

**The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its
implementation in public schools**

by

Morifi Tshebedi Joase

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

In the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: Professor. J L Beckmann

AUGUST: 2018

Declaration

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DEGREE AND PROJECT	Phd The views of role-players on Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools
INVESTIGATOR	Mr TJ Morifi
DEPARTMENT	Education Management and Policy Studies
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	05 May 2017
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	27 June 2018

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liesel Ebersöhn', written over a horizontal line.

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
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Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my late grandparents, Tshebedi Josiah Morifi and Mmaphuti Raesetsa Ramoeng Morifi, who raised me up to the person I am today. These two are in fact my parents since they embraced and treated me so well and allowed me to use the surname Morifi. My grandparents never attended school, were not even able to write their names, but they encouraged me to study and also financed my education until tertiary level.

Of course, I also dedicate this study to my mother, Mpulana Nthudi Rosina Madikoto, who took care of me from birth to date. It was not easy for her to raise me up as a single parent with my other three siblings, but she ensured that I attended school like any other child from primary to tertiary level without fail. She took me through tertiary education, even though she was unemployed and she sacrificed her own needs and pleasure. “O šomile mokwena moila lehlaka moroka a meets a pula, o šomile setlogolo sa Matshaa ka patla, o šomile setlogolo sa Seleki wa boRamphole a tswetla, O šomile Nthudi, kgaetsedi ya Mokete, ngwanabo Tshedisha le Mahlana”

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This research output was the result of contributions by many people and organisations. First, I thank God, Jehovah my Lord and Saviour, who kept me alive during the most challenging time of my life, for all the protection and provisions throughout my long journey. My appreciation goes to my mother, siblings, family and Kgohloane Baptist Church for their understanding and support.

My supervisor, Professor Beckmann J, was a source of inspiration, father figure and mentor at every stage of my PhD studies. I wish to pay tribute to him for his informative comments and guidance throughout the study, as well as his uncompromising approach to work. Without all the participants of the study, I would not have successfully conducted this study. I wish to thank them all; especially the principals, teachers, parents and learners who agreed to participate, contributed their knowledge and honest opinions, although the topic I researched was emotional, sensitive and personal. May the Lord God meet all your needs according to His riches in glory.

I also give thanks and acknowledgement to my principal, Mr Ramaphakela, for his understanding, co-operation and willingness to let me complete my work without any pressure. I acknowledge the Limpopo Department of Education, Capricorn District, Pietersburg and Seshego Circuits for allowing me to conduct my research in their schools.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate role-players' views on the Measures for the Prevention and Management of the Learner Pregnancy Policy (hereafter MPMLP) in Public Schools (DoE, 2007) and its implementation in public schools. The study utilised a qualitative research approach because it was aimed at understanding perceptions about the views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools. The researcher utilised an interpretive case study paradigm, which sought to transform human beings, change normally acceptable tendencies and their environment by being personally involved in the actions that changed their circumstances.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, field notes and tape recordings. The focus was on eight selected high schools: four schools are situated in an urban area and mainly accommodate learners from urban areas; another four are situated in a township, and mostly accommodate learners from disadvantaged families, poorer socio-economic backgrounds and from a location situated in a rural area or village. Purposive sampling was used in this study, in which eight principals, eight teachers, four parents and four learners were interviewed.

Thematic analysis was utilised, in which information gathered from semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field notes were grouped on the basis of the population examined and then compared. Five themes emerged from the analysed data, which are: Knowledge of the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP); Management of the Learner Pregnancy Policy in public schools; Stakeholders' involvement, co-operation and participation in the life of a pregnant learner; Challenges relating to the implementation of the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP in Public Schools; and Recommendations on policy implementation.

The following findings were revealed by this research study. While participants seemed to acknowledge that pregnant learners had a legal right to education in terms of the Constitution of South Africa of 1996, SASSA, 84 of 1996 and the MPMLP (DoE,

2007), most of them do not know the pregnancy policy, which could assist them in managing pregnant learners and reducing the high rate of teenage pregnancies in public schools. Lack of knowledge of the MPMLP hinders the implementation of this policy in public schools. The completion of the curriculum and attainment of good school results suffer because instead, school management spend a lot of time addressing non curriculum issues such as learner pregnancy, leave of absence and the intervention of parents and health workers in the school environment.

The Department of Education did not take cognisance of the fact that new teachers are not inducted and workshopped about new policies. The newly appointed principals and HODs are also not taken on board in acquainting them with these new policies and legislations. The study further indicated that some stakeholders do not have an interest to get to know this policy and thus show a lot of ignorance of its content. In turn, this permits the principals and those affected to use their own discretion in resolving issues related to teenage pregnancy at their schools.

