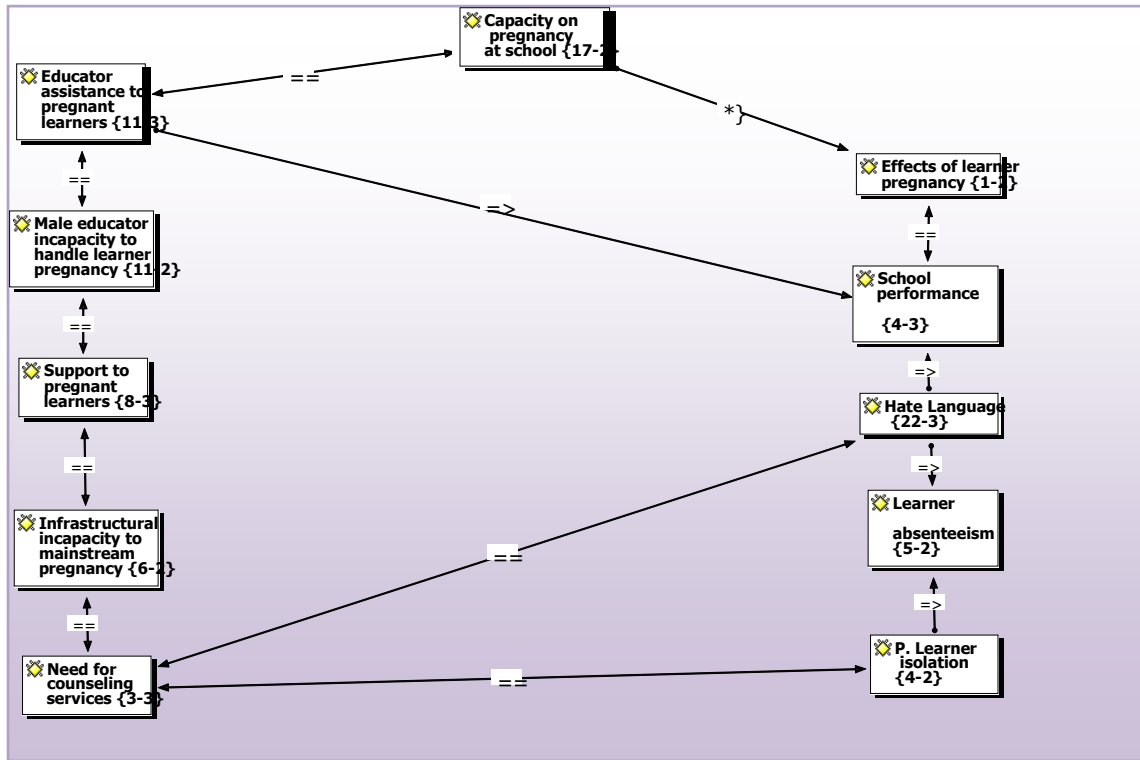


Figure 5.2 illustrates the interrelated factors that influenced educational access and service provision to pregnant learners within the formal school setting at the two study sites. The figure shows that the school capacity to handle pregnant learners’ needs was associated with factors such as educators’ 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**

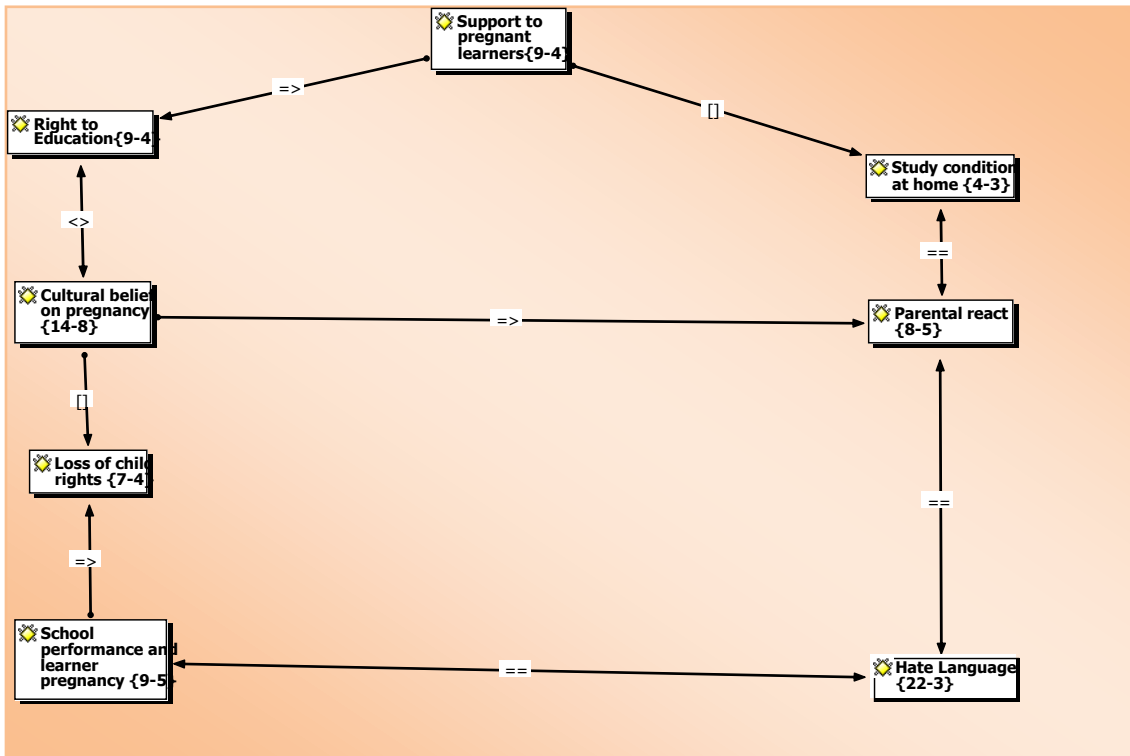


Figure 5.3 is not limited to the home because what happens in the home is influenced by the socio-cultural context of the community at large. Most of the factors referred to in the network equally apply to the community's socio-cultural setting of the two study sites. For example, cultural beliefs on 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 13<sup>25</sup>). 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

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LITERATURE CONTROL ON EMERGING THEMES

#### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented gathered data from focus discussions, key participant interviews, observations recorded in the researcher's reflective journal, and a study of documentary school records that were made available to me at the two schools where I conducted the study. From the presented data, themes, categories and sub-categories emerged (Table 5.1). In the first theme, I describe how the pregnant and former pregnant learners identified their educational goals, and how they sought to achieve them. For the four themes, I presented and described how the education policies, schools, the family/home and the community responded to the educational needs of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who chose to continue with their education through the formal school system.

In this chapter, I apply and discuss the theoretical framework, which underpinned my study as well as literature from related research studies in relation to the themes that emerged from data gathered for my study. The literature control of my data, not only helped me to understand the study participants' responses to pregnant learners through comparing them with existing knowledge, but was also a means of distilling my data themes into findings of the study.

The chapter has two major sections. In the first section, I apply Argyris and Schon's action science theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1992; Anderson, 1997) to examine how participants of this study responded to pregnant and former pregnant learners within the school, family and community. In the second section, I explore and compare my study results with existing knowledge from reviewed studies on teenage pregnancy and schooling.

## **6.2 Action science theory as a mirror to findings of the study**

Since my study was premised on Argyris and Schon's action science theory, in this section I examine the themes and categories from the study in relation to the theory. In their social action or action science theory, Argyris and Schon posit that there is a split between policy (espoused theory-of-action) and practice (theories-in-use) (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1992; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002). In this regard, action science theory postulates that the existence of an official organisational policy (espoused theory-of-action) may not always imply that the organisation's stakeholders are guided by or comply with the policy in their actual actions (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Pitman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997).

### **6.2.1 Split between policy and practice: Policy as political symbolism**

Documentary study of the policy revealed that both South Africa and Zimbabwe seemed to meet the international expectations and standards on formulating national statutory and policy frameworks that seek to extend educational access to all children, including pregnant teenagers. The current study revealed that both countries have Constitutional Bill of Rights and Acts of parliament that give equal educational rights to citizens regardless of their differences. Further, there are policy circular guidelines on prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in schools (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999; DoE, 2007). I interpreted these to be relevant policies, which action science theorists call the espoused theories-of-action (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002; Anderson, 1997). If implemented by education stakeholders, these policies could benefit pregnant teenagers and help them realise their educational aspirations.

However, from the narrations of both policy duty bearers and rights bearers at both schools, it appeared that there was inadequate knowledge of national policies by most of the study participants. At both study sites, parents of both pregnant and mainstream learners, and community representative members of school governing boards indicated



that they did not know about policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools, nor had they discussed them with school management. At the South African school a member of the SGB claimed that:

We have not discussed this policy and what to do with the pregnant learners in the meeting (SA male SGB member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:8 (9:9).

His colleague at the Zimbabwean school also made the same observation when he said that, as representatives of the community:

We have not discussed the policy with the school head (Zimbabwean male SDC member 1) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:20 (7:7).

Parents of pregnant and former pregnant learners further added that they had not discussed the issue with the school management when their daughters had fallen pregnant. This is illustrated by the SA female parent 5 who said that:

No, we were not called to school to discuss that our daughter is now pregnant... (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:30 (48:48).

Likewise, although the Zimbabwean female parent 6 said they had their pregnant daughter back in school, they also had not been formally informed about the schoolgirl pregnancy policy. She also indicated that:

We knew that having a baby does not mean a child should not go to school from others. 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).

All the educators at the South African school also said they had not seen the schoolgirl pregnancy policy on paper although they had heard about it. The SA female educator 2 had this to say:

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).

The same acknowledgement of not knowing much about the policy was made by a male educator at the same school, who said:

I am not sure 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 (SA male educator 2). P 2: F.G. Interview.doc - 2:18 (33:33).

The current study revealed that the education stakeholders who knew about the policy had made informal observations, that pregnant learners were not expelled from school. There had been no official notification of the regulations on management school girl pregnancy at both study sites. Related studies by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004), Mncube (2007) and Mncube and Harber (2008) investigated levels of school policy conceptualisation by community representative members in SGBs at South African schools. Their findings revealed that apart from school principals, the other stakeholders in SGBs had little knowledge on policy related issues. Therefore, the observation that participants of this study had neither seen nor discussed the policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools is not an isolated research finding.

In Zimbabwe, a UNICEF study on gender issues in education, which was conducted by Runhare and Gordon (2004), and Gordon (2002), found that many Education Officers (EOs) and school principals lacked adequate knowledge on the policy circular that regulates how girls who might fall pregnant while at school should be handled (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999). However, data from the current study contradicted this earlier finding, because the school principal and educators at the Zimbabwean study site demonstrated that they had meaningful knowledge about the policy. Most of them were able to point out the policy's major shortcoming, of requiring pregnant and former pregnant learners to transfer to another school. The educators' sound knowledge of the policy was illustrated by the Zimbabwean educator 3 who complained 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. This requirement to change school is like a punishment to the poor girl (Zimbabwean female educator 3) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:9 (24:24).

Consequently, it was not a mere coincidence that at the Zimbabwean site, where policy appeared to be more restrictive, the population of enrolled pregnant learners was smaller

than that of the South African study site, where the policy is more accommodative (Appendix 13.1). Thus, apart from knowledge of policy on mainstreaming by duty bearers, data from this study seemed to indicate that the restrictive or democratic nature of the espoused theory-of-action (policy guidelines) is also a determinant factor to pregnant learners' access to schooling. Statistical data on school dropouts in Zimbabwe indicated that pregnancy and marriage were reported as reasons for girls leaving school, even at primary school level (MoESC, 2004). This scenario seemed to also have prevailed at the Zimbabwean school where the current study was conducted because there were fewer pregnant and former pregnant learners in the stream compared to the number of known and suspected learners who fell pregnant at the school (Appendix 13.1).

Both the South African and Zimbabwean policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999) stipulate the distinct responsibilities that parents and educators should play to help pregnant learners cope with their schooling. However, narratives from both parents and educators illustrated that they were not aware of these responsibilities, and those who assisted used trial and error or did it out of sympathy but not as an obligation. The educators at both study sites said that they neither gave extra academic assistance to pregnant learners during the period of absence from school nor counselled their learners about prevention and management of teenage pregnancy as required by the policy guidelines.

It also emerged that the educators lacked basic counselling skills and there were no formal counselling structures at both schools. If the educators carried out these responsibilities as stipulated in the policy, they would be fulfilling their pastoral care role as outlined in the seven key roles of educators in South Africa (DoE, 2000; Government Gazette No 20844, 2000; Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC], 2003). This is an indication that while the intervention policies were available at both study sites, they were not applied as theories-in-use or put into practice by the duty bearers. The observation from my study seems to concur with an earlier study by Jansen (2002) which found that there were many policies that had been crafted in post-apartheid South Africa. Most of them however, had remained as a form of political symbolism because there

were no clear implementation strategies and educators were not equipped with the necessary skills to effect educational change.

From the current study, it would seem that pregnant teenagers at the South African school were more aware of and exercised their right to attend school while pregnant than those at the Zimbabwean school, who preferred to suspend attendance or withdrew from school altogether during pregnancy. Indeed one South African pregnant learner appeared thankful that:

We come to school until we feel that now we can just have to go or to remain at home maybe when it's time to give birth, no one will stop us  
(South African pregnant learner) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:1 (5:5).

However, her Zimbabwean counterpart implied that she regretted being at school as she indicated that:

I feel more comfortable at home than to go to school in this situation  
(Zimbabwean pregnant learner) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:5 (24:24).

Consequently, the current study also revealed that there were more active pregnant learners at the South African than at the Zimbabwean study site (Appendix 13.1). This could imply that South African pregnant learners know that they have the right to attend school until time the time of delivery.

### **6.2.2 Culture as the governing variable towards teenage pregnancy school policy**

Research on action science theory has indicated that there are always two faces to organisational behaviour, namely; “statements of moral principles or organizational codes of ethics”, which are official policy statements or the moral ideal; and moral reality or the actual behaviour and political will of the organisation’s stakeholders (Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999, p.353). To this end, and with specific reference to education, Argyris and Schon (1974) add that no matter how clear and rational curriculum change schemes could appear, they may not be successfully implemented unless they accommodated the teachers’ group norms, feelings, attitudes and values. These socio-cultural factors are

what Argyris and Schon call governing variables which could influence human behaviour more than formal organisational instructions or policy.

Policies should therefore, not be formulated and implemented as if this is done in a socio-cultural vacuum. In this study there seemed to be a general opposition and resistance by stakeholders to the policy guidelines that allowed for the continued enrolment and mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools. Most of the study participants at both study sites held negative perceptions towards the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools. The policy was blamed for being too permissive and for contradicting societal values on sexuality and marriage. Participants at both study sites blamed the policy for also contributing to moral decay among teenagers, increased teenage pregnancy, school indiscipline and declining standards in some schools. One Zimbabwean male educator expressed his discontent that pregnant learners could lower the reputation of schools and complained that:

...why turn schools to maternity hospitals. To me the policy lowers the value of schools and education in the country (Zimbabwean male educator 1) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:23 (50:50).