It is evident that for the successful implementation of the learner pregnancy policy, the Department of Education must consider going to all villages and townships to make this process more inclusive. Community leaders, counsellors and churches should take the lead to help ensure that everybody contributes to the process of policy formulation and implementation. The department should make this policy available in all official languages as currently it is available only in English. The effective implementation of the learner pregnancy policy should ideally not only reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies, but also improve the academic results of SA's schools and make all stakeholders active participants. This will reduce many of the current barriers to the attainment of SA's education goals. However, no policy can achieve such goals in isolation. It will need more involvement by parents and other stakeholders. It will be a major challenge to try and convince teenagers to remain abstinent; thus, the only other option will be to make sure that they use contraceptives at all times.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Barbara Wood, am a PEG-registered professional researcher and editor and hereby confirm that I have language-edited:

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George, June 2018


BARBARA WOOD

List of Abbreviations

MPMLP	Measure for the Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy
DoE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
SASA	South African Schools Act
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measure
WHO	World Health Organization
SGB	School Governing Body
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme

List of key words

Policy

Role-players

Parents

Teachers

Learners

Principals

Policy Implementation

School Governing Body

Department of Education

Teenage pregnancy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to investigate the views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy (Measure for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy) (hereafter MPMLP) (DoE, 2007) and its implementation in public schools. The policy deals with the prevention of learner pregnancy, intervention in case pregnancy has occurred and the support of teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancy in schools. This study critiqued and analysed the views of different role-players in relation to learner pregnancy in schools and the implementation of MPMLP in public schools.

1.2 Background / Introduction

Internationally, 15 million women under the age of 25 give birth yearly, representing up to one-fifth of all childbirths. It has been reported that 529,000 women die due to pregnancy and childbirth-related medical problem once a year (Dev Raj, Rabi, Amudha, Van Teijlingen & Chapman, 2010:4). Teenage pregnancy is a main worry to international societies, with the United States of America ranking at the uppermost with almost 1,000,000 learner pregnancies per annum (Williams, 2010:1).

According to Grant (2012), pregnancy is one of the leading causes of female students dropping out of school. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (hereafter UNFPA) (2013) indicates that in 2010 alone, 36.4 million women in developing countries aged 20 to 24, were reported to have given birth before the age of 18, and even more extreme, 2 million before the age of 15. According to Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey (2013:30), focusing on South African

schools, about 13,941 teenage girls fell pregnant in the Limpopo Province alone in the year under review in the survey.

Pregnancy was recognised as a main driver of dropout and exclusion among secondary school schoolgirls in Sub-Saharan African countries (Makamare, 2014). Juvenile pregnancy among school girls is a major worrying factor in many Southern African emerging countries. It is also said that the highest rate of juvenile pregnancy in the world is found in Sub-Saharan Africa (Changach, 2012:3). In Sub-Saharan African countries, girls and women are trailing behind for equivalent access to secondary education, and this is partly due to the phenomenon of juvenile pregnancy.

South Africa is confronted by an escalating number of schoolgirl pregnancies. This fact by itself and the manner, in which pregnancies are dealt with, hinders the eradication of gender inequalities in education and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter MDG) of Universal Primary Education and Gender Equality in Education. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing and trying to get rid of extreme poverty in its many dimensions such as poverty, low income, lack of adequate shelter, hunger, disease, and exclusion, while promoting gender equality, better education and environmental sustainability (United Nations Human Rights (hereafter UNHR), 2010:19).

Schoolgirl pregnancies are increasing in number each year and are occurring at ever younger ages. Even though the implementation of the MPMLP was formally introduced by the national Department of Education (hereafter DoE) in 2007 with the intention of preventing and managing teenage pregnancies, the desired outcomes seem to be but minimally realised. Even where policies exist at schools, commitment to them is often limited, with education providers and communities unaware of re-entry policies or unsupportive of girls' return to school (Willan, 2013:11). According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, T. (2009:21), schoolgirl pregnancy has grown in significance as a reality in South Africa and as such represents one of several indicators of burgeoning schoolgirl delinquency.

According to Karra and Lee (2012:12), the pregnancy rate among schoolgirls in South Africa remains high by world community's comparison and the rate of 13% in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal is twice the national average of 6.5%. Rural provinces in South Africa, especially among the predominantly black communities, are affected more than urban areas. Medical risks, disruption of education and long-lasting emotional problems such as giving birth on school premises, lack of emotional support and irregular school attendance are all associated with schoolgirl pregnancy (Kanku & Mash, 2010:563).

According to Govender (2015:28), more than 176,000 teenagers got pregnant in South Africa in 2013. Of these girls, 2,903 were 13 years old. In 2014 alone, 3,858 pregnant teenagers visited the pregnancy counselling centre Africa Cares for Life, which has 67 branches across South Africa (Govender, 2015).

The MPMLP is underpinned by three important principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (hereafter the Constitution), which are: the right to equality, the right to education and the rights of children (DoE, 2007). The MPMLP emphasises the right to basic education of the pregnant girl child and encourages all pregnant learners to finish their basic education. These constitutional rights provide a framework for educating and assisting learners to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities in accordance with a healthy lifestyle. They also suggest measures for guiding and supporting vulnerable learners, involving all relevant role players and integrating the measures with available systems and structures.

The role of parents, teachers, principals, churches and non-governmental organisations is vital in ensuring that learner pregnancy is addressed. The responses of, among others, parents, learners, teachers, churches, non-governmental organisations, the South African Police Services (SAPS) and government departments can make a major contribution when addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy in South African society, including the continuing stigmatisation of pregnant girls and the reception or welcoming of pregnant learners back in the schools and society.

The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy gave rise to, among others, the following questions that had to be addressed:

- What were the reasons for schoolgirl pregnancy?
- What was the effect of the pregnancy on the education of the school girls?
- What support was available for pregnant schoolgirls?
- What was the role of parents in addressing this phenomenon?
- What were the views of learners on sexual activity and abstinence?
- In the opinion of the role-players, what contextual factors had an influence on the implementation of the MPMLP?

The implementation of MPMLP in South African public schools was received with mixed reactions due to the loopholes it seemed to have such as lack of knowledge by parents, learners, teacher and the policy formulation process and how pregnant girls are unfairly treated. The aim of the MPMLP was to clarify the position regarding learner pregnancies, inform the affected learners about their right to continue access to education, support teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancies, create procedures and provide guidelines to be followed in cases, where prevention had failed and pregnancy had occurred. A study conducted by Modisaotsile (2012) indicated that despite the progressive legislation in South Africa allowing young women to return to school post-pregnancy, only around one-third actually re-entered the schooling system.

In 2008 and 2009, the governing bodies of *Welkom High School and Harmony High School*, respectively, applied pregnancy policies that provided for the exclusion of pregnant learners from school for certain time periods. This school pregnancy policy was in line with national pregnancy policy known as MPMLP. The parents of the affected learners reported the matter to the education authorities, who ultimately referred the matter to the Head of the Education Department (hereafter HOD). The HOD issued instructions to the principals of the schools to re-admit two learners, who had been excluded from school in terms of the pregnancy policies. The schools, through their SGBs, obtained an interdict against the Free State HOD from interfering with the implementation of their policies. The School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are given the powers and mandate by the South African Schools Act, 84 of

1996 (hereafter SASA) to determine admission policies in terms of Section 5 (5) of SASA.

The court found that the schools' pregnancy policies infringe with the constitutional rights of pregnant learners at face value, including the rights to human dignity, freedom from unfair discrimination and to receive a basic education. The court also found that the HOD acted *ultra vires* by giving instructions that were not in line with national policy. The court ordered the schools to review the policies in the light of the requirements of the Constitution, the Schools Act and the considerations set out in the judgment. The court further ordered the schools to engage meaningfully with the HOD in the process of reviewing their policies, according to the principles of cooperative governance enshrined in the Schools Act.

1.3 Problem Statement

The researcher intended to investigate the views of relevant role-players on MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. MPMLP outlines a range of measures to prevent early pregnancy in learners and support teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancy in schools. MPMLP further aims to clarify the position regarding learner pregnancies, to inform the affected learners about their right to continue access to education, to support teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancies, create procedures and provide guidelines to be followed in cases, where prevention has failed and pregnancy has occurred.

The difficulties pertaining to the implementation of the policy in its current form include the following:

- It seemed that it had not been widely communicated to all relevant stakeholders and as such it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to implement something about which one was not informed;
- It is not gender sensitive in the sense that it seemed to be confined to the pregnant girl child and says less about the boy child father;

- The girl child stayed at home for a period of two years after giving birth and that delayed her academic progress, while the boy child progressed unhindered (MPMLP, 2007);
- The above difficulties do not seem to explain adequately, why the policy seemed to fail to a degree to achieve its aims;
- The high and increasing rate of teenage pregnancy in South African public schools, despite the implementation of the policy since 2007, has reached alarming proportions and therefore seemed to call for an investigation into hitherto unexplored role-players' views that might affect the success of the implementation of the policy.

By investigating relevant role-players' views in this regard, I focused on and analysed the role-players' views on MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. The views of different stakeholders presented a clear picture and understanding as to what the core issues are that hinder the implementation of the MPMLP. There were various solutions and recommendations that addressed this phenomenon, which contributed towards a possible solution. All of these influenced the way in which people responded to a policy, but it had not been known, if their views affected the implementation of the MPMLP and, if they did, to what extent they affected the implementation.

1.4 Reflections from the Past and related Studies.

1.4.1 Introduction

During apartheid era in South Africa, pregnant girls were not allowed to attend school. In the post-apartheid era, with the adoption of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, girls who become pregnant, while still at school, may no longer be expelled from their institutions because, according to South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 and the Bill of Rights, learners should not be discriminated against unfairly on the basis of pregnancy. The adoption of MPMLP by the Department of Education in 2007 also required that pregnant learners remain at school until the time of child delivery. This policy has six major features:

1. It seeks to address the prevention of teenage pregnancy, intervention in case pregnancy has occurred and the management of the pregnant learner, while also considering the rights of the unborn child. It states that the new-born child has the right to basic nutrition and parental care in terms of Section 28 of the Constitution, while the mother has the right to a basic or further education in terms of section 29 of the Constitution.
2. It guarantees to teen mothers the right to remain in school during pregnancy.
3. It recommends the provision of professional counselling to teen mothers.
4. It recommends that pregnant learners get school work by special arrangement during the time, when the learner is medically unfit to come to school.
5. It proposes that the girl child who has delivered a baby should stay at home for a period of two years, taking care of the baby.
6. It provides definite steps to be followed by schools and pregnant Senior Certificate Education (SCE) candidates.

1.4.2 Policies in other countries

In Namibia, a policy on learner pregnancy was introduced in 2008, seeking to address teenage pregnancy among school girls, which was seen as a barrier to the elimination of gender disparities in education and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter MDG's) regarding universal primary and gender equality in education by 2015. If a girl child becomes pregnant by a school boy child, both of them are entitled to leave, when the time of delivery comes. They are supposed to go for counselling in order to develop their sense of responsibility and accountability in the emotional, moral and financial spheres. Both the girl child and the boy child are allowed to return to school after the delivery of their child after twelve months of absence from school (Ministry of Education in Namibia, 2008).