The SGB chairperson at the South African school also viewed mainstreaming of pregnant learners in schools as lowering the quality education. He had this to say:

We cannot maintain good standards at a school if learners are mixing with people in maternity, what do they discuss; school work or babies? This thing is killing education ... (SA male SGB member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:3 (5:5).

From the above concerns, it appeared that participants opposed the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools because it was against their cultural values, which define schools as institutions for children and where pregnant or former pregnant teenagers should not have a place. According to research on action science theory, such opposition to organisational policy could arise from differences between stakeholders' culture and moral reality, and the organisation's official policy (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999).

Data from the current study therefore, concur with action science theory that, the socially constructed beliefs, which Argyris and Schon call governing variables or moral reality (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemic & Zajac, 1999), might explain the study participants' general opposition to the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners in ordinary schools. This might have contributed to policy duty bearers, particularly educators, not having adequate political will to implement the policy on the ground, because the policy seemed to contradict the community's beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood.

### **6.2.3 Double loop learning: New goal setting as motivating factor to pregnant learners**

Because theories-in-use are social constructions that are acquired during the process of interaction within one's social and cultural group, Argyris and Schon's action science theory posits that individuals can deconstruct behaviour that brings undesirable consequences. In the same view, Argyris and Schon further posit that individuals can learn new theories-in-use or actions, in order to change their situation and that of the organisation to which they belong (Argyris, 1976; Schon, 1982; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). The process of re-defining, deconstructing and changing theories-in-use involves and requires reflecting and re-examining one's actions and applying the espoused values or theories-of-action (Argyris, 1976; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985). Referring to two learning processes for new theories-in-use, called single-loop and double-loop learning, Argyris (1976) proposes that:

...learning to become aware of one's present theory-in-use and then altering it ... requires that individuals question the theories-of-action that have formed the framework for their actions (p.370).

This study revealed that pregnant learners who chose to continue with schooling after falling pregnant might have applied what Argyris and Schon (1974) call double-loop learning, to reflect on their past mistake, redefine and set new educational goals, which informed their new theories-in-use or new behaviour. The statements made by pregnant learners showed that they had reflected on their past and then made new decisions for

their future actions. The new goals made them to remain in school despite negative perceptions from other people. Although the Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2 regretted her past, she was determined to make a change to her future because she felt that she had:

...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).

The same sentiments were echoed by the SA pregnant learner 3, who also regretted having been pregnant but had the hope that:

...even though I am pregnant I know that after birth I will still proceed with my schooling and then I will achieve my goal... (SA pregnant Learner 3) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:15 (21:21).

In the above statements, the reflective double-loop learning can be realised from the fact that the pregnant learners regretted their past theories-in-use or behaviour by expressing that they felt that they had betrayed many people when they became pregnant. Based on this reflection of the regrettable past, the pregnant learners set new goals for themselves, which Argyris and Schon (1974) call governing values. These new goals could result in them being directed to adopt new behaviour/actions or theories-in-use. The new goals were meant to help them face the future, and further their education and prove to everyone that they can become something in life. To achieve the new goals, they had to adopt new coping strategies, such as having more focus and commitment to school work, being open with their pregnancy condition, overcoming negative attitudes from the community and fighting back hate speech. Such a process by which a person changes both the governing variables and actions is called double-loop learning, which, according to action science theory can result in desirable consequences or results (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Anderson, 1997; Smith, 2001).

According to Argyris and Schon's action science theory, a high degree of congruency between espoused theories-of-action (policies) and theories-in-use (action/behaviour) is likely to result in desirable consequences or results (Anderson, 1997; Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985; Argyris, 1990; Putnam & Smith, 1985; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). In this study, it appears that new goal-setting by some of the pregnant learners resulted in

winning support from some educators and parents. Some educators and parents acknowledged that some of the girls had become more positive and serious with their education after falling pregnant. After observing some positive change among some pregnant learners, one SA female educator acknowledged that:

...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).

One mother of a pregnant learner, who attended at the South African school, also appreciated 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 quite;. All she does is to go to school (SA female parent 4) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:24 (39:39).

In this study, new goal-setting after pregnancy and the support given to some pregnant learners by other people in return for their new theories-in-use (approved change of behaviour), illustrate that Argyris and Schon's action science theory was an appropriate theoretical framework for explaining the underlying factors that influence the behaviour of pregnant learners and the other people they interact with.

From the views expressed by most of the participants in this study, it would also appear that although there were more negative sentiments against the inclusion of pregnant learners at both schools, there was acknowledgement that pregnant teenagers had the right to education. The espoused theory-of-action which made participants acknowledge that pregnant learners had rights to education seemed to relate to human rights principles. Due to this realisation, some participants raised arguments in support of the policy on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools. They included the following reasons:

- It can help to achieve gender equality in education and in society;
- Educated girls can be financially independent to look after their babies; and
- Educated girls will not depend on social grants and will not be abused by men again.



All these positive revelations from the respondents of this study indicated that the right to education could be a common platform upon which mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools could be advocated. Such a process could require that stakeholders at school level should, identify, reflect on and critique factors that are obstacles to all children's, including pregnant teenagers' right to education. It would appear from the findings of this study that there is need to re-examine traditional and cultural beliefs, norms and values on pregnancy, marriage and motherhood that could be harmful to women emancipation in education and other public spheres. According to Argyris and Schon's theories-of-action, such a process of reflecting, re-examining and re-defining the governing values of their espoused theories-of-action (Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1990; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986) could result in people changing their theories-in-use (actions/responsiveness) towards the educational needs of pregnant learners.

#### **6.2.4 Single motherhood as a negative master status for pregnant learners**

Research by Argyris (1990) on how people can learn new or modify their theories-in-use (actions) revealed that human beings cannot change both the governing variables and actions that had negative consequences without support from the society in which they live. This implies that society's social virtues and value system should be reflected upon and re-examined so that they support the principle of every child's right to education which is internationally recognised as a basic human need (Subrahmanian, 2005; Stromquist, 2005; Taylor, Smith & Nairin, 2001; Dandet & Singh, 2001; Detrick, 1999; Tsanga et al., 2004; Ochalita & Espinasa, 2001). Such a process, according to the action science theory is what Argyris and Schon call double-loop learning and Model II theories-in-use because they seek to promote social change and actions that are shaped by rationalised information and choices that accommodate other people's perceptions, alternative world views and democratic principles (Argyris, 1990; Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997; Argyris, 1976; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

It appears from this study that most of the participants of this study needed skills to critique their current governing variables, namely some cultural and traditional beliefs

and norms on pregnancy and motherhood, which could disadvantage pregnant teenagers' equal right to educational access and participation. Such support could embrace a broader perspective to include the community at large. Data from the study seems to indicate that attitudes towards pregnant teenagers are social constructs of the interrelated social institutions, such as education policy, the school, the family and the community.

Argyris and Schon point out that human behaviour (theories-in-use) is influenced by a recipe of governing variables or values, which are socially constructed during the process of interaction within social groups (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). They therefore concluded that, "versions of the same model of theories-in-use result from similar upbringing within a culture" (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p.11). To apply Argyris and Schon's theory of action science to my study, I therefore studied the relationship between study participants' beliefs and perceptions on teenage pregnancy, their views on policy, as well as their attitudes towards pregnant and former pregnant learners at their school.

Data from the study seems to imply that the school, as a sub-institution of the community was influenced by the community's traditional values, norms and beliefs on teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. From what most study participants said, it appears that their community's negative perceptions to any pregnancy out of wedlock influenced the daily interaction between pregnant learners and other people within the school. Negative labels and hate language directed at pregnant and former pregnant learners were expressed both in the community, family and at school.

There were more participants at the Zimbabwean study site, who reported that single former pregnant teenagers were viewed as girls of loose sexual morals or prostitutes, and that they held low social status. As such they were not given responsibilities at social gatherings because single women have no social credibility in society. One Zimbabwean educator summed up how teenage mothers lost their social status by pointing out that:

...in the community, the girl loses her pride, nobody trusts her and people talk about her behind whenever she appears. A pregnant girl or

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).

The influence of the general negative perception to teenage motherhood on the school was revealed by another Zimbabwean educator who observed that former pregnant learners are not given responsibilities:

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).

There seems to be a correlation between the more negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy and single motherhood at the Zimbabwean study site and the low enrolment of learners who chose to continue with schooling after falling pregnant (Appendix 13.1).

Most participants at both study sites concurred that once a girl became pregnant, she might lose her childhood rights in the family. Pregnant and former pregnant learners, for instance alleged that they lived like adopted children as a punishment for their mistake. The mistake of falling pregnant was viewed as a shame to the family. One former pregnant learner at the Zimbabwean school narrated that:

Being pregnant or having a baby can be trick. Even if you get a chance to go to school, you cannot ask for any favours from parents. You are like an adopted child.... (Zimbabwean former pregnant learner) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:13 (5:5).

In the same vein, a pregnant learner at the other school confessed that the attitude of her parents towards her had changed after she had become pregnant. She made the following observation:

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 (SA pregnant learner) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:46 (59:59).

The pressure for such negative treatment in the family seemed to be influenced by the way the bigger picture of the community views teenage pregnancy. In this regard, Zimbabwean school principal observed that:

...in African communities, teenage pregnancy is highly despised, taken as a curse (Zimbabwean deputy school principal) P 7: F.G. Interview.doc - 7:47 (132:132).

Such community perceptions encroached into the school too, as illustrated by the observation that pregnant learners complained that educators did not assist them or protect them from hate speech, even if this was done in their presence. On their part, educators were constrained by community values because assisting a pregnant or former pregnant learner was viewed with suspicion in the community, especially for male educators. One male educator at the South African school said that most people in the community did not trust them. He had this to say:

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

It looked like the allegations made by educators were not without basis, because at the Zimbabwean school some parents came in the open and made the accusation that:

.....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) P10: F.G. Interview.doc - 10:8 (24:24).

Just like in the community where teenage pregnancy and single motherhood were viewed by participants as a disgrace to traditional marriage values, the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools was also regarded as rewarding anti-social behaviour. Complaints were made by some community members in the school leadership that pregnant learners caused school indiscipline, increased rate of school girl pregnancies and generally lowered educational standards at schools where they were enrolled. The view was expressed by SA SGB male member 3, who was unhappy with the schoolgirl pregnancy policy and alleged that:

People who fall pregnant while they are young have no discipline, and they should not be allowed in school as a punishment (SA SGB male member 3) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:9 (9:9).

Similarly, his counterpart at the Zimbabwean school felt that former pregnant learners were a problem, not only at school, but even at home. He claimed that:

It is very difficult to discipline a girl with a baby even at home by her own parents, so what do we expect teachers to do? (Zimbabwean male SDC member 2) P 6: F.G. Interview.doc - 6:8 (23:23).

These findings from the current study seem to agree with Argyris and Schon's action science theory, that governing values to human behaviour are socially constructed and largely emanate from cultural beliefs, norms and expectations (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Berger & Luckman, 1972; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986).

Data from my study therefore, revealed that there appears to be a strong relationship between how pregnant and former pregnant learners are perceived and treated in the community at large and all other micro-institutions of the community, such as the family, the church and the school. The relationship seems to be founded on socio-cultural beliefs of the ideal type of pregnancy, marriage and motherhood. These were the common denominators upon which, pregnant and former pregnant learners were judged and treated in the school. In this case, cultural values and beliefs seemed to overshadow the capacity of the schools to uphold and implement the official policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners as outlined in white paper policies (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999; DoE, 2007). Such official policies are the espoused theories-of-action in action, which stakeholders in an organisation might not refer to or apply in their day to day operations or theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Anderson, 1997; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002).

### **6.3 Comparison of emerging themes with existing research studies**

Data from my study seems to indicate that there could be five major factors that influenced pregnant learners' capacity to access and exercise their right to formal

schooling. These include their identification of new educational aspirations, and the responses of education policy, the school, the family and the school community neighbourhood, as well as the educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teenagers. In order to position my findings within the existing body of knowledge, I reviewed literature on research studies on effects of teenage pregnancy and educational opportunity, and policies and programmes for education of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. The literature was used as a lens through which I examined and critiqued data from my study, in order to establish new knowledge boundaries.

### **6.3.1 New goal setting as a motivating factor for pregnant learners**

One of the observations from the current study was that after pregnancy, some pregnant teenagers reflected on their past and re-shaped their educational goals. It emerged that some of the pregnant and former pregnant learners who chose to pursue their schooling had redefined and set new positive goals for themselves after falling pregnant. The teenagers stated that they wanted to change, prove a point in life, further their education and look after their babies. One such pregnant learner was eager to open a new page in her life, although she was at home at the time of the interview waiting for delivery. To her all hope was not lost due to pregnancy. She made a new commitment that:

I have to face the future and make sure that I achieve my goal of going further with my education. 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).

The positive change of some of the pregnant learners was also confirmed by some educators and parents. They expressed that the learners were now more self-disciplined and mature than they were before pregnancy. One of the parents testified that:

In the village everyone was like pointing a finger and at school you would find she had nobody to talk to. But she changed and liked to learn more. She did not give us any more problems (SA female parent) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:21 (37:37).

A Canadian case study conducted by Burdell (1998) found that teen mothers could successfully be trained to become good decision-makers on both their career and sexuality issues. This approach came to be named ‘curriculum of redemption’, whereby pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were assisted to regain their self-esteem. They were also empowered to take new perspectives and initiatives to life, through career focused education (Burdell, 1998). Such strategies proved that the teen mothers could redeem themselves from any past mistakes, de-stigmatise their situation and change their lives altogether. The findings by Burdell (1998) seem to concur with the observation I have made in my study which, revealed that some of the pregnant learners in the study were also able to take new decisions and set new goals, in order to ‘redeem themselves’ from their past mistakes. The fact that they chose to continue with their schooling despite negative perceptions from the public could also be an indication that new goal-setting after pregnancy could have become a motivating factor to work hard at school and to regain their self-esteem.

Research studies by Grant and Hallman (2006) and Hof and Richters (1999) in South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively revealed that pre-pregnancy school participation and performance were influential factors for teenage mothers who dropped out of school. In both studies, pregnant and former pregnant learners, whose school performance had been poor before pregnancy were found to drop out of school more than those who performed well academically. The conclusion from both studies was that pregnancy was not always the primary reason for dropping out of school. If their academic performance was poor, most teenage mothers were found to have left school before they had fallen pregnant. Grant and Hallman (2006) further concluded that, rather than pregnancy being the cause of school drop-out, it was poor school participation by teen mothers which resulted in them, falling pregnant and then dropping out of school.

While it would seem from the findings by Grant and Hallman (2006) and Hof and Richters (1999), positive goal setting could begin before a teenager fell pregnant, my study differed with this in that some pregnant learners in my study had been “awakened” to positively re-define their educational aspirations after getting pregnant. They

expressed the wish to “go to university”, “write and pass their ‘A’ level examinations”, “prove that they can do something in life”, “look after their babies” even if they did not get married. The statements seem to be reflections of and a redefinition of new goals based on their current, rather than the pre-pregnancy situation.

Studies by Duncan (2007) and Key, Barbosa and Owen (2001), conducted in America, seem to agree with my findings as they found that teenage motherhood had actually become a motivating factor for some former pregnant teenagers to pass high school and enrol at colleges or universities. Duncan (2007) found that some American teenage mothers were eager to re-enrol in high school and proceeded to college so that they could be self-reliant rather than depend on welfare grants. Such teenage mothers were found to be closer to and proud of their babies. One can conclude that pregnancy and early motherhood might have opened a maturity page in their lives.