The Re-entry Policy Statement in the 2011 Education and Training Sector Policy in Swaziland states that all children, irrespective of their life circumstances, have the right to be re-integrated into the educational institution they previously attended Qand'elihle, Simelane, Thwala, & Mamba (2013) further indicate that most pregnant learners disappear without questioning the stigmatisation associated with their pregnancy. School principals and teachers are sceptical about tagging the student

mothers, suggesting that it may constitute stigmatisation (Qand'elinhle *et al.*, 2013). The Department of Education has initiated an awareness to capacitate teachers, principals and government officials to enable them to understand and accommodate learners who gave birth, with the intention of assisting and building them into better parents.

1.4.3 Policy and policy implementation

Since the introduction of a new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, several new education policies and guidelines have emerged with the intention of effecting change in the system of education. There is no single definition of policy, which is universally accepted. Cloete and de Coning (2011) define policy as a statement of intent or an action plan to transform a perceived problem in a future solution. They further state that policy is a declaration, strategy and implementation of intent with a mechanism employed to realise societal goals and to allocate resources. This plan or strategy contains valuable information that is recorded with clear objectives and the intention to uplift, remedy and infuse life in organisations. A policy that is not implemented is sterile. It needs role-players to implement it effectively and efficiently.

As previously stated, the main focus of MPMLP is to address the problem of teenage pregnancy, intervene, if pregnancy has occurred and to manage the pregnant learner, while also considering the rights of the unborn child. It guarantees to teen mothers the right to remain in school during pregnancy and recommends provision of professional counselling. The launching of MPMLP in 2007 by the Department of Education and the escalation of learner pregnancy in South African (SA) schools seem to run parallel to each other. The effect and impact of this policy on learner pregnancy in SA schools seemed to be ineffective and yielded unsatisfactory results due to its implementation challenges. Modjadji and Mahopo, (2018:3) reported that Ekurhuleni mayor Mzwandile Masina revealed on 13 June 2018 that 1 000 schoolgirls, including a Grade 5 pupil, fell pregnant in the municipal area last year.

Concept implementation means to accomplish, fulfil, carry out, produce and complete (Cloete & de Coning, 2011). Further Cloete & Coning (2011) indicate that implementation is a process, which tries to achieve the policy objective. It is the

ability to forge links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results. Policy implementation remains fundamental in achieving the desired goals for change and transformation in this society. Role-players in the implementation of MPMLP seem fundamentally important in addressing this phenomenon. It has been realised that teachers are essential in implementing 'new' policy to reform, restructure, transform schools and classrooms, called for a focus on teachers. They are often seen as either unreceptive or unaffected, or as resistant to education policy change (Smit, 2001: 68).

1.4.4 The policy formulation and development process

The policy community refers to all those involved in policy formulation. Further indicates that a policy network is used for the linking process within a policy community or between two or more communities (Pop, 2012). Parents, principals, teachers, learners and governments are important stakeholders that ought to contribute to policy formulation, especially on issues that directly affect them. The researcher contends that the contextual background of stakeholders has an impact on understanding and shaping policies that will enhance the society they live in.

According to Bell & Stevenson (2006) policy development is both a continuous and a contested process, in which those with competing values and differential access to power seek to form and shape policy in their own interests. Policy development is therefore not a simple case of understanding the priorities, or indeed the whims, of governments or individual school leaders (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). It must be an inclusive process, involving all relevant stakeholders to arrive at a comprehensive and inclusive product. Stakeholders' needs and priorities are listed, engaged and extensively discussed to arrive at a common understanding.

Policy must be seen as a dialectic process, in which all those affected by the policy will be involved in shaping its development. Though policy is systematic and goal-oriented, it is complex and random. It is the co-ordination of several courses of action, and not one discrete activity (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

1.5 Factors that Influence the Implementation of the Learner Pregnancy Policy

1.5.1 Teachers' knowledge of the law

South Africa led a comparatively progressive legislative response to teenage pregnancy and motherhood, with some even suggesting it has responded to a “feminist influence” (Bhana & Clowes, 2008). The Constitution protects the rights (of all citizens, including children) to make decisions regarding reproduction and the right to access healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare (Hoffman-Wanderrerr, 2013:4). A number of laws have been passed to actualise these rights since 1996. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (hereafter the Equality Act) has the effect that school learners, who become pregnant, may not be discriminated against unfairly (Lince, 2011). In 2007, the MPMLP was announced and had a dual focus on the prevention of pregnancy and the management of pregnancy, where and if it does occur.

A study conducted by Willan (2013) found that most educators and principals showed ignorance about the MPMLP policy to the extent that some learners were encouraged to report for school a week after giving birth. The implementation of the policy depended in some circles on the principal's interpretation of the policy. There was a lack of support and understanding from the Department of Education in ensuring that fair implementation took place across the board. Educators know that learners should not be expelled from school due to pregnancy, but the actual policy on pregnancy and how it is implemented is probably less known.

1.5.2 Communication within the education system

The Department of Education in Limpopo Province is an organ consisting of different sections, directorates and sub-divisions, intended to enhance efficiency and effective realisation of its main goals. For effective service delivery to be realised, effective communication among these sections and directorates needs to be well managed. Turkalj & Fosić, (2006:34) state that communication in a system of government embodies a multifaceted system of the movement of information, wishes instructions and references made up of two partially complementary systems: a formal

communication network and an informal communication network. Turkalj and Fosić (2006:35) further specified that formal communication is an organised and formal process of information transmission in verbal and written form, prearranged and accustomed to the requirements of the organisation.