### **6.3.2 Influence of traditional discourse on teenage pregnancy school policy**

One of the objectives of my study was to investigate the level of awareness and views of different education stakeholders to the policy circulars that provide for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The study revealed that there were some differences in both policy conceptualization and implementation between the two schools: Although there was no formal dialogue to educate stakeholders on the policy that allowed pregnant learners to be enrolled at both schools, pregnant learners at the South African school were found to be more aware of and exercised their legal right to continue with schooling than their Zimbabwean counterparts. Consequently, the South Africa school had more pregnant learners who were currently attending school at the time the study was conducted (Appendix 13.1<sup>26</sup>).

Educators at the Zimbabwean school had broader knowledge of the contents of the policy on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in ordinary schools than their South African

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix 13.1: Population of pregnant learners 2008 - 2009



counterparts. Zimbabwean educators were able to highlight the main weaknesses of the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 of 1999, indicating a sound understanding of the policy. The South African educators only indicated that they knew that pregnant learners were allowed to attend school from observations, but they had nothing else to say about the policy guidelines on prevention and management of schoolgirl pregnancy (DoE, 2007).

With regard to policy implementation, the study revealed that the South African school had a higher population of pregnant learners than the Zimbabwean school. It appears that the South African school system was more accommodative to girls who wanted to continue studying during pregnancy than the Zimbabwean school, which seemed to be very conservative, to the extent that pregnant teenagers preferred to withdraw from school altogether, or to transfer to another school after delivery. This finding is corroborated by latest statistical data on school dropout rates in Zimbabwe, which indicated that pregnancy and marriage are causes of schoolgirl drop-out, even at primary school level (MoESC, 2004).

Apart from these differences, an important common feature from both study sites was opposition which the policy of mainstreaming pregnant and former pregnant learners received from most study participants. As already alluded to, the practice of enrolling pregnant and former pregnant learners was blamed for being too permissive. To the participants, the increase in teenage pregnancies, school indiscipline and low quality of education at schools, were attributed to this policy. Most adult participants complained that the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers was like rewarding girls for immoral behaviour, which is against most African cultural values on marriage and motherhood.

Earlier studies conducted elsewhere have indicated that opposition to educational programmes for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal schools is not an isolated phenomenon to this study. In the USA where legal provisions and programmes have been in place for decades, Weiner (1987), Ladner (1987), McGee

and Blank (1989), Burdell (1999), and Kelly (1998) documented how civil society, educators, and district education administrators have continued to resist those initiatives. According to Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998), the opposition to, and negative perceptions to mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in ordinary schools were found to be based on the conservative discourse which defines the ideal family as composed of two parents, and that single mothers distorted this traditional definition of a family. Spending state financial resources on welfare grants was viewed as rewarding teenagers for wrong doing (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998; Emihovich & Frome, 1998; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

Burdell (1998) identified a “curriculum of concealment”, meaning that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were only accommodated by schools in USA as a window dressing fulfilment of Title IX legal obligations (p.212). This is an indication that, even with well crafted policy guidelines on management of learner pregnancy in schools, positive changes are not guaranteed, unless policy provisions are understood, accepted and promoted by all the education stakeholders at the school level.

In an African context, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) and Chilisa (2002) also found that educators and community members criticised the policy that allowed for the re-enrolment of former pregnant teenagers in Botswana. This was because it contradicted their traditional values on marriage, pregnancy, breast feeding and motherhood. Data from my study raise doubts that all the education stakeholders actively participate in the policy formulation process.

### **6.3.3 The school as an agent of reproducing traditional values on single motherhood**

Most studies that investigated causes of school dropout among pregnant teenagers found that interaction patterns within the school were a major causal factor for their decision to either quit or continue with schooling (Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; Mensch et al., 2001; Brindis & Philliber, 1998). Mensch et al (2001) found that high school boys made

pregnant teenagers uncomfortable in the school because of acts of abuse like bullying, mocking, domination and hate speech. Gordon (1995) and Dorsey (1989b) studied the causes of poor performance among female students in Zimbabwean high schools. Both studies revealed that male educators and boys contributed to the poor performance, especially in mathematics and sciences due to poor attention given to girls by educators as well as physical, verbal and sexual harassment of girls by male educators and boys.

The observation from these earlier studies indicating that school boys were more involved in abusing and harassing female learners was also confirmed by the current study. From what the pregnant and former pregnant learners themselves said, it appears that they encountered different types of abuses in the school, which ranged from loss of friendship, isolation, mockery, negative labelling, being used as examples of bad behaviour to being given nicknames. I presented and discussed these forms of abuse to pregnant and former pregnant learners under the sub-theme of hate language. Mainstream male learners were largely blamed for such hate speech as illustrated by one female learner at the Zimbabwean school who was unhappy that:

You hear boys asking 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).

At the South African school, a mainstream female learner made the same allegation against boys at the school and also expressed the concern that:

Some of us who are also girls feel disturbed by what boys say always to them. You hear someone always using an example of pregnancy where it does not fit. Even teachers they hear it that this is not fair but they do not act (SA mainstream female learner 1) P 5: F.G. Interview.doc - 5:20 (55:55).

While studies by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1989b) and Mensch et al (2001) seemed to point to male stakeholders within the school as the more perpetrators of abuse and harassment against female learners, the current study revealed an extra dimension to their findings. There was a different revelation, which seemed to indicate that female educators at both schools used more abusive language to pregnant learners than male educators.

One Zimbabwean pregnant learner accused female educators at the school for being more abusive than male educators. She complained 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 (Zimbabwean pregnant learner 1) P 8: K.P. Interview.doc - 8:4 (28:28).

The same allegation was made against female educators by pregnant and former pregnant learners. The sentiments were represented by one former pregnant learner at the South African school, who made the accusation 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).

From the study, it emerged that verbal abuse of pregnant teenagers was a phenomenon which the community seemed to implicitly condone as a social control mechanism meant to uphold the cultural belief that pregnancy outside marriage is shameful to society. I found this to be contrary to the policy guidelines, which call on schools to take measures against hate speech and any stigmatisation of pregnant learners (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999).

Another indication that pregnant learners were not adequately accommodated at the two schools was that almost all the participant categories of this study called for separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. Reasons forwarded for the call to separate pregnant learners from mainstream learners included that; once pregnant, a woman becomes an adult who should be in a non-formal institution; they were difficult to discipline by educators; they were a risk to male educators; there were no relevant facilities for pregnant people; and educators were not trained to handle pregnant learners. Indeed, educators at both study sites indicated that they were not capable of helping pregnant teenagers and had no training on basic counselling.

It emerged from gathered data that because pregnant and former pregnant learners were perceived as girls of loose sexual morals, educators and parents at both study sites

expressed fear that some male educators could be ‘trapped’ into or suspected of having sexual relationships with the pregnant or former pregnant learners. Although she perceived former pregnant learners as sexually loose, one female parent at the Zimbabwean study site was suspicious that:

.....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 suspicion, which showed community mistrust of male educators, was also expressed by the SA male parent 1 who also alleged 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).

With regard to separate or special programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, in the USA and Canada where such programmes were established alongside ordinary schools, there were facilities and provisions like counselling services, health and baby care laboratories, life skills and family life education (Weiner, 1987; Duncan, 2007; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2001; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Searmark & Lungs, 2004). Such provisions were found to be non-existent at the two schools where I conducted the study. There is need for psycho-social services, especially counselling, to assist educators and both pregnant learners to cope with education.

#### **6.3.4 The school as an agent of reproducing patriarchal values**

Gender bias was one factor which the current study found to influence participants’ perceptions to the policy and practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal education. To show unfair treatment of male and female students in education, female participants complained that:

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.... (SA SGB female member 1) P 1: F.G. Interview.doc - 1:15 (16:16).

This argument, which was made in reference to the observation that in most of the cases the pregnant learner is expelled, suspended or given leave from school while nothing is said about the male partner responsible for the pregnancy (Bayona & Kadji-Murangi, 1996; Mitchell et al., 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008).

The observation follows the feminist theoretical argument that schooling mirrors and perpetuates social inequalities in society (Leach, 2000; Chilisa, 2002; Ritzer, 1992; MacDonald, 1981). Furthermore, gender ideology which is informed by the patriarchal nature of society is the basis upon which the reproductive role of women is undervalued in most societies. According to this view, the nature of educational policy design on pregnant learners could reflect and correspond with the society's response to human rights and gender equity issues. This is because a society's general perceptions to and treatment of pregnant teenagers, and women in general are also reflected and reproduced through schools (Chilisa, 2002). Education perpetuates gender inequality by defining reproductive and childcare responsibilities as feminine roles by social norms, practices and customs (MacDonald, 1981; Leach, 2000; Stromquist, 1997b), even if there could be formal policies aimed at promoting gender equality. Madeleine MacDonald argues that schooling is one of the major agents of reproducing unequal gender relations by delegating to women, child care and early education as their prime responsibility (MacDonald, 1981). The patriarchal nature of society and gender ideologies could therefore be reflected and serve to influence the nature of schools' service delivery to pregnant learners.

### **6.3.5 Family support in building home-school partnership for pregnant learners**

Sociological theory posits that the school is a microcosm of the larger society and therefore mirrors or reflects the socio-cultural patterns of how the whole society is structured and functions (Blackledge & Hunt, 1992; Ritzer, 1992; Haralambos & Holborn, 1996). Likewise in this study, it appears that the school and the home both depicted and reproduced the attitudes, expectations and treatment of pregnant learners that conformed with the cultural values and beliefs of the community on teenage pregnancy.

Results from this study suggest that once a learner becomes pregnant, she loses her social and childhood rights in the family, at school and in the community in general. Examples that illustrate loss of social status and childhood rights include being negatively and suspiciously perceived as sexually loose and undisciplined; not being given responsibilities in the family; and not being free to communicate with parents or ask for childhood needs like pocket money and school fees. I found these observations to be similar to Kelly (1998) and Burdell (1998) who also found that giving educational rights and social welfare grants to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers is seen in the USA as sending the wrong message, of rewarding immoral sexual behaviour.

The loss of social and childhood rights by pregnant and former pregnant learners, which is reported in this study, is also not a phenomenon unique to this study. Studies by Weigand (2005) and Brindis and Philliber (1998) found that, unlike other marginalised groups, such as the disabled and minority ethnic groups, teenage mothers are a marginalised group that has not yet gained self-advocacy on their concerns due to conservative views towards sexuality and marriage.

Although the DoE (2007) policy guidelines emphasise that parents of former pregnant learners have the responsibility of baby care, most parents who were interviewed revealed that caring for their daughter's baby was more of a favour than an obligation. Because of baby-care and other household responsibilities, some of the former pregnant learners said they had to either complete their school work at school or only studied at home when the baby had gone to sleep. These observations are consistent with those of Chetty and Chigona (2008, 2009) who found that former pregnant teenagers had no adequate time to study at home because of being overloaded with household work and inadequate support from their family members. Another South African study by Grant and Hallman (2006) found that parental support in the form of material provision and baby minding was one determinant factor for school re-enrolment by teenage mothers. The study revealed that teenage mothers who failed to get such support from parents or other family members were more likely to drop out from school. On the same note McGraha-Garnett (2007)

concluded that “Adolescent mothers who dropped out evidenced greater distance in their involvement with their parents” (p.104).

However in this study, not all pregnant learners painted a gloomy picture of the home environment. There are a few who acknowledged that their parents had not changed their attitudes and support. For example, the SA pregnant learner 2 showed her appreciation by stating that:

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, at first they were angry with me but they understand that it was just a mistake and it will be over and life will come back to normal (SA pregnant learner 2) P 4: F.G. Interview.doc - 4:47 (60:60).

It would appear that parents who discussed with their daughters when they became pregnant were more considerate. They established contacts with the school and took care of the baby while their daughter did her school work. Some mothers reported that they accompanied their pregnant daughters to the clinic and school, in order to protect them from public abuse. Such support was illustrated by the Zimbabwean female parent 6 who said:

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).

Similarly, in order to protect her pregnant daughter’s right to education, the SA female parent 5 felt obliged to support her daughter because she knew 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 (SA female parent 5) P 3: F.G. Interview.doc - 3:29 (46:47).

Home-school partnerships were also reported to have been initiated by school management at the Zimbabwean study site. The school principal is said to have visited a family to encourage the parents to support their pregnant daughter so that she could write



final examinations. Therefore, results from this study largely concurred with research findings from elsewhere, which concluded that the family setting had a strong influence on pregnant teenagers' future educational plans and needs, resilience to continue with schooling and performance (Weigand, 2005; Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Ahn, 1994; McGraha-Garnett, 2007; Grant & Hallman, 2006). The home-school partnerships, although they seemed to occur on a very insignificant scale in this study, could be the best opportunity to build on if the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal education is to be effectively undertaken as an intervention measure for school dropout due to pregnancy. The partnership could be done through fostering and promoting the principle of an equally shared responsibility between the school and not only the families of pregnant learners, but also the other micro-institutions of the community like the church, clinics, political and local government structures.

Observations from this study indicated that the social fabrics of the two schools seemed to be shaped around the other social institutions in the community. I therefore concluded that the opportunities and challenges for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners within the formal school system may not fully be attributed to a particular school's structural and functional characteristics, but could also be a result of the whole community's socio-cultural response to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood.

#### **6.4 Chapter summary**

The major objective of this study was to investigate how the school and other social institutions responded to the educational needs and aspirations of pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their education at formal schools. From the themes that emerged from the study, it appears that the nature of responses to pregnant learners are shaped more by the community's cultural beliefs, norms, values and expectations on marriage, pregnancy and motherhood than the official school policy. The study revealed that apart from not explicitly denying pregnant teenagers' access to schooling as required by policy, little attention at both schools was given for the enhancement of equitable educational participation and outcomes by pregnant learners. What most participants expressed on the

policy, the schools, and the home seemed to indicate that the institutions, at both study sites, responded to teenage pregnancy in similar ways.

In this chapter, I first applied the action science theory to examine the views of the study participants on the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers at formal schools. Argyris and Schon (1974) posit that human action or theories-in-use is influenced by governing values, which are socially constructed within a socio-cultural setting. Findings of this study revealed that while the two schools where the study was conducted had official policy directives (espoused theory-of-action) on how to mainstream learners who might fall pregnant while at school (Ode, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute, P.35, 1999), not much had been done in terms of policy dialogue, conceptualisation and appreciation, to promote the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at the schools.

It would appear from this study that education stakeholders were more influenced by the community's cultural and traditional beliefs, norms and expectations on pregnancy, marriage and motherhood to treat pregnant learners within the home and the school as they do. As a result, the negative traditional perceptions of teenage pregnancy and single motherhood in the community seemed to also have influenced pregnant learners' educational access, participation and performance in a negative manner. The study therefore, concurred with the action science theory, which points to that, there is a split between an organisation's official policy or espoused theory-of-action and its stakeholders' actual behaviour or theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1999; Anderson, 1997; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen, et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the study also concurred with the action science theory on its proposition that the values or governing variables which influenced behaviour (theories-in-use) were socially acquired during interaction in a given socio-cultural context. In this study, cultural beliefs, which educators and learners acquired in their community, seemed to influence study participants' perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners more than official school policy.