The process of communication involves several elements: the sender, the message, the medium and the receiver. The transfer of information from the senior personnel to the junior staff in an organisation or department sometimes seems to lose its original intent. The information about MPMLP from the District office to schools through the circuit offices seems to need attention.

1.6 Challenges that Role-players Encounter in the Implementation of MPMLP

1.6.1 Unrealistic expectations

The introduction of democracy and a democratically-elected government in South Africa in 1994 was accompanied by many expectations, some of which were extremely unrealistic. The expectations of the community and society exceeded the reality, skills and what ordinary people can deliver. The change in government initiated the necessity to alter and also introduce some new policies and laws. However, the physical availability of policy documents does not necessarily translate into actual implementation and addressing learner pregnancy in SA's schools.

If policies are to be left on paper and not implemented, a beneficial future cannot be assured for South Africans. The administration and execution of policies should be carried out in a coordinated and correlative manner. A book edited by Sayed and Jansen (2001) argued that there has been a "gap" between idealistic policy developments and their implementation in schools and classrooms. Jansen (2001) asserted that the policy gap can best be explained by the notion of "political symbolism" – policy never meant to be implemented.

Communities still want to be part of the decision-making process in matters that affect them daily. According to Buccus (2016), the residents of Vuwani protested

outside the Limpopo High Court in Polokwane, demanding the municipal demarcation board's decision to incorporate them into Malamulele be reversed. Communities are seriously irritated as they feel that they are not being listened to. Hence, these protests are a reaction to a crisis of local democracy, rather than of service delivery. The difficulties with service provision are often due to a lack of democratic public participation in decision making.

1.6.2 Lack of public awareness and support

A good implementation of policy is linked to the participation of all stakeholders in education. These stakeholders include School Governing Bodies (SGBs), parents, teachers, learners, the private sector and government departments (Modisaotsile, 2012:3). The effective implementation of MPMLP in SA's schools depends to a great deal on the awareness and involvement of stakeholders, especially parents. According to Macupe (2016:7), parents felt that allowing pregnant pupils to attend school was a burden on teachers as it is not their duty to care for pregnant pupils; they are not trained to be nurses, social workers or doctors, which would only be putting more pressure and stress on teachers.

The Minister of Basic Education (2007) contends that pupils who are pregnant cannot be stopped from attending school. She advocates the implementation of SASA, the Constitution and other relevant pieces of legislation. However, the issue of awareness remains key in ensuring that dialogue among all relevant stakeholders is encouraged. A dialogue among learners and parents, business people and the entire community should bring about and shape a common understanding that should positively build this country.

The MPMLP seems to be the product and the decision of the Department of Education alone, since some important stakeholders are not fully aware of it. As a result, support from these important role-players is minimal or non-existent.

1.6.3 Inadequate resources

The resources that may enable the proper implementation of MPMLP may not be adequate enough for every stakeholder to fully comprehend. The resources needed include, among others, financial and human resources, which are key to achieving the desired goals. However, for the sake of effective, efficient management and implementation, planners must identify crucial potential blockages in the relevant institution beforehand and come up with possible solutions (Mokhaba, 2005). It is not unusual for unexpected and unintended problems to arise, especially with the introduction of a new policy.

According to Rarieya *et al.* (2014:4), the present bureaucratic systems in the Department of Basic Education, as well as its monetary constraints, have constrained the actual implementation of policies and programmes planned to address gender disparities. The implementation of any progressive policy is also dependent on financial support from the government and the private sector. It has been widely witnessed that the availability of money alone does not address the implementation policy problem, but that financial support requires men and women who can competently and lawfully manage the proper spending of money. Some government departments underspend their allocations, until these are returned to National Treasury, even though people's needs and basic services are not met. This is caused by the inability and incapacity of the appointed government officials. It seems as if implementers of the policies are not properly trained and capacitated to fulfil their expected mandate (National Treasury Annual Report, 2016). It is therefore essential for effective and efficient workshops or training sessions to take place to ensure that facilitators know and understand what they are going to do. SGBs must be fully trained, especially in the areas of finance and policies of the Department of Education (DoE) and the provisions of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). SGB members should be made aware of their responsibilities towards the schools, and their teachers and learners (Modisaotsile, 2012).

1.7 Research Questions

The main research question in the study was:

- What are role-players' views on the implementation of MPMLP in public schools?

Sub Questions

Supplementing the main question were the following questions sub questions:

- 1.7.1 What are the views of the role-players regarding the learner pregnancy policy?
- 1.7.2 What are the views of the role-players in terms of the extent to which the policy has been successfully implemented?
- 1.7.3 What were the factors that enabled or hindered the implementation of the policy?
- 1.7.4 Why was the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy ineffective in some public schools?
- 1.7.5 How was the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP) implemented in some selected public schools?

1.8 Research Aims

The research aims for the study were to investigate the views of role-players on the implementation of MPMLP in public schools.

The sub aims were to:

- 1.8.1 Find out what the views of the role-players regarding the learner pregnancy policy are.
- 1.8.2 Explore the views of the role-players in terms of the extent to which the policy has been successfully implemented.
- 1.8.3 Identify the factors that enabled or hindered the implementation of the policy.
- 1.8.4 Establish why the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy was ineffective in some public schools.
- 1.8.5 Find out how the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP) was implemented in public schools.

1.9 Rationale for the Study

As a school leader, the researcher was and still is confronted with a high teenage pregnancy rate in the schools that requires him to act decisively. The researcher has been an educator in both primary and secondary schools in Limpopo Province and been confronted by the problem of a high teenage pregnancy rate. This stimulated an interest in him to know how one should best handle cases pertaining to teenage pregnancy in an educationally, legally sound and appropriate manner. The researcher also wondered what caused such high teenage pregnancy rates and what factors are perhaps not given enough attention.

There is a need to explore reasons for the apparent failure of the implementation of the MPMLP. The analysis of the role-players' views on MPMLP and its implementation could enhance an analysis of the weaknesses and the strengths of the implementation of MPMLP to ensure efficiency and the realisation of its main objectives.

The daily media reports from newspapers, television and radio attest to the fact that teenage pregnancy has reached an alarming rate (Mashaba, 2015). The number of learners at entry level in grade R is high, while at the exit point in grade 12, it leaves much to be desired. A large number of girls are unable to reach the exit point in grade 12 due to teenage pregnancy and thus they contribute to the high rate of learner school dropout (Mashaba, 2015). A grade 5 pupil was among the 1000 schoolgirls who fell pregnant in Ekurhuleni last year. The high number of pregnancies was attributed to the cult of "blessers" who continue to prey on the vulnerability of our youth in and out of schools (Modjadji & Mahopo, 2018). The role of the school is to shape the behaviour of SA's youth. First and foremost the parents have the responsibility of providing the child with values in the home and to set an example that will guide the child through childhood and youthfulness. However, together with the parents and the communities, it is left to schools and teachers to be role models, guide learners and implement the MPMLP in a humane and caring manner.

1.10 Working Assumption

Based on the available evidence I assume that role-players are not familiar enough with the policy MPMLP, even though they may indicate different views about what can cause teenage pregnancy. As a result, the MPMLP is not functioning optimally.

1.11 Research Design

Creswell (2007:70) indicates that a research design is a strategy or tactic, which moves from the fundamental logical expectations to specifying the selection of participants, the information collection methods to be used and the data scrutiny to be done. Research design is a strategy or blueprint of how you aim conducting the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). In this research, I used a multiple case study design.

1.12 Paradigm

Paradigms are an elementary set of principles that guide action (Creswell, 2014). Maree (2012:47) asserts that a paradigm is a set of beliefs or assumptions about major aspects of truth, which give rise to a particular world view. According to Welman *et al.* (2007), a paradigm refers to the advancement of scientific practice based on people's viewpoints and expectations about the world and the nature of knowledge. It therefore refers to the way in which research should be conducted. Welman *et al.* (2007), further content that a paradigm addresses important expectations taken on confidence, such as the relationship between knower and known, beliefs about the nature of reality and expectations about methodologies.

The study was a case study and the researcher utilised an interpretive paradigm (Yin, 2014). An interpretive hermeneutic approach was considered to be the most suitable for this study research because of the growing belief of the interactive and locally contingent nature of knowledge creation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011:4). Interpretivism seeks and strives to understand how individuals in everyday settings construct meaning and explain the events of their worlds (Maree, 2011:59). From

this viewpoint, instead of being a linear, static and cumulatively achieved reality discovered through the use of careful observation and logical deductions, knowledge construction is seen as interactive, circular and tentative (Nieuwenhuis, 2009).

Babbie and Mouton (2001:138) clarify that the interpretive pattern enables the researcher the chance to comprehend and construe the world in terms of its performers. Further, Babbie & Mouton (2001) specify that the chore of the researcher becomes that of understanding what was going on as it places emphasis on the process of understanding. Interpretative research offers an opportunity to engage in in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:28). In this study, participants felt free and were encouraged to reflect on their own situation and the world they live in.

In most schools and communities, learner pregnancy is viewed as ill-discipline and lack of self-discipline on the side of the girl learner. The blame is squarely put on the girl learner, while the boy learner is never mentioned. The girl child should be treated fairly, guided and supported both emotionally and mentally in order for her to complete her studies. The girl learner is not fairly treated in case of pregnancy at school, unlike the boy learner. There is unequal treatment or unfair discrimination in the event of pregnancy in relation to the access to education or schooling. This does not even address the other consequences of teenage pregnancy as resultant poverty, stigmatisation and a child growing up with fewer chances in life than one born to adults who can support it properly.

1.13 Research Approach

The study utilised a qualitative research approach because it was aimed at understanding perceptions about the role-players' views on MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. According to Creswell (2014:4) research design is an approach for discovering and understanding the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. Those who participate in this form of enquiry have expectations about testing theories deductively, controlling for alternative details, building in protections against bias and being able to take a broad view and

reproduce the outcomes (Creswell, 2014:4). This approach was chosen because it was interpretive, exploratory and contextual in nature.

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2006:315) qualitative study is an investigation in which investigators gather data in face-to-face circumstances by interrelating with designated people in their locations, describing and scrutinising people's individual and shared social actions, thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. Creswell (2014:4) confirms that qualitative research is a method for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables and these variable can be measured typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. According to Maree (2012:47), qualitative research is a research methodology that is concerned with understanding the procedures and the cultural and social contexts that underline various behavioural patterns. It is mostly concerned with exploring the 'why' questions of research. In qualitative research the emphasis is on the study of people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meanings and interpretations. The emphasis is on the quality and depth of information. Qualitative research is concerned with perceptions, viewpoints, evidences (Maree, 2012:48).