With regard to existing knowledge and related research studies, some findings of the present study seemed to concur with what has been found elsewhere although with some differences with regards to context, and the study sample. Although there is no existing research that directly studied education stakeholders' level of conceptualisation of policy on management of school girl pregnancy in South Africa, this study concurred with earlier researches by Mncube (2007), Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004), Mncube and Harber (2008) and Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004), which found that, apart from school principals, other representatives in SGBs had inadequate knowledge on school policy and made no meaningful contributions on decision making in the school.

However, in the case of Zimbabwe, the current study contradicted earlier research by Runhare and Gordon (2004) and Gordon (2002), which concluded that Zimbabwean school principals and educators knew little about the MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35 of 1999. The policy circular outlines procedures for mainstreaming pregnant learners in schools. A comparison of what obtained from reviewed literature and findings from the current study revealed that the both schools for the current study lagged behind schools in the USA, the UK, Canada and Sweden, in providing education programmes that catered for pregnant learners (Duncan, 2007; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2001; Kelly, 1996; Burdell, 1996; Mitchell, 1999; Searmark & Lungs, 2004).

However, conservatism to pregnant teenagers' educational and other social rights which were revealed by the current study seem to be similar to what researchers have established in the developed countries. Research studies seem to also indicate that there are still objections by the public to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools due to conservative and traditional discourses on marriage and motherhood (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998; Emihovich & Frome, 1998; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

In the next chapter, I distil and filter the main findings of my study, outline new knowledge that was generated from this study and make recommendations for further research on issues that emerged, but might have been left hanging.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

The major purpose of my study was to explore and compare how stakeholders at two formal schools responded to the educational needs of pregnant teenagers within their socio-cultural settings. The study investigated how the lived experiences of pregnant learners within the family, the school and the community might have affected their educational aspirations, participation and outcomes. In order to explore and understand how the two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners, the views of educators, parents, members of the school governing bodies and students who studied with pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were gathered through focus group discussions and key participant interviews. Data gathered at the two study sites were compared and reference was made to relevant literature on the topic.

The review of literature, which is discussed in chapter two, indicated that the enactment of legal provisions and policies that prohibit the expulsion and discrimination of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal educational institutions is a fairly new phenomenon, especially in developing countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe where this study was conducted (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Hubbard et al., 2008; Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Further, available research studies revealed that programmes that cater for the mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are operational in a few countries like the USA, the UK and Canada, where they have been established since the early 1980s (Weiner, 1987; Zellman, 1981; Burdell, 1996; Brundis & Philliber, 1998; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). In these programmes, schools are equipped to cater for the psycho-social, life skills, career development and academic needs of the mainstreamed pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. However, in most African countries mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools seems to be legalised but not substantially implemented (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; Grant & Hallman,

2006; Gordon, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). Consequently, in South Africa and Zimbabwe, where pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have had the legal right to continue with schooling since 1996 and 1999 respectively, few studies have been conducted to examine how this is benefiting the affected children and how formal schools have responded to this responsibility.

While the legal responsibilities of schools to integrate learners who could fall pregnant are clearly outlined through relevant policies in both South Africa and Zimbabwe (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999), my study was premised on the notion that policy formulation and policy implementation are two distinct processes (Jansen, 2002; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990). It was on the basis of this assumption that I chose to underpin the study on Argyris and Schon's action science theory which posits that human behaviour is constituted by espoused theories-of-action (policy) and theories-in-use (actions). I applied the theory to analyse how the study participants were influenced by their social and cultural beliefs to perceive the policy and practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners at formal schools.

The study revealed that while participants seemed to appreciate that pregnant learners had a legal right to education, most of them were opposed to the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools because of traditional and cultural beliefs on teenage pregnancy and single motherhood. Findings from the study therefore tended to agree with action science theory's proposition that there is usually a split between policy and practice or what people espouse about their actions and how they actually behave (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982). It emerged from the study that policy implementers did not always meet their responsibilities according to policy directives because of cultural inclinations.

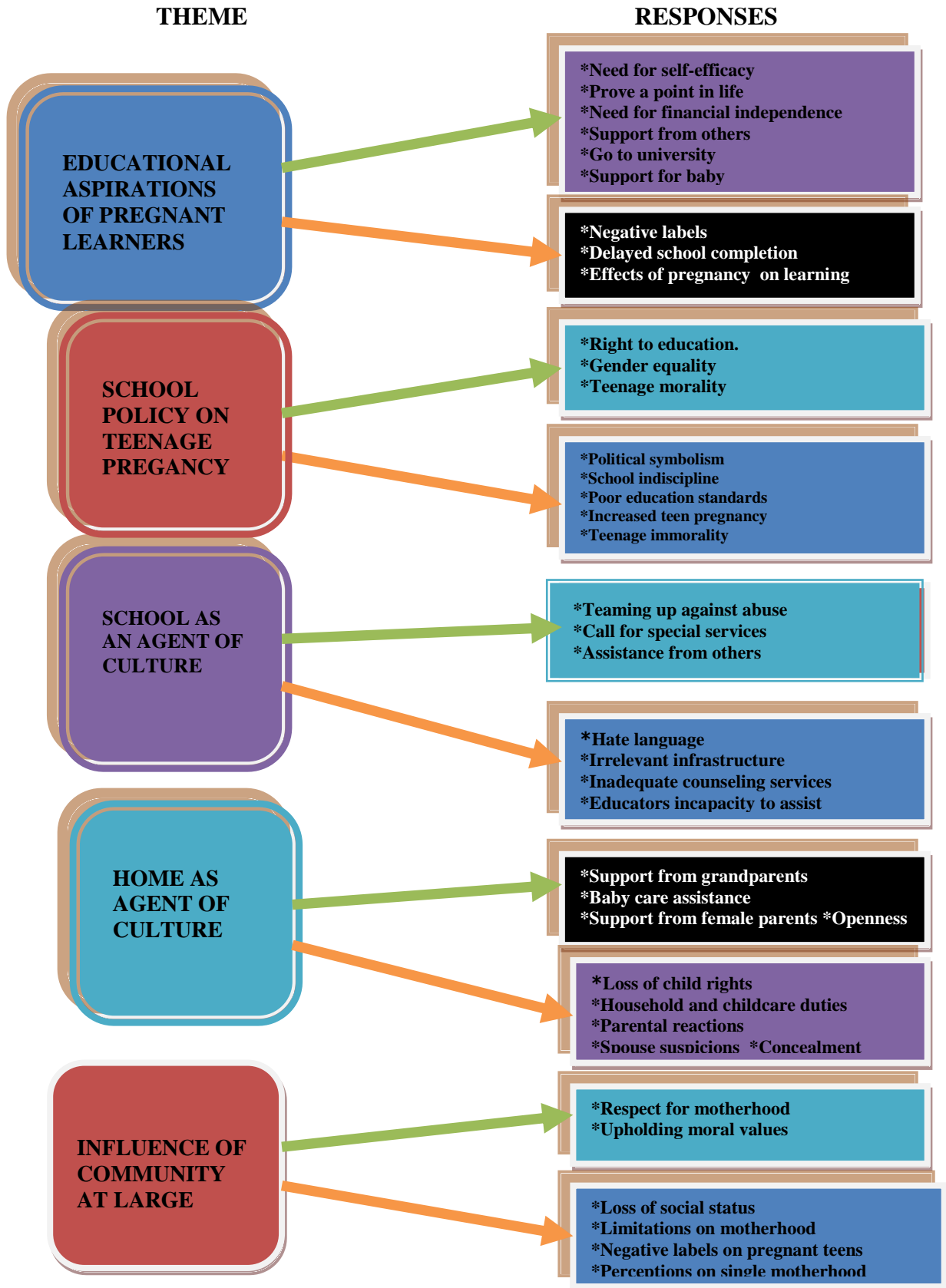
In the previous chapter, I highlighted and discussed the data that emerged from this study in relation to related literature and findings from other research studies. From reviewed literature, it would appear that the opposition to liberal policies that allow for inclusion of

pregnant learners into formal schools, which was revealed in the study, is not an isolated phenomenon. Even in the USA, where programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been in place for a while, several studies have shown that welfare grants and educating pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are still viewed as a waste of resources and a way of rewarding deviant child behaviour (Carlson, 1992; Kelly, 1998; Burdell, 1998). Such opposition, as the current study revealed, was found to be associated with traditional and conservative values and attitudes that were against teenage pregnancy and single motherhood.

## **7.2 Summary of emerging themes and findings**

Figure 7.1 is a summary of the positive and negative institutional responses to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers that emerged from gathered data at the two formal schools where I conducted the study. The positive factors represent opportunities for achieving equitable educational provision for pregnant learners, while the negative represent current challenges to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers in formal schools.

Figure 7.1: Institutional responsiveness to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners



As illustrated in figure 7.1, five themes, which explained how the study participants responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools, emerged from this study. The (top) green arrows in the figure point to the responses that I classified as the positive responses to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal schools, while the (bottom) orange arrows indicate the negative responses.

The first theme revealed that pregnant teenagers who chose to continue with their schooling despite the negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, had set for themselves new goals after falling pregnant. Such goals, which included the need to be self-reliant, to prove a point in life and to proceed to tertiary education, seemed to act as motivating factors to continue with schooling. I equated this process of new goal setting after pregnancy to what Argyris and Schon (1974) call double-loop learning, whereby a person could engage in self reflection and adopt new life values and actions that could bring about desirable consequences or results. However, there appeared to be negative factors to the achievement of the new goals. The condition of pregnancy itself was one deterrent factor because it had side effects like stress, depression, emotional instability, and illness. This was found to result in irregular school attendance and delayed school completion or even voluntary withdrawal from school altogether.

Socio-cultural beliefs which participants held against the education policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with formal schooling were found to influence the negative responsiveness of the two schools to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. The study revealed that, with the exception of some educators at the Zimbabwean study site, all the other participants had no meaningful knowledge of official policy guidelines on prevention and management of pregnancy in schools. While some of the adult participants or policy duty bearers appreciated that policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education promoted every child's right to education and gender equality, there was general opposition to the continued enrolment of pregnant teenagers at both schools. There seemed to be a feeling that the policies were too permissive and could cause school indiscipline, an increase in teenage pregnancy and decline in the standard of schools.



A call was therefore, made at both study sites for special and separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant learners. At the Zimbabwean study site, most educators and parents called for pregnant learners to study at non-formal or correspondence, schools which they said are suitable for children who chose to be adults. The study found that motherhood was culturally equated to adulthood regardless of one's age and this seemed to militate against the pregnant learners' access to formal schooling.

In terms of enrolment, the study found that the South African school had more pregnant and former pregnant learners than the Zimbabwean school. This seemed to indicate that there were more educational opportunities for pregnant teenagers in South Africa than in Zimbabwe. I explained the difference in terms of the differential attitudes and reactions to teenage pregnancy, which were revealed at the two study sites.

Data from interviews seemed to indicate that it was more common for parents at the Zimbabwean study site to either chase a pregnant daughter away to the man suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy or to live elsewhere. This resulted in the suspension of school attendance or complete withdrawal from school.

It also emerged that pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school were less aware and less prepared to exercise their right to continue with schooling compared with their South African counterparts. The South African community appeared to be more accommodative of pregnant learners, while at the Zimbabwean school, marriage and not schooling was viewed as the better option for any pregnant girl regardless of her age. This was meant to restore the pregnant girl's social dignity as a woman. Overall, there seemed to be openness in approach to learner pregnancy at the South African school, as opposed to concealment of learner pregnancy at the Zimbabwean school which among other factors, was found to contribute to the difference in the population of enrolled pregnant learners at the two schools.

Both schools where the study was conducted were, in terms of infrastructure and human resource capacity, found to be inadequately prepared to cater for mainstreaming of

pregnant learners. Educators at both schools were found to be inadequately prepared to render relevant assistance and counselling services to pregnant learners.

Boys and female educators were alleged to verbally abuse pregnant learners more than other participants. Male educators felt more incapacitated to assist pregnant and former pregnant learners because there were suspicions in both communities that they could end up having sexual relationships with them. This was because pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are viewed as easy targets for sexual abuse.

This study found that, in the family, the nature of parental reactions to a daughters' pregnancy had implications on the nature of treatment and support they gave to pregnant learners' educational needs. In Zimbabwe, most parents were reported to send their daughters away to either the man suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy or to a close relative who lived elsewhere. This seemed to be one reason why there were fewer pregnant learners at the Zimbabwean school than at the South African school. I concluded that the integration of pregnant learners had not reached any meaningful level at the Zimbabwean school because of conservatism to teenage pregnancy in the broader community.

Dialogue was found to be an important indicator of the level of support which parents gave to their pregnant daughter's educational aspirations and needs. Where parents were prepared to discuss the problem with the pregnant daughter, there seemed to be more support for the girl to continue with school. From what pregnant learners said, it appears that most parents became negative towards their pregnant daughter, to the extent that this could lead to the learner losing their normal childhood rights and privileges.

However, female parents were reported to give more support to pregnant daughters than their male counterparts. In some cases, parental conflict was reported, which negatively affected the pregnant learners' schooling. There were some few female parents who established partnerships with the school where their pregnant daughters attended. Such

parents were reported to accompany their pregnant daughters to school and to protect them from public abuses.

Finally, this study revealed that the participants' negative perceptions to the education policy that allowed for the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers, and the patterns of interaction with and treatment of pregnant learners in the school and the family seemed to be driven by the whole community's negative labelling of teenage pregnancy and single motherhood. Because the school and family are microcosms of the community, the study found that socio-cultural values were reflected in the way participants responded to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the school. Besides the negative perceptions to teenage pregnancy and single motherhood, cultural limitations on pregnancy and breast-feeding also retard pregnant teenagers' access to formal schooling at both study sites. In Zimbabwe for example, it was revealed that when a woman is carrying her first pregnancy she was expected to be confined in the home.

### **7.3 Responding to research questions**

#### *Research question 1*

*How do education stakeholders in South Africa and Zimbabwe conceptualise and perceive policy guidelines on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education?*

The study revealed that, at both the South African and Zimbabwean schools, most study participants demonstrated inadequate knowledge on the policy that allows pregnant learners to be enrolled in formal schools. All participants indicated that there was no formal dialogue between the school management and other education stakeholders on school policy. The affected pregnant learners and their parents also confirmed that they had not held discussions with the school management when the girls had fallen pregnant.

However, some of the educators at the Zimbabwean school demonstrated meaningful understanding of the national policy provisions of the MoESC policy circular of 1999, which guide schools on how to handle girls who fall pregnant while at school.

There were negative sentiments and attitudes towards the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools. Most participants indicated that the policy contravened their cultural values on pregnancy and ideal motherhood. At both schools, participants claimed that the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools could cause teenage ill-discipline, increased teenage pregnancy and a decline in the the standard of education.

While most participants acknowledged that pregnant teenagers had the right to education, they called on authorities to establish separate schools for pregnant teenagers. It was further suggested that pregnant and former pregnant learners should pursue their educational aspirations through the non-formal education system, which accommodates adult people.