De Vos (2011:65) designates that qualitative research is a form of investigation, in which researchers construe what they hear, see and understand. The researchers' interpretation cannot be separated from their prior knowledge, context, own background and history. The researchers go in the situation with open thoughts, ready to saturate themselves in the difficulty of the state of affairs, and interpret and analyse issues that affect participants on a daily basis (De Vos, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, qualitative research was used to capture the viewpoints and perceptions of participants. I collected data from the respondents: eight principals, eight educators, four parents and four learners from secondary schools in the Pietersburg and Seshego Circuits of the Polokwane cluster in the Capricorn District.

1.14 Epistemology

Epistemology is the subdivision of philosophy that studies how one knows what is correct and how one validates reality (Repko, 2012). Epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world and pays attention on issues such as what forms the basis of our knowledge and how we can learn about reality (Ritchie, et al, 2013:7). It relates to the way in which knowledge is best attained through deductive and inductive view knowledge attainments (Ritchie, et al, 2013:7). An epistemological position reflects one's views of what can be known about the world and how it can be known. The researcher's epistemological position was interpretivist, which trusts that the realm is socially created, social phenomena do not exist independently of one's interpretation of them and objective analysis is impossible.

The truth that I wanted to discover was represented by the views of role-players' on MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. The researcher gave them an opportunity to tell him what their views are and he tried to capture their responses as accurately as possible, and to analyse and interpret them to gain knowledge about their view on the phenomenon, being the role-players' views on MPMLP and its implementation. In the process, the researcher ensured that the knowledge he revealed is trustworthy and does not represent his personal views, but those of the participants in the study.

1.15 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the whole thesis investigation (Grant and Osanloo, 2014:13). Grant & Osanloo (2014:13) further states theoretical framework functions as the guide on which to build and support your study, and also make available the structure to describe how you will epistemologically, theoretically, methodologically, and systematically approach the thesis as a whole. It is further defined as a structure that guides research by depending on a formal theory constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and associations (Grant and Osanloo, 2014:13). The theoretical framework

underpinning this study is social justice, which deals with eliminating unfair treatment, inequities and injustices that hinder equal access to available resources.

According to Urban Dictionary.com, social justice is encouraging patience, freedom and equality for all people irrespective of sex, race, orientation, national origin or handicap (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=social+justice>, accessed on 18 January 2016). Businessdictionary.com defines social justice as the just and suitable administration of laws meeting the requirements of the natural law that all persons, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, religion, possessions, race and so forth, are to be treated in the same way and without impartiality (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/social-justice.html>, accessed on 16 January 2016).

In the context of this research, social justice implies applying justice especially to teenage pregnant girls in regard to their access to education. The MPMLP does not and should not only concern girls.

The researcher focused on gender inequality in education, where girls and boys do not receive the same care and treatment when the girl gets pregnant or the boy impregnates the girl. Gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals, based on their gender (Sabberwal, 2014:1). It arises from differences in socially constructed and resolutely held gender roles based on biological factors of chromosomes, brain structure and hormonal differences. Ritzer, (2013) indicates that gender disparity shows that men and women are placed in society not only differently, but also unequally. This disparity results from the organisation of society, for although individual human beings differ in their profile of abilities and personalities, no significant pattern of natural difference distinguishes the sexes. Such disparity holds and includes economic, cultural, social and leadership viewpoints, which outline disparity between girls and boys (Ritzer, 2013).

In this regard, countries that have expulsion policies for pregnant teenagers, violate the right of some children to education, and are at risk of missing the EFA and MDG target of achieving Universal Basic Education by 2015 (Runhare, 2013). Gender inequality in education becomes evident as a result of teenage girl pregnancy,

especially in public schools, where the pregnant girl child is allowed to attend school only until she gives birth, after which she must stay at home for two years, whereas if the boy child is the father of the child and thus just as responsible for the pregnancy as the girl is allowed to continue with his studies uninterrupted. The MPMLP stresses, among other things, that pregnant learners can attend school until they give birth after, which they are supposed to stay at home. The girl learner who gave birth to the child is not allowed to come back to school until after two years when her child is grown up. There is clear gender inequality between the girl child and the boy child in terms of their treatment and available opportunities in case of a pregnancy. There should be equal treatment for the same action that will bring equality before the law.

1.16 Research Methods

The research aimed at unpacking the impact of MPMLP in schools and its implementation to arrive at the change or emancipation of the girl learners. The researcher used the responses of participants to interpret the MPMLP. In this regard, the researcher had to play an important role in empowering the participants, through their participation in the research, to explore their own views so that he could use their responses to construct a rich picture of their views. The researcher followed a hermeneutic approach in the sense that he attempted to reveal or explain factors affecting the implementation of MPMLP (Chang, 2010).

1.17 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and tape recordings. The researcher first engaged in semi-structured interviews with the participants.

1.17.1 Semi-structured interviews

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) propose that semi-structured questions have no choices from which the participants select an answer. Rather, the question is formulated to permit for individual answers. According to de Vos (2011:351) semi-

structured interviews can also be detailed interviews, which use exposed response questions to find data on participants' meanings, how they perceive their world and how they make sense of the vital proceedings in their lives. It rarely spans a long time period and usually requires the participants to answer a set of prearranged questions (de Vos, 2011). The researcher was concentrating to the answers of the participants as he identified new emerging lines of investigation that were directly related to the phenomenon, which was studied, probed and explored. The questions answered or responded to by school principals, educators, parents and learners that entailed their perceptions and experiences were tape recorded and notes were taken in a notebook.