### *Research question 2*

*How are policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools translated into practice in South African and Zimbabwean schools?*

Observations on the ground, and school records indicated that the South African school had enrolled more pregnant learners in 2008 and 2009, than the Zimbabwean school (Appendix 13.1<sup>27</sup>). There appears to be more stigmatisation of pregnant teenagers in the Zimbabwean community, to the extent that pregnant learners either preferred to suspend their schooling, or transfer to another school after delivery. Mainstreaming was found not being meaningfully implemented at the Zimbabwean school, compared to its South African counterpart. However, while there were more pregnant learners at the South African school, most stakeholders did not adequately play their roles as outlined by the policy guidelines on management of school girl pregnancy.

Education stakeholders in both countries were found to be inadequately prepared to handle issues related to school girl pregnancy. There were no follow-ups on pregnant learners and no records were maintained to monitor the attendance, participation and academic performance of pregnant learners at both schools.

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<sup>27</sup> Appendix 13.1: Records on population and school participation of pregnant learners

Overall, the study revealed that there is no systematic policy dialogue and implementation at both the South African and Zimbabwean schools. The study concurred with Argyris and Schon's theoretical proposition, that there is usually a split between organisational policy and how its management and stakeholders acted (Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Argyris, Pitman & Smith, 1985; Anderson, 1997).

### *Research question 3*

*How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the school, in the family and in the community?*

Data from both study sites indicated that there were socio-cultural factors that influenced participants' attitudes and treatment of pregnant learners. Teenage pregnancy was found to be negatively perceived in both the South African and Zimbabwean communities, and this appeared to also influence the negative manner in which pregnant learners were treated in the home, the school and the broader community. Pregnant learners are viewed as a bad influence to other learners and therefore are 'excluded' from taking important responsibilities in the home, the school and the community.

Because of negative labels associated with teenage pregnancy and single motherhood in the community, it would appear that pregnant learners lose their status in the family, the school and the community. Pregnant learners are not given important responsibilities in the school, the family and the community at large. Hate language against, and isolation of pregnant learners were reported in the school, the family and the community. Negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy seem to have negative consequences on pregnant learners' educational access and participation.

### *Research question 4*

*What factors motivate and demotivate pregnant learners to remain in school during and after pregnancy?*

At both schools, some pregnant learners who chose to remain in school were found to be motivated. This was seen through their act of setting new goals for themselves after falling pregnant. The new goals included the desire to prove that they could improve their

lives, complete school, go to university, be financially independent and not disappoint their parents again. New goal-setting is a process in which some pregnant teenagers reflected on their past mistakes and redefined their future goals and behaviour. The study found that although the school, the home and the community environments are negative to teenage pregnancy, pregnant learners who set new goals for themselves were determined to continue with their education.

In some cases, support from significant people such as friends, other pregnant learners and parents can motivate pregnant learners to remain in school. Pregnant learners and their friends were found to team up and fight back against abusive behaviour from some of the mainstream learners at the school. There were also few reports of mothers of pregnant learners who established partnerships with schools by visiting the school and accompanying their pregnant daughters to school. Such parental support was found to protect pregnant learners from abusive behaviour from the public. It also helped to restore the pregnant learners' confidence and self-image.

My study found that hostile attitudes in the community, the school and the family demotivated pregnant teenagers to remain in school. The communities at both study sites viewed pregnant teenagers as a bad influence and therefore, felt that they should be enrolled in non-formal or special schools. This was viewed as a punitive measure to deter other learners from sexual misbehaviour.

Most participants felt that it is unfair to expect educators to teach pregnant learners because they did not receive adequate training on this. Furthermore, hate speech, negative labelling of pregnant learners as failures and isolation were reported at both schools. These are forms of stigma that can push pregnant girls out of school.

In the family, pregnant learners lose their childhood rights and close relationship with parents. Family support for schooling can be uncertain because a pregnant girl is expected to get married rather than continue with schooling. In Zimbabwe, where people are more conservative, most parents chase their pregnant daughters away to the men

suspected to be responsible for the pregnancy. In other cases, parents at the Zimbabwean study site concealed the pregnancy of their daughters by sending them to live away from home. This can result in the pregnant girl dropping out of school.

Due to more conservatism in the Zimbabwean community, the school management lacked the political will to enrol pregnant learners because they claimed that it destroys the reputation of the school in the community. This could explain why the Zimbabwean school enrolled fewer pregnant learners than the South African school. It appears that the South African community is more open and accommodative to pregnant teenager than the Zimbabwean community.

#### **7.4 Limitations of the study**

Although case studies are credited for their depth in exploration of a given phenomenon within a defined setting, there is a wide ranging debate that raises questions about the generalisation of their findings to the universe of the targeted population because of their small sample size (Ambert et al., 1995; Berg, 2001; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Schewardt, 2007). Likewise, in this study, although a wide range of participants were interviewed to achieve an in-depth exploration of the topic, only one school from each country was selected because it suited the specified objectives of the study. Because the two schools could not represent all the schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond schools whose demographic characteristics match the schools where the study was conducted.

In this study, concentration was on participants who had daily interaction with pregnant learners. Only senior educators or those whose responsibilities related to pregnant learners and mainstream learners, who studied with pregnant learners were purposely selected to participate in the study. This excluded the views of other educators and professionals such as psychologists, social workers, doctors and nurses, whose areas of expertise are also linked to the condition of teenage pregnancy.

One method of data collection which had been planned for this study was documentary study of school records on educational participation and performance of pregnant and former pregnant learners. However, adequate data could not be obtained on academic profiles to analyse school performance before, during and after pregnancy, over a fairly long period of time. Educators did not maintain specific and systematic progress records that could be used to track performance of pregnant and former pregnant learners. Apart from what the participants said, the study did not therefore establish a quantifiable conclusion on the relationship between teenage pregnancy and academic performance, which was based on progress records.

## **7.5 Contributions of the study**

Although the findings of this case study may not be generalised in a generic manner, the study made a contribution in confirming, strengthening and refining some existing theoretical propositions, and also generated knowledge that departed from current empirical studies.

### **7.5.1 Significance of the study to policy and practice**

This study revealed that there is inadequate dialogue on, and understanding of policy among stakeholders within the school. Because most study participants demonstrated insufficient knowledge on policy, there is need for policy advocacy and dissemination in schools. Such a process could help to identify and critique cultural beliefs and customs that could be harmful to every child's right to education.

My study revealed that the two schools were generally inadequately equipped to deal with the psycho-social challenges that pregnant learners usually encounter (McGaha-Garnett, 2007; Miller et al., 2008; Richter & Mlambo, 2005). It is therefore recommended that, teenage pregnancy and counselling should be studied as contemporary educational problems in teacher training and development courses.



Structures for counselling should be established in schools to assist education stakeholders to cope with the different challenges such as HIV/Aids, orphanhood, child-headed households and teenage pregnancy.

### **7.5.2 Generation of new knowledge**

Most studies conducted in Africa on school girl pregnancy have made use of either demographic data on teenage fertility, female school dropout rates and policy analysis, to make inferences on effects of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood on education (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Gordon, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Ritchers & Hof, 1999; MoESC, 2004; Manzini, 2001). The current study is unique in that its findings are based on primary data from pregnant and former pregnant learners, their parents, educators and mainstream peers, who experienced the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schooling. A number of African countries such as Malawi, Namibia, Cameroon, Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe have policies that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; UNICEF, 2004; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996). However, no study has been conducted to evaluate the utility of these policies on the ground. My study has therefore broken new ground by exploring how the intended policy beneficiaries and policy implementers in African communities perceive and experience the phenomenon of mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal schools.

A review of studies conducted in Africa on teenage pregnancy indicates that most researchers have focused on teenage pregnancy as a cause of school dropout and delayed school completion rates among girls (Gordon, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999; Mokgalabone, 1999; Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001). The studies have therefore contributed more to the analysis of gender disparities in educational access, completion and outcomes. My study has taken a new dimension by contributing to the understanding of how pregnant learners experience formal schooling. The study also helps to reveal how the different actors in

social institutions such as the family and the community can influence how formal schools respond to the mainstreaming of pregnant teenagers.

Currently, the principle of education as a basic human right is assumed to be universally non-negotiable (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2003; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001; Bray, 1996; Prinsloo, 2005; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). However, this study has revealed that while education is a basic right for every child, the manner in which the right is defined accessed by and extended to some children is contextual due to diverse socio-cultural value systems. This study found that the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools could contravene Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which calls for the protection and safeguarding of the cultural values of indigenous children (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2003). The study revealed that while pregnant teenagers have the right to education, most participants felt that pregnant learners should not be enrolled in formal schools because it disturbs the learning atmosphere due to cultural beliefs on pregnancy and motherhood.

Studies in Africa by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1998b) and Mensch et al (2001) concur with the feminist theoretical discourse (MacDonald, 1981; Gordon, 1996; Bryson, 1992; Stromquist, 1998) that the school is a patriarchal institution that reproduces female subordination through male domination and harassment. Findings of this study caution the generalisation of this proposition because female educators at both study sites were alleged to verbally abuse pregnant learners more than their male counterparts. It would appear from my study that where the ideal motherhood or womanhood qualities are threatened, some women might compromise the principle of gender equality.

From studies conducted in Zimbabwe and South Africa, Hof and Richters (1999) and Grant and Hallman (2006) concurred that most teenage mothers dropped out of school because of poor academic performance before they became pregnant. They concluded that pre-pregnancy school participation was a key determinant factor for teenage mothers' decisions to drop out of school. The current study refined this research proposition after

realising that most pregnant learners in this study were motivated to continue with schooling despite negative attitudes from other people. Falling pregnant was found to be a turning point for some of the girls. The girls were found to have ‘awakened and matured’ after falling pregnant, and set for themselves new goals. New goal-setting can be a motivating factor for pregnant teenagers to remain in school, despite the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy.

## **7.6 Revisiting research assumptions**

This study was informed by four assumptions that emerged from reviewed literature. In this section, I therefore make a brief introspection of the four research assumptions using findings from my study.

### *Research assumption 1*

*Most pregnant teenagers drop out of school because of an unfriendly school environment (Mensch et al., 2001; Weigand, 2005)*

There were reports of hate speech against pregnant and former pregnant learners at both schools. Most pregnant learners reported that they were isolated from mainstream learners. Most participants preferred to have separate schools for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, rather than to mainstream them in formal schools. Therefore, the findings of this study seem to concur with the first research assumption.

### *Research assumption 2*

*Negative attitudes to teenage pregnancy in society can result in poor educational access and participation by pregnant learners (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).*

Pregnant learners at both study sites reported that boys and female educators used abusive language against them. The study revealed that pregnant learners received limited support within the school, the home and in the broader community. In the broader community, there were negative attitudes towards pregnant learners, who were labeled as failures. Available school records indicated a decline in the quality and subsequent achievement in

the school work of pregnant learners. This research assumption was therefore confirmed by the findings of this study.

*Research assumption 3*

*Educators are not adequately equipped to implement new education policies at the school level (Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999)*

Educators, school governing board members and parents at both schools demonstrated inadequate knowledge on their responsibilities towards the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in school. There was no formal dialogue on policy at both study sites. Educators expressed concern that they had not received any professional training or counseling on how to handle and manage issues related to teenage pregnancy. On the basis of these observations, this research assumption was confirmed by my study.

*Research assumption 4*

*Pregnant teenagers lack motivation to learn (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999)*

Although academic records indicated that school performance declined during the period of pregnancy, pregnant learners who remained in school said they were keen to change their future through education. They set new goals for themselves. These included proving that they could do something in life, furthering their education up to university, being able to look after their babies and not disappointing their parents again. The findings of this study went against this assumption from the reviewed literature. From this observation, I therefore posit that, despite challenges that pregnant learners can face in the home, the school and the community, they can still be motivated to complete their education.

## **7.7 Recommendations for further research**

This research was a case study of only two schools, and therefore its findings may not be generalised to other schools in South Africa and Zimbabwe. It is therefore recommended that a comprehensive survey that could include different types of schools and communities affected by teenage pregnancy be conducted because communities do not

conceive and respond to a given phenomenon in the same way. Furthermore, surveys usually employ data gathering instruments and methods that accommodate larger samples than case studies.

Although the study had also been designed to gather quantifiable data on the educational outcomes of pregnant learners, no meaningful records were available on academic results of pregnant learners over a period of time. Another study should be conducted to generate quantitative data on how the policy on mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal schools might benefit the right bearers in both countries. Such a study should investigate the school, circuit, district, provincial and national records on academic performance of learners, who wrote final school examinations while they were pregnant or just after giving birth.

My study focused on how the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education was responded to by education stakeholders at two schools selected from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The former pregnant learners who participated in focus group interviews seemed to differ from pregnant learners in the way they experienced schooling. Therefore, another study that could track and compare the educational outcomes of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers could give an even broader perspective on this subject.

## **7.8 Chapter summary and conclusion**

This study found more similarities than differences in the manner in which the two schools responded to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. At both schools, socio-cultural factors seemed to be more influential than official school policy in defining the place of pregnant learners in formal schools. Cultural beliefs and norms against teenage pregnancy and single motherhood were found to be the foundation upon which negative perceptions and treatment of pregnant teenagers in the community, home and the school were based.

Negative factors to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at both schools included a lack of political will to assist pregnant learners by educators, hate language within and outside the school and negative labelling of pregnant learners as children who were undisciplined, immoral and had lost their future. Such perceptions and treatment seemed to make pregnant learners feel unwelcome at school, to the extent that most of these at the Zimbabwean study site chose to suspend school attendance or even voluntarily withdraw from school altogether because of the expectation that a pregnant girl should be married rather than remain in school.

According to policy, there should be equal treatment of the pregnant girl and boy who is responsible for the pregnancy (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999). From complains made by most female parents, it seems not much was being done at both schools to boys who were suspected to be responsible for impregnating a girl.

With regard to policy implementation, the study tended to agree with the theoretical framework that underpinned the study, namely Argyris and Schon's action science theoretical proposition that there is usually a split between most organisations' official policies or codes of ethics and what management and workers do on the ground (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1990; Al-Kazemi & Zajac, 1999; Malen et al., 2002; Argyris & Crossan, 1993; Schon, 1982). This was illustrated by the observation that while both schools were supposed to be guided by national policy guidelines (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999) to identify and manage the educational challenges that could be faced by pregnant learners, the policies were not adequately implemented by both school administration and educators. From what the participants said, it would appear that the inadequate implementation of policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy at the two schools was linked to the negative perceptions that most of the study participants held against the inclusion of pregnant learners in formal schools. Instead, there was a call from most participants that pregnant learners should be isolated in their own special schools because mainstreaming them in ordinary schools lowered the reputation and educational standards of schools.

Another reason for ineffective policy implementation seems to be the inadequate knowledge on the provisions of the policy guidelines on the management of pregnancy in schools by most of the policy duty bearers like educators, community representatives in school governing bodies and parents. Some educators at the Zimbabwean study site, however, reflected meaningful understanding of the policy, while their counterparts at the South African school seemed to lack basic knowledge of the roles they were expected to play according to the policy guidelines. In concurrence with Argyris and Schon's action science theory, it appeared that the governing values that tended to inform most of the participants' attitudes and treatment of, and institutional responsiveness to pregnant learners were socially acquired within the socio-cultural setting of the broader community than guided by organisational policy.

However, while there were these barriers to the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at formal schools where the study was conducted, there seems to be the possibility for opportunities to redress the negative attitudes towards pregnant learners among the education stakeholders. One such opportunity was that, despite the negative factors, some pregnant teenagers seemed to have set for themselves new goals, which gave them the resilience to continue with schooling. Furthermore, participants at both study sites acknowledged that pregnant teenagers have the right to education, just like any other children. This recognition could be an avenue through which the policy on mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal schools could be advocated and justified to all stakeholders like school management, educators, parents and mainstream learners. Besides, the fact that the study participants were aware that policy prohibits the expulsion of pregnant learners from school, can be used as a stepping stone to assist schools in developing school-based guidelines to identify and cater for the educational needs of pregnant learners.

In view of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy the world over and the fact that education is a basic human right, I conclude this study by recommending that formal schools should redefine and broaden their roles so as to identify and accommodate the needs of children who might fall pregnant while at school.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Research Topic registration: University of Pretoria



8 January 2009

Mr T Runhare  
Number 23  
Rooibok Road  
LOUIS TRICHARDT  
0920

Dear Mr Runhare

**TOPIC: THESIS**

I have pleasure in informing you that the following has been approved:

**TOPIC:** A comparative case study of institutional responsiveness to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education

**SUPERVISOR:** Prof S Vandeyar

**CO-SUPERVISOR:** -

The appropriate regulations for the requirements of theses appear in the General Regulations of the University.

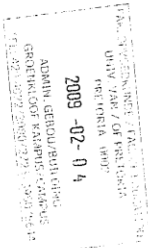
Shortened guidelines for the submission and technical details of theses are attached.

Your enrolment as a student must be renewed annually until you have complied with all the requirements for the degree, preferably during the official period of enrolment but before **February 28**. No re-registrations will be accepted after **February 28**. You will only be entitled to the guidance of your supervisor if annual proof of registration can be submitted.

Yours sincerely

Ms Wilda Stander

Telephone: (012) 420 2725 / Fax: (012) 420 5933  
Email: wilda.stander@up.ac.za



## Appendix 2.1: Letter from Ethics Committee: University of Pretoria

I.A APFC



Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee

23 April 2009

Dear Mr Runhare

**REFERENCE: EM08/11/01**

Your application was carefully considered and discussed during a Faculty of Education Ethics Committee meeting and the final decision of the Ethics Committee is:

Your application is approved on the following conditions:

- 1) That the research strategy that will be utilised in the study does not require that the participants offer very private and personal information about themselves.
- 2) That it is made clear to the focus group participants that there are limits to confidentiality. Confidentiality cannot guarantee because there is no control over other participants in the focus group.

This letter serves as notification that you may continue with your research. You do not have to re-submit an application. The above-mentioned issues can be addressed in consultation with your supervisor who will take final responsibility.

Please note that this is **not a clearance certificate**. Upon completion of your research you need to submit the following documentation to the Ethics Committee:

- 1) Investigator(s) Declaration that you adhered to conditions stipulated in this letter (D08/01).
- 2) Investigator(s) Declaration for the storage of research data and/or documents (Form D08/02).
- 3) Supervisor's Declaration for the storage of research data and/or documents (Form D08/03).

On receipt of the above-mentioned documents you will be issued a clearance certificate. Please quote the reference number EM08/11/01 in any communication with the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes,

Dr Salome Human-Vogel  
Chair: Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Education

## Appendix 2.2: Ethical clearance certificate: University of Pretoria



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**DATE CONSIDERED**

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :**

EM08/11/01

PhD: Education Policy Studies

A comparative case study of institutional responsiveness to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education.

Mr Tawanda Runhare

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

22 July 2010

APPROVED

Please note:

*For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years*

*For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE** Prof L Ebersohn

**DATE**

22 July 2010

**CC**

Prof Vandeyar  
Ms Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

Appendix 3: Permission to conduct research: Senior education manager (South Africa)



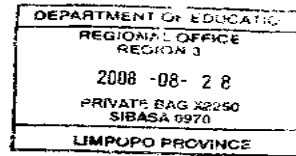
**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X2250  
SIBASA  
0970  
Tel: (015) 962 1315  
962 1331  
Fax: (015) 962 6039  
(015) 962 3674

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

REF:13/3/2/11  
ENQ: J.MAGUGUMELA.

University of Venda  
School of Human and Social Sciences  
Department of Teacher Education  
Private Bag x5050  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950



Attention: TAWANDA RUNHARE

*Given to M. Masala  
Registry 20080828*

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: A case study of Institutional Responsiveness to Mainstreaming of Pregnant Learners in Formal Education.**

1. The above matter has reference.
2. We acknowledge receipt of your request to conduct research on the above mentioned topic.
3. Permission is granted to conduct research as requested on condition that normal teaching and learning is not disrupted.
4. This serves to introduce to the Circuit manager and the Principal under whose jurisdiction the identified school shall be.
5. We wish you success in your endeavour to be involved in finding solutions to challenges facing the successful provision of better quality education.

*[Signature]*  
DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER FOR EDUCATION

*20080828*  
DATE

**VHEMBE DISTRICT**  
**THOHOYANDOU GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS; OLD PARLIAMENT; BLOCK D**  
*55th Anniversary of South Africa - Development is about people*

## Appendix 4: Permission to conduct research: Circuit Manager (South Africa)



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**VHEMBE DISTRICT**

Nzhelele West Circuit  
Private Bag X1001  
Dzanani  
0955  
Telefax: 015 970 4537

---

**NZHELELE WEST CIRCUIT**

Ref: 915170  
Enq: Circuit Manager  
Tel : 015 970 4537  
Cel : 071 676 4371

To: The Principal

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: TAWANDA RUNHARE: A case study of Institutional Responsiveness to Mainstreaming of Pregnant Learners in Formal Education.

1. The above matter have reference
2. Permission has been granted to Tawanda Runhare to conduct research on the above mentioned topic.
3. Permission is granted to conduct research as requested on condition that normal teaching and learning is not disrupted.
4. Hoping that you will find this in order.

  
-----  
THE CIRCUIT MANAGER: NZHELELE WEST

17/09/2009  
-----  
Date

---

NZHELELE WEST CIRCUIT MAKHADO EMPC ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS  
Private Bag X1001, Dzanani, 0955, Telefax: 015 970 4537

**1**

*The Heart Land of South Africa – Development is about people! **Baso Paba, People First, Vhatlu Phanda!***

---



## Appendix 5: Permission to conduct research: Secretary for Education (Zimbabwe)

all communications should be addressed to  
"The Secretary for Education Sport and Culture"  
Telephone: 734051/59 and 734071  
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"  
Fax: 734075



Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture  
P.O Box CY 121  
Causeway  
Zimbabwe

MR TAWANDA REINHARD  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture institutions <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~

A CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS TO  
COMPARATIVE  
MAINTAINING OF PREGNANT LEARNERS IN FORMAL  
EDUCATION: HARARE AND MIDLANDS PROVINCES.

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director responsible for the schools from which you want to research.

You are also required to provide the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture with the final copy of your research since it is instrumental to the development of Education in Zimbabwe.



  
Z. M. Chitiga

For: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE**



**Appendix 6: Permission to conduct research: Provincial Education Director  
(Zimbabwe)**

All communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director  
Education, Sport and Culture"  
Telephone: 222911/4 and 2  
23225/6  
Fax: 226482



Ministry of Education  
Sport, Arts and Culture  
P.O. Box 737  
GWERU

Mr/Ms/Miss **TAWANDA RUMHARE**

Deputy Regional Director  
Ministry of Education  
and Culture: Midlands  
17 NOV 2009  
(Primary Education)  
P.O. Box 737, Gwelo

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL  
RESEARCH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN MIDLANDS PROVINCE

Permission to carry out a research on **A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF  
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS TO MAINSTREAMING  
OF PREGNANT LEARNERS IN FORMAL EDUCATION;  
HARARE AND MIDLANDS PROVINCES.**

In Midlands Province has been granted on these conditions

- that in carrying out this you do not disturb the learning/teaching programmes in schools
- that you avail the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture with a copy of your research findings
- that this permission can be withdrawn at anytime by the Provincial Education Director or by any higher officer

The Education Director wishes you success in your research work, and in your University College studies

*T. Nyahwa*  
PP. EDUCATION OFFICER (PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL SERVICES)  
FOR PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR, MIDLANDS

## Appendix 7: Participant consent forms

### Appendix 7.1



Faculty of Education  
University of Pretoria  
PRETORIA 0002

2008

## INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

### Introduction

My name is Mr Tawanda Runhare. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria carrying out research on **policy guidelines that allow for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools.**

I am requesting for permission to select 30 learners (some of whom will be pregnant or former pregnant), from your school to take participate in the research by expressing their views on the topic.

For you to make an informed decision on this, you should have full information and understanding of what the study is about and how the learners will be involved. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask or phone me on the following numbers: 015 962 8412/079 216 3502 (South Africa) or 052 6712/011 716228 (Zimbabwe). You are reminded that participation is entirely on voluntary basis and therefore no one will take part until she/he fully understands what the research is all about and is happy with what she/he will do in the study.

### What is the purpose of the study?

The main purpose of the study is to gather the views of school principals, teachers, learners, parents and community members in the school governing boards on policy guidelines that allow pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education at formal schools. This information will be used to analyse the strengths/benefits and weaknesses/disadvantages of the policies and suggest how they could be improved.

### **How will they participate in the study?**

If you grant this permission, the learners who volunteer to participate will be asked some questions on the research topic and to share their views in a group of between 6 to 8 people of the same age, gender, circumstances and socio-cultural origins. The group discussion will take about one hour. The discussion will not be an oral examination and therefore all the views expressed will be correct because there are many perceptions to the same policy.

### **What are the rights of the learners as research participants?**

The decision to take part in this study is totally voluntary, that is, every learner will be free to accept, or refuse to take part in the study if she/he has some doubts or thinks that her/his participation could leave her/him emotionally or psychologically disturbed. Furthermore, should she/he agree to take part but change her/his mind later, she/he will be allowed to withdrawal from the study at any stage and time, without being asked any questions.

### **What are the risks of participating in the study?**

Since the learners shall only be answering questions on the topic being studied, there will be no foreseeable physical injuries that could result from their participation. However, the ideas they will express will be known by the other members of the group. They will therefore be advised not to say any information about themselves that they would not share with other people or that could leave them feeling emotionally disturbed. However, if one thinks that such information is important to this study, she/he can write and put it into the school suggestion box, without indicating her/his name.

Also, as the study is not about anyone's personal or private life, but on views towards pregnancy policies in schools, there should be no emotional risks if one chooses to take part.

### **How will participants' personal privacy and confidentiality be protected?**

As already stated, the learners will not be asked to talk about their private life but to express their views on pregnancy policies in schools.

All views gathered in the study will be handled in a strictly confidential manner: First, participants will not be allowed to say their names throughout the discussion and gathered information will not be linked to any name in the report of the study. Second, the gathered information will only be used for this study and not disclosed to any unauthorised people. Lastly, all participants will have a chance to cross-check the information before and after it is put into a report. This will be done at another meeting, which will be held between the researcher and the focus groups that would have participated.

### **Has the study got approval from authorities?**

Written permission to carry out this research in schools was granted by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee (University of Pretoria) and the relevant department of the Ministry of Education. However, this does not mean that learners will take part in the study against their will. Furthermore, before learners below the age of 18 years can volunteer to participate, their parents will first give written permission.

### **INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION FORM**

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Pretoria, I now invite you to complete this form as an indication of your permission for learners at your school to voluntarily participate in this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. The rights and risks of learners' participation have also been fully explained to me. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and time, without giving any reasons.

I therefore hereby freely **Give/Do not give** my consent for the learners to voluntarily take part in the study as outlined (**Delete the inapplicable**).

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 7.2



Faculty of Education  
University of Pretoria  
PRETORIA 0002

2008

### **INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Introduction**

My name is Mr Tawanda Runhare. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria carrying out research on **policy guidelines that allow for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools.**

I am inviting you to volunteer to take part in the research by expressing your opinions on the topic.

For you to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not, you should have full information and understanding on what the study is about and how you will be involved. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask by writing your questions (**without writing your name**) and placing them in the school suggestion box or phoning me on the following numbers: 015 962 8412/079 216 3502 (South Africa) or 052 6712/011 716228 (Zimbabwe). Since this is not official work, you are therefore reminded that you are not forced to take part and that you should not agree to take part until you fully understand what the research is all about and are happy with what you will do in the study.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The main purpose of the study is to gather the views of school principals, teachers, learners, parents and community members of the school governing boards on policy guidelines that allow pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education at formal schools. This information will be used to analyse the strengths/benefits and weaknesses/disadvantages of the policies and suggest how they could be improved.

#### **How will you participate in the study?**

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked some questions on the research topic and share your views in a group of between 6 to 8 other people of the same age and gender. The group discussion will take about one and half hours. The discussion will not

be an oral examination and therefore all the views expressed will be correct because there are many perceptions to the same policy.

### **What are your rights as a research participant?**

Your decision to take part in this study is totally voluntary, that is, you are free to refuse to take part in the study if you have some doubts or if you think that your participation could leave you emotionally or psychologically disturbed. Furthermore, should you agree to take part, but change your mind later, you are allowed to withdrawal yourself from the study at any stage and time, without being asked any questions or giving any reasons.

### **What are the risks for your participation in the study?**

Since you shall only be answering questions on the topic being studied, there will be no foreseeable physical injuries that could result from your participation. However, the ideas you will express will be known by the other members of your focus group. You should therefore not say any information about yourself that you would not share with other people or that could leave you feeling emotionally disturbed. If you think that such information is however important to this study, you can write and put it into the school suggestion box, without indicating your name.

Also, as the study is not about your personal or private life, but on your views towards pregnancy policies in schools, there should be no emotional risks if you choose to take part.

### **How will your personal privacy and confidentiality be protected?**

As already mentioned, you will not be asked to talk about your private life but to express your views on pregnancy policies in schools. For this reason, you are advised to only answer what you are asked.

All views gathered in the study will be handled in a strictly confidential manner. First, you will not be allowed to say your name throughout the discussion and gathered information will not be linked to any name in the report of the study. Second, the gathered information will only be used for this study and not disclosed to any unauthorised people. Lastly, all participants will have a chance to cross-check the information before and after it is put into a report. This will be done at another meeting which will be held between the researcher and your focus group.

### **Has the study got approval from authorities?**

Permission to carry out this research in schools was granted by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee (University of Pretoria), the Ministry of Education, the school principal and parents. However, this does not mean that you should take part in the study against your will.

## INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION FORM

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Pretoria, I now invite you to complete this form as an indication of your voluntary acceptance to take part in this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. The rights and risks of my participation have also been fully explained to me, and I have read and fully understood what this study is all about. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the study at any stage and time without giving any reasons.

I therefore hereby freely **Give/Do not give** my consent to participate in this study (**Delete the inapplicable**).

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 7.3



Faculty of Education  
University of Pretoria  
PRETORIA 0002

2008

### **INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS**

#### **Introduction**

My name is Mr Tawanda Runhare. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria carrying out research on **policy guidelines that allow for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools.**

I am inviting you to volunteer to take part in the research by expressing your opinions on the topic.

For you to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not, you should have full information and understanding on what the study is about and how you will be involved. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask by writing your questions (**without writing your name**) and placing them in the school suggestion box or phoning me on the following numbers: 015 962 8412/079 216 3502 if in South Africa or 052 6712/011 716228 if in Zimbabwe. Since this is not school work, you are therefore reminded that you are not forced to take part and that you should not agree to take part until you fully understand what the research is all about and happy with what you will do in the study.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The main purpose of the study is to gather the views of school principals, teachers, learners, parents and community members of the school governing bodies on policy guidelines that allow pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education at formal schools. This information will be used to analyse the strengths/benefits and weaknesses/disadvantages of the policies and suggest how they could be improved.

#### **How will you participate in the study?**

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked some questions on the research topic and share your views in a group of between 6 to 8 other learners. The focus group will be made up of other learners of the same age, gender, circumstances and attending at the same school as you. The group discussion will take about one hour. The discussion

will not be an oral test and therefore all the views expressed will be correct because there are many ways of looking at policy, rule or anything by different people.

### **What are your rights as a research participant?**

Your decision to take part in this study is totally voluntary, that is to say you are free to refuse to take part in the study if you still have some doubts or think that your participation could leave you emotionally or psychologically disturbed. Furthermore, should you agree to take part but change your mind later, you are allowed to withdrawal yourself from the study at any stage and time, without being asked any questions or giving any reasons.

### **What are the risks for your participation in the study?**

Since you shall only be answering questions on the topic being studied, there will be no foreseeable physical injuries that could result from your participation. However, the ideas you will express will be known by the other members of your focus group. You should therefore not say out any information about yourself that you do not want to share with other people or that could leave you feeling emotionally disturbed. If you think that such information is important to this study, you can write and put it into the school suggestion box without indicating your name.

Also, as the study is not about your personal or private life, but on your views towards pregnancy policies in schools, there should be no emotional risks if you choose to take part.

### **How will your personal privacy and confidentiality be protected?**

As already mentioned, you will not be asked to talk about your private life but to express your views on pregnancy policies in schools. For this reason you will be advised to only answer what the questions ask.

All views gathered in the study will be handled in a strictly confidential manner. First, you will not be allowed to say your name throughout the discussion and gathered information will not be linked to any name in the study report. Second, the gathered information will only be used for this study and not disclosed to any unauthorised people. Lastly, all participants will have a chance to cross-check the information before and after it is put into a report. This will be done at another meeting which will be held between the researcher and your focus group.

### **Has the study got approval from authorities?**

Permission to carry out this research in schools was granted by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee (University of Pretoria), the Ministry of Education, your school principal and parents. However, this does not mean that you should take part in the study against your will.

## INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION FORM

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Pretoria, I now invite you to complete this form as an indication of your voluntary acceptance to take part in this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and activities of the study. The benefits and risks of my participation have also been fully explained to me, and I have read and fully understood what this study is all about. I was given full opportunity to ask any questions and I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the study at any stage and time without giving any reasons.

I therefore hereby freely **Give/Do not give** my consent to participate in this study (**Delete the inapplicable**).

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 8: Focus group interview guides**

### **Appendix 8.1: Focus group interview guide for pregnant and former pregnant learners**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

**I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write and forward to me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.**

**Thank you.**

**Mr Tawanda Runhare.**

1. Do you understand the school policy on girls who become pregnant while at school?
  - 1.2 What is good about the policy?
  - 1.3 What is bad about the policy?
  - 1.4 What should be added to the policy?
  - 1.5 What should be removed from this policy?
  
2. When you look back, what was it like to be at school before you got pregnant?
  - 2.2 What is it like being at school now?
  
3. Would you say your educational plans have changed after getting pregnant?
  - 3.1 If yes explain how they have changed.
  
4. From your experience, how do the following people treat you? Give reasons why you think they have such behaviour, attitudes and treatment.
  - 4.1 Your parents.

4.2 Community members.

4.3 Your school/classmates.

4.4 Teachers.

5.1 Describe the traditional/cultural customs and practices that your community has on pregnant women.

5.2 What cultural/traditional customs and practices in your community do you find to be bad for your education now that you are pregnant/have a baby? Explain with examples from your experience or what you have seen.

6. From what you have experienced so far, what would you prefer from the following choices? Give reasons to support your choice.

6.1 To be at home during the period of pregnancy and only come back to school after giving birth. Why?

6.2 To continue with schooling throughout the period of pregnancy. Why?

6.3 To attend a correspondence or adult school. Why?

6.4 To stop going to school completely. Why?

7. Describe the reactions of the following to you when they got to know that you were pregnant?

7.1 Your parents

7.2 Your school/classmates

7.3 Teachers.

7.4 How did these reactions affect you as a learner?

8. Describe your daily life with the following people now that you are pregnant:

8.1 Your parents

8.2 Your school/classmates

8.3 Teachers

9. If given a choice where would you find it better to continue with schooling? Give reasons for your choice.

9.1 The school where you were before your pregnancy. Why?

9.2 A different school from where you were before your pregnancy. Why?

9.3 A correspondence or adult school. Why?

10. Are there any programmes or services at school that are meant to help you as a pregnant or formerly pregnant learner?

10.1 If yes, describe them.

10.2 If not, what do you suggest should be done?

11. Describe the problems that you are experiencing at school as a pregnant or former learner.

11.1 What do you suggest should be done to solve the problems?

12. As a pregnant or former pregnant learner, what do you expect from the following people?

12.1 Your parents.

12.3 Teachers.

12.4 Your school/classmates.

13. Has there been any change to your school performance after you got pregnant or gave birth. Give reasons for the change, if any.

14. If you look at the structures/facilities in the school, are they good for you as a pregnant or former pregnant learner? Explain your answer with examples.

14.2 What do you suggest should be done to meet your needs?

15. What things do you think should be done to the following to improve the learning of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

15.1 Teachers.

15.2 Your parents.

15.3 Your school/classmates.

16. The policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education in schools has been there for some time now.

16.1 Do you think the policy should be kept in schools or be stopped now? Why?

**Thank you once more for your participation and valuable ideas.**

**Tawanda Runhare**  
**PhD student University of Pretoria, 2008.**

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## Appendix 8.2: Focus group interview guide for mainstream learners

### INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

**I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write and forward to me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.**

**Thank you.**

**Tawanda Runhare.**

1. Do you understand school policy on girls who become pregnant while at school?
  - 1.1 What is good about the policy?
  - 1.2 What is bad about the policy?
  - 1.3 What should be added to the policy and why?
  - 1.4 What should be removed from the policy and why?
  
2. Describe the traditional/cultural values and practices that your community has on pregnancy.
  - 2.2 What cultural/traditional practices/values in your community affect the educational performance of pregnant learners? Explain with examples from your observations.
  - 2.2 What are the traditional sexuality education/beliefs/values in your community which affect the education of pregnant and formerly pregnant learners? Explain with examples from your observations.
  
3. From your observations, describe how the following people behave to and treat pregnant and formerly pregnant learners:
  - 3.1 Their parents.
  - 3.3 Teachers



3.4 Their school/classmates like you.

4. Where do you think it would be better for the pregnant and former pregnant learners to learn? Give reasons for your answer.

4.1 At the same school where they were before pregnancy.

4.2 At a different school from where they were before pregnancy.

4.3 At a correspondence or adult school.

4.4 To stop school altogether.

5. As school/classmates of pregnant and former pregnant learners, did you get any counseling on this?

5.1 If so, from whom and on what topics?

5.2 If not, is this important to you? Give reasons.

6. What do you think should be done to?

6.1 Pregnant and former pregnant learners to help them with their schooling?

6.2 Other learners who are learning with pregnant learners so that they can understand the pregnant and former pregnant learners in school.

7. From what you see, what do you think is best for the pregnant girls?

7.1 To continue with school during their pregnancy. Why?

7.2 To take a break from school and return after giving birth. Why?

8. From what you see, what do you think is best for pregnant and former pregnant learners?

8.1 To continue at the same school where they were before pregnancy.

8.2 To change to another school?

8.3 To stop schooling altogether. Why?

9. From your observations what problems do pregnant and formerly pregnant learners face?

9.1 At school.

9.2 At home.

9.3 What should be done to help solve these problems?

10. What things do you think should be done by the following to improve the learning of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

10.1 Teachers.

10.2 Their parents.

10.3 Other learners like you.

11. The policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education in schools has been there for some time now.

11.1 Do you think the policy should be kept in schools or be stopped now? Why?

**Thank you once more for your participation and valuable ideas.**

**Tawanda Runhare**  
**PhD student University of Pretoria, 2008.**

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### Appendix 8.3: Focus group interview guide for educators

#### INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

**I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write them and give me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.**

**Thank you.**

**Mr Tawanda Runhare.**

- 1.1. Does the school have a school policy on learners who could fall pregnant while at school?
- 1.2. What do you think are its strength and weaknesses?
2. What in your view should be added to and removed from the school policy? Give reasons.
3. From your experience and observations do you support the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools? Give reasons to support your answer.
4. From your observations, explain the attitudes towards or treatment of pregnant and former pregnant learners by the following people:
  - 4.1 Their parents.
  - 4.2 Other learners.
  - 4.3 Teachers in general.

5. From your observations, what problems do pregnant and former pregnant learners face that affect their school work?

5.1 At home.

5.2. In the community.

5.3. At school.

6.1 What are the customs and views that people in the community have towards teenage pregnancy?

6.2 How could such customs and views disadvantage the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

7. From your observations, do you think the school community supports the school policy on inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools? Explain your answer.

8. The policy that allows pregnant and formerly pregnant girls to continue with their education in formal schools has been there for some time now.

8.1 Do you think the policy should be continued or discontinued? Give reasons for your view.

9. What do think is best for the pregnant and former pregnant learners:

9.1 To continue at the school where they were before their pregnancy. Why?

9.2 To change to another school. Why?

9.3 To withdraw during pregnancy and come back to school only after giving birth. Why?

9.4 To attend a non-formal or adult school. Why?

9.5 To stop schooling altogether. Why?

10. Since the pregnant and formerly pregnant learners are in the school, does the school do anything to help them with their schooling?

10.1 If yes, give details.

10.2 If not what should be done?

11. Describe what you see to be the reactions of the following people on hearing that a school girl is pregnant:

11.1 Their parents.

11.2 You, as their teachers.

11.3 Other learners.

12 From school records are there some girls who have chosen to leave school due to pregnancy

12.1 If yes, what could be the reasons?

12.2 If not, what does the school do to help such learners?

13. Do the school facilities cater for the needs of pregnant learners?

13.1 If yes, in what way?

13.2 If not, what should be done?

14. Are there any programmes or services meant to cater for the special needs/problems of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

14.1 If yes give examples.

14.2 If not, what should be done?

15. Is anything being done by the school to prepare the following for the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant learners at the school?

15.1 Their parents.

15.2 Teachers.

15.3 Other learners.

15.4 Explain your answer.

16. Suggest what you think should be done to the following to improve the learning of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

16.1 Teachers.

16.2 Their parents.

16.3 Their school/classmates.

17. The policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education in schools has been there for some time now.

17.1 Do you think the policy should be kept in schools or be stopped now? Why?

**Thank you once more for your participation and valuable ideas.**

**Mr Tawanda Runhare**  
**PhD student University of Pretoria, 2008.**

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## **Appendix 8.4: Focus group interview guide for parents/guardians of pregnant and former pregnant learners**

### **INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

**I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write them and forward to me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.**

**Thank you.**

**Tawanda Runhare.**

- 1.1 Do you fully understand the school policy on school girls who could become pregnant while they are at your school?
- 1.2 What do you like and dislike about the policy and why?
- 1.3 What should therefore be added to and removed from the policy and why?
  
2. In your view, which is better for a school girl, -to change school or remain at the same school when she falls pregnant? Explain your answer.
  
- 3.1 What are your community's traditional/cultural customs and practices about a pregnant woman?
- 3.2 In what way do such beliefs and practices affect the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners?
  
4. Explain some of the major problems which affect the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners:
  - 4.1 At home

4.2 In the community

4.3 At school.

5. Do you support the teaching of sex education in school?

5.1 If not, why?

5.2 If yes, what things should be taught to learners? Why?

5.3 Which topics should not be taught to learners? Why?

6. From what you see, how are the pregnant and former pregnant learners treated:

6.1 By family members.

6.2 By Community members.

6.3 By teachers.

6.4 By other learners.

7. Do you support the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant girls in schools? Why?

8. Suggest what you think should be done by the following people to improve the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners:

8.1 Parents.

8.2 Community members.

8.3 Teachers.

8.4 Other learners.

9. The policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education in schools has been there for some time now.

9.1 Do you think the policy should be kept in schools or be stopped now? Why?

**Thank you once more for your participation and valuable ideas.**

**Mr Tawanda Runhare**  
**PhD student University of Pretoria, 2008.**

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## **Appendix 8.5: Focus group interview guide for members of the school governing board**

### **INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

**I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write them and forward to me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.**

**Thank you.**

**Mr Tawanda Runhare.**

1.1 Do you fully understand the school policy on school girls who could become pregnant while they are at your school?

1.2 What do you like and dislike about the policy and why?

1.3 What should therefore be added to and removed from the policy? Why?

2. In your view, which is better for a school girl, -to change school or remain at the same school when she falls pregnant? Explain your answer.

3.1 What are your community's traditional/cultural customs and practices about a pregnant woman?

3.2 In what way do such beliefs and practices affect the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners?

4. Explain some of the major problems which affect the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners:

4.1 At home

4.2 In the community

4.3 At school.

4.4 What should be done to solve such problems?

5. Do you support the teaching of sex education in school?

5.1 If not, why?

5.2 If yes, what things should be taught to learners? Why?

5.3 Which topics should not be taught to learners? Why?

6. From what you see, how are the pregnant and former pregnant learners treated?:

6.1 By family members.

6.2 By Community members.

6.3 By teachers.

6.4 By other learners.

7. Do you support the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant girls in schools? Why?

8. Did you as the school governing board members take part in formulating the school policy on girls who fall pregnant while at school?

8.1 If yes, how did you take part in the formulation of the policy?

8.2 Did the general members of the school community participate in formulating the school policy on girls who fall pregnant while at school?

8.3 If yes, how did you participate in the formulation of the policy?

9. From what you see, how are pregnant and former pregnant learners treated:

9.1 By family members.

9.2 By Community members.

9.3 By teachers.

9.4 By other learners.

10. Do you support the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant girls in schools? Why?

11. Suggest what you think should be done by the following people to improve the education of pregnant and former pregnant learners:

11.1 Parents.

11.2 Community members.

11.3 Teachers.

11.4 Other learners.

12. The policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant girls to continue with their education in schools has been there for some time now.

12.1 Do you think the policy should be kept in schools or be stopped now? Why?

**Thank you once more for your participation and valuable ideas.**

**Tawanda Runhare  
PhD student University of Pretoria, 2008.**

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## Appendix 9: Examples of research reflective notes

**OCCASION: F.G. Interview with Zimbabwean educators**

**DATE: 17 November 2009**

**VENUE: Staff room: Zimbabwean study site.**

**Journal Notes:** Three of the educators said they had not seen the policy though they have seen pregnant and former pregnant girls allowed to learn. Nine of the teachers only agreed that the school should have the policy – they only assumed rather than knowing. Teachers have little concern on policy issues – they regard it as administration responsibility. Schools do not have their own policy but only depend on the office ministry policy, which is not discussed with both learners, parents and even transfers have not been staff developed on the policy provisions. The educators, especially males, expressed more negative views on the policy.

Many raised the view that teen mothers are viewed as prostitutes and that they are isolated in society.

There were views on re-enrolment at different school or transfer to another school which were expressed based on the advantages: All the participants had consensus that the girl child has a right to education and so should be allowed to return to school after delivery, but to another school than to the same school. It is in fact the trend in Zimbabwe unlike in SA. Some were against going to an adult school/non-formal because they said a child should learn with people of her own age. If she goes to an adult school she could regard herself to be an adult or get bad influence from adults: However others expressed that at a non-formal school, because timetable is not rigid, a teenage mother can have time to breastfeed the body and to meet other mothers and share parental ups and downs.

**OCCAION: F.G. Interviews with Zimbabwean parents**

**DATE: 10 - 11 December 2009**

**VENUE: Staff room and participants' own homes: Zimbabwean study site.**

**Journal Notes:** The male participants were more talkative against inclusion; emphasis on moral values of society and that it was a shame for a girl to be pregnant while at school not at tertiary college.

There was difference in perception according to gender: Males viewed pregnancy as related to loose morals while females viewed it as an exploitation of innocent young girls. That it was those who are poor in school who became pregnant and therefore no real loss/wastage.

Parents who had the experience of having had a pregnant daughter were appreciative that it was a challenge; although they also lay blame on the daughters for bring shame to them. They raised concerns against those who opposed the policy of mainstreaming pregnant and teen mothers in formal schools. However they agreed that it caused problems at school that's why it would be better to have the girl return to school after giving birth. This softer stance was more in SA than in Zimbabwe where girls withdrew themselves once pregnant and would choose to reenroll at another school away from where they are known. Parents of former pregnant and pregnant learners preferred to be interviewed at their homes than to join the focus groups. This indicated the stigma associated with having a pregnant daughter. That only female parents accepted to talk to the interviewer also showed that men saw the problem of daughter pregnancy as mother-blame issue.

**OCCASION: F.G. Interview with South African parents**

**DATE: 09 October 2009**

**VENUE: Secluded rooms: South African study site.**

**Journal Notes:** One of the female parents excused herself from the discussion. Although she did not show any emotions, as the researcher I got interested to find out the reasons. I asked if I could visit the family on another day. With the assistance of one of the educators, we visited the family. First I wanted to know why she had moved out of the discussion. This made me to realise that parents with similar experiences, and those with children who are pregnant or were former pregnant would not be free to come out in the public. I made appointments to visit some at their homes. The parents of pregnant and former pregnant learner, it could be concluded from this that they were not free to tell their experiences in public. To them discussion on teenage pregnancy was a sensitive research area. As the researcher I had to adjust my data gathering procedures to create an atmosphere in which such parents could open up. For this reason they were interviewed at their individual homes. Here they opened up but they were emotional at times, one ended up expressing self pity for failing to look after her daughter while others felt their daughters were not thankful for the sacrifice they made to educate them. This indicated how society negatively viewed families with a pregnant child.

**Appendix 10: Example of transcribed data from interviews (Refer to CD)**

**Occasion:** F.G. Interviews with South African Pregnant and Former Pregnant Learners

**Date:** 25 August 2009

**Venue:** Secluded study room: South African study site.

I am glad that the school management and the department do not chase us from school. We come to school until we find that now we can just have to go or to remain at home maybe when it's time to give birth, no one will stop us. After giving birth I will make sure that I look for somebody to look after my baby because I want to go on with my education when I have given birth. It is possible that I can have a child even let's say today and if it's exam time I can come the day after and I will be able to attend school the following day or to write my exam the following day. I have seen others who have done this before and I know this is allowed (SA Pregnant Learner 1).

When we get pregnant at school we do not report the case to anyone in the school. I was not asked to report. I just come to school as usual. Not even a single teacher comes to us to ask about our pregnancy or to counsel us. I think it is proper that we should be getting counseling; unfortunately we do not receive any. I would prefer to be informed about what to wear and when to wear at school and how to sit in the desk (SA Pregnant Learner 3).

**Occasion:** F.G. Interview with Zimbabwean School Development Committee (SDC)

**Date:** 04 December 2009

**Venue:** Staff room: Zimbabwean study site.

It is upon the parents of the pregnant child to make a decision to have the child continue with her education so that the girl could go and continue at another school. 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, there are important issues like improving the passes for the school than this policy because we should not be like

encouraging pregnant girls be in school as if they have done nothing wrong (Zimbabwean male SDC member).

Yes it is right that the policy can be a spoiler to school children. It's like we are licensing that it is ok to get pregnant while at school. If we condone this thing it can create problems yet we are saying let the children learn first. How can such a girl mix with others without spoiling them? If other girls see that the pregnant girl is expelled they will fear to be pregnant (Zimbabwean male SDC member).



## Appendix 11: Example of Atlas ti coded free quotations (Refer to CD)

All current quotations (297). Quotation-Filter: All

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### **P 1: F.G INTERVIEW WITH SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS**

P 1: F.G INTERVIEW.doc - 1:2 (8:8) (Super)

Codes: [Right to Education]

How about if examinations are being written, will it be fair to suspend the girl? It means she will have to wait for next year exams. They should be allowed to write and go on with their education so that their future is not destroyed just because of something that takes place for only nine months. To me this is very unfair and the policy is right to allow the girls to go on with their schooling.

### **P 2: F.G. INTERVIEW WITH SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATORS**

P 2: F.G. INTERVIEW.doc - 2:1 (105:105) (Super)

Codes: [Call for Special Schools for Pregnant Teens]

While there is no way society can run away from teenage pregnancy in schools, but the counter solution is to find a school where there is less stigmatisation. Whether we like it or not, psychologically once a girl becomes pregnant, she becomes stigmatised here at a normal school because she gets ashamed to be in that state as a schoolgirl

### **P5: F.G. INTERVIEWS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MAINSTREAM LEARNERS**

P 5: F.G. INTERVIEW.doc - 5:1 (5:5) (Super)

Codes: [Mainstreaming As Cause of Teenage Pregnancy]

Usually when a person is pregnant she will make others to be lazy at school and some think 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.

**P6: F.G. INTERVIEW WITH ZIMBABWEAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (SDC) MEMBERS**

P 6: F.G.INTERVIEW.doc - 6:1 (35:35) (Super)

Codes: [Morality and Learner Pregnancy]

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. The girl is already ashamed of herself and putting more pressure on her is unfair. This is why some abort, kill or dump the baby (Zimbabwean female SDC member).

**P 7: F.G. INTERVIEW WITH ZIMBABWEAN EDUCATORS**

P 7: F.G. INTERVIEW.doc - 7:1 (11:11) (Super)

Codes: [Hate Language]

If for example she comes from school late because there were sports or some afternoon study or something like that at school, you hear parents say “You want to bring us another baby without a father”. Because the girl will have made the first mistake, she has no defense. Even to walk with another male pupil. The parents of the boy will shout at him thinking he is being spoiled by the young mother (Zimbabwean male educator).

**P 8: INTERVIEW WITH ZIMBABWEAN PREGNANT AND FORMERLY PREGNANT LEARNERS**

P 8: KEY PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW.doc - 8:1 (38:38) (Super)

Codes: [Educator Assistance to Pregnant Learners]

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.

## **Appendix 12: Example of Atlas ti codes (Refer to CD)**

### **Code-Filter: All**

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**Call for special schools for pregnant learners**  
**Call for special schools for pregnant teens**  
**Cultural beliefs on pregnancy**  
**Cultural beliefs on pregnancy and marriage**  
**Cultural limitations on pregnancy and motherhood**  
**Educator assistance to pregnant learners**  
**Educators capacity to handle learner pregnancy**  
**Effects of learner pregnancy**  
**Gender bias against pregnant teens**  
**Hate language**  
**Home-school partnerships**  
**Home -school partnerships**  
**Infrastructural capacity to mainstream pregnant learners**  
**Knowledge of learner pregnancy policy**  
**Knowledge on learner pregnancy**  
**Learner pregnancy and school indiscipline**  
**Learner pregnancy and school performance**  
**Mainstreaming as cause of decline in education standards**  
**Mainstreaming as cause of increase in teen pregnancy**  
**Mainstreaming as cause of increase in teenage pregnancy**  
**Mainstreaming as cause of teenage pregnancy**

### Appendix 13: Records on population and school participation of pregnant learners

#### Appendix 13.1: Population of Pregnant Learners at the Study Sites: 2008 - 2009

Year	Study Site	Known Cases	Suspected Cases	Enrolled	Totals
2008	S.A. school	11	- (No records)	8	19
	Zim. school	3	- (No records)	2	5
2009	S.A. school	17	2	11	30
	Zim. school	5	3	4	12

Source: School admission records

#### Appendix 13.2: School Performance of Sampled Pregnant Learners at the South African Study Sites: 2008 - 2009

Learner Details	Subject	2008				2009			
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
SA Pregnant Learner 1	Eng	89	26	68	55	31	33	30	37
	Tshivenda	68	63	82	76	44	53	48	51
	Maths Lit	72	56	29	31	30	13	19	27
	Science	51	24	56	42	29	21	28	26
SA Pregnant Learner 2	Eng	19	31	40	37	25	14	-	-
	Tshivenda	52	35	40	42	53	33	-	-
	Maths Lit	39	14	15	21	32	18	21	20
	Science	35	37	49	42	54	62	34	39
SA Pregnant Learner 3	Eng	89	26	68	53	44	53	41	42
	Tshivenda	68	63	82	70	31	33	-	-
	Maths Lit	72	56	29	33	30	13	-	-
	LO	51	24	56	34	29	21	-	-
SA Pregnant Learner 4	Eng	45	47	25	38	45	47	41	43
	Tshivenda	55	63	54	50	55	53	32	40
	Maths Lit	43	16	20	23	43	16	21	24
	Science	28	48	54	30	28	48	32	40
SA Pregnant Learner 5	Eng	27	37	30	32	33	38	31	41
	Tshivenda	65	62	54	51	51	53	51	61
	Maths Lit	26	9	6	17	26	17	25	33
	LO	53	65	78	62	62	57	59	63
SA Pregnant Learner 6	Eng	9	5	16	21	52	-	-	-
	Tshivenda	33	51	42	37	22	-	-	-
	Maths Lit	17	21	25	30	12	-	-	-
	Science	40	40	33	45	46			

Source: Learners progress records provided by subject educators and school academic records

### Appendix 13.3: School Performance of Sampled Former Pregnant Learners at the South African Study Sites: 2008 - 2009

Learner Details	Subject	2008				2009			
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
SA former pregnant learner 1	Eng	46	51	44	53	43	47	53	51
	Tshivenda	53	57	61	51	56	63	61	66
	Maths Lit	41	47	37	43	44	47	45	43
	Science	39	43	51	22	39	44	50	47
SA former pregnant learner 2	Eng	-	44	38	47	39	51	48	53
	Tshivenda	63	71	67	63	59	57	66	59
	Maths Lit	53	49	50	47	61	54	48	47
	Science	40	47	63	54	51	48	51	47
SA former pregnant learner 3	Eng	46	43	44	46	53	43	40	45
	Tshivenda	63	71	68	73	69	59	61	67
	Maths Lit	47	45	49	41	53	45	43	44
	Science	39	52	47	44	48	42	40	46
SA former pregnant learner 4	Eng	51	47	49	44	53	46	43	47
	Tshivenda	61	74	68	59	57	63	68	64
	Maths Lit	47	51	39	42	47	42	39	37
	Science	42	37	35	28	41	39	47	44
SA former pregnant learner 5	Eng	42	38	36	37	43	41	32	39
	Tshivenda	51	47	47	60	56	53	55	57
	Maths Lit	42	38	29	31	37	32	19	35
	Science	43	39	44	47	29	33	35	39
SA former pregnant learner 6	Eng	48	33	29	36	38	41	26	31
	Tshivenda	47	41	44	52	62	59	57	51
	Maths Lit	16	26	31	18	22	36	39	28
	Science	22	34	30	34	42	27	33	39

Source: Learners progress records provided by subject educators and school academic records

**Appendix 13.4: School Performance of Sampled Pregnant Learners at the Zimbabwean Study Sites: 2008 - 2009**

Learner Details	2008				2009		
	Subject	Marks			Marks		
		<b>Term1</b>	<b>Term2</b>	<b>Term3</b>	<b>Term1</b>	<b>Term2</b>	<b>Term3</b>
Zimbabwean pregnant learner 1	Eng	59	63	B	53	55	43
	Shona	72	78	A	66	63	56
	Maths	54	57	C	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science	51	59	C	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zimbabwean pregnant learner 2	Eng	28	39	41	33	44	-
	Shona	60	63	59	56	54	-
	Maths	14	18	16	21	19	-
	Science	32	33	31	17	16	-
Zimbabwean pregnant learner 3	Eng	53	49	56	55	53	44
	Shona	73	67	73	69	68	59
	Maths	41	38	27	44	33	36
	Science	43	33	49	51	44	34
Zimbabwean pregnant learner 4	Eng	58	63	B	53	63	57
	Shona	73	69	B	59	51	54
	Maths	53	56	D	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science	55	59	C	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Learners progress records provided by subject educators and school academic records

**Appendix 13.5: School Performance of Sampled Former Pregnant Learners at the Zimbabwean Study Sites: 2008 - 2009**

Learner Details	2008				2009		
	Subject	Marks			Marks		
		Term1	Term2	Term3	Term1	Term2	Term3
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 1	Eng	61	58	63	52	47	56
	Shona	78	68	77	73	69	63
	Maths	47	41	32	29	32	42
	Science	43	53	47	43	52	47
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 2	Eng	56	55	48	52	49	54
	Shona	66	64	61	67	58	63
	Maths	44	49	41	38	36	43
	Science	45	48	47	52	49	49
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 3	Eng	56	54	51	58	49	57
	Shona	67	71	68	59	68	66
	Maths	45	51	46	52	51	47
	Science	49	52	49	53	48	56
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 4	Eng	44	-	48	51	48	49
	Shona	65	-	61	68	63	59
	Maths	31	-	32	29	38	39
	Science	44	-	43	38	41	39
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 5	Eng	56	51	54	42	46	42
	Shona	66	72	68	55	57	58
	Maths	46	47	38	42	48	43
	Science	44	38	41	51	45	45
Zimbabwean former pregnant learner 6	Eng	-	41	44	28	34	38
	Shona	-	53	48	51	49	50
	Maths	-	40	41	33	27	31
	Science	-	36	14	31	23	26

Source: Learners progress records provided by subject educators and school academic records

**Contents of CD**

- Appendix 10:** Transcribed data
- Appendix 11:** Atlas ti coded free quotations
- Appendix 12:** Atlas ti filtered codes