Creswell (2008) proposes to the fact that researchers use semi-structured interviews to get a full image of the participants' opinions on a particular theme. This kind of interview provided the researcher and the participants much more flexibility than the conservative planned interview.

1.17.2 Document analysis

Document analysis involves the study of existing documents (minutes of meetings, school journals, policy documents and transfer booklets), either to comprehend their substantive content or illuminate profound meanings, which may be exposed by their style and coverage (de Vos, 2011:377). De Vos (2011:78) further indicates that most documents such as personal letters to friends, diaries, confessions, suicide notes and autobiographies, are not written with a view to research. The same applies to documents such as minutes of meetings, agendas, newsletters and internal office memos. Some of the documents are aimed at the mass media, such as newspapers and magazines.

According to de Vos (2011:377) documents can be classified as primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are seen as the original written material of the author's own experiences and observations, while secondary sources consist of material that is derived from someone else as the original source (de Vos, 2011:377). Maree (2011:82) states that primary sources are data that are previously

unpublished such as a letter in a newspaper, while secondary sources refer to any material such as books or articles that are based on previously published work.

The researcher used admission and transfer register books that revealed the number of learners who left or transferred from the school in that particular year. These books detail the reasons for the transfer of the learner. The details of the learner who has been transferred and the parents' information are recorded in the school journal, where the parent and / or the guardian sign for acknowledgement. The South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) is an electronically integrated application that is cost effective and user friendly that offers many and varied uses and advantages to schools. This programme in SA's school entails the learners' enrolment information and learner archives, which enables the researcher to establish when the learner was transferred and the reasons for that particular transfer. These three documents enabled the researcher to find out how many learners became pregnant or left the school due to pregnancy. The researcher did a content analysis, based on the information found in the three documents and also analysed the discourse revealed.

1.17.3 Tape recording

Tape recorder is a machine that is used for recording and playing sounds on tape (Collins English Dictionary, 2012: 1705). It is an electrical expedient used for recording sounds on magnetic tape and usually also for duplicating them, consisting of a tape deck and one or more amplifiers and loudspeakers (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary International Student's Edition, 2012: 1527). The researcher asked for permission from the participants to tape record the interviews. This enabled him to concentrate, listen and respond better. The interviews also flowed better as there were no distractions of note taking. With the latter, there is the increased risk of the researcher being more subjective about what he writes down and what not.

The entire interview was recorded, which gave a more holistic picture of what was spoken about, the manner in which it was expressed and what was particularly stressed by the participants. They felt less observed as the tape recorder was used

in a discreet way. During analysis, the researcher had the opportunity to go back over the material to make sure everything was captured for data analysis.

The researcher must ensure that records are destroyed after the research report has been compiled, so that the participants' confidentiality should be protected. Paper records should be shredded and recycled to avoid confidential information tossed on the streets. Data destruction is the process of destroying data stored on tapes, hard disks and other forms of electronic media so that it is completely unreadable and cannot be accessed or used for unauthorized purposes <https://searchstorage.techtarget.com/definition/data-destruction>. Records stored on a computer hard drive, USB, CDs, DVDs should then be erased using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device. The researcher should keep records stating what records were destroyed, and when and how it was done.

1.18 Demarcation (Population)

This study was conducted in a cluster of a region in Limpopo Province. The focus was on eight selected high schools: four schools are situated in an urban area and mainly accommodate learners from urban areas; another four are situated in a township and its immediate environment, and mostly accommodate learners from disadvantaged families and poorer socio-economic backgrounds as well as from a location situated in a rural area or village, where they accommodate learners from poor backgrounds, most of them heading families themselves.

The researcher selected eight principals, eight teachers, four parents and four learners. The selection of these particular parents and teachers was based on the fact that their children had gone through teenage pregnancy and they had some experience of how to address the challenge. Some parents and teachers dealt with teenage pregnancy themselves, which gave them personal and practical experience. Selected learners were those who went through teenage pregnancy themselves.

1.19 Sampling

Maree (2011:79) states that the idea of a sample arises from the inability of researchers to test all the persons in a given population. Michael (2012) contends that a sample refers to choosing a portion of the population, in the research area, which becomes a representation of the entire population.

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Creswell (2007:19) adds that this method of sampling is used in qualitative study and that participant and locations are cautiously chosen that can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that in purposive or purposeful sampling, the researcher picks particular elements from the population that will be illustrative or informative about the topic of interest. Maree (2012:79) contends that this method of sampling is used in exceptional circumstances, where the sampling is done with a precise purpose in mind.

The researcher selected eight principals, four from one circuit and four from another circuit. The sample included eight educators, four from one circuit and four from another. The educators preferably had to be responsible for the subject Life Orientation. Purposive sampling was used in this study in selecting four learners in grade twelve (12), two from the rural or township schools and two from the urban schools. The researcher also sampled four parents, two from a rural area in one of the circuits and two from an urban area in another circuit. The selection of the respondents was based on the following:

1. Parents, whose children had gone through teenage pregnancy and who had experience on how to address the challenge.
2. Some parents and teachers went through teenage pregnancy themselves, which gives them personal and practical experience.
3. Learners, who were selected, were those whose friends had gone through teenage pregnancy or who had been pregnant at some stages.
4. Most principals in high schools were dealing with the teenage pregnancy challenge on a daily basis; so they were able and qualified to provide vital information. The researcher requested the principals from these various sampled

schools to assist him with the information pertaining to the criteria indicated above.

1.20 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this study, information gathered from semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field notes were clustered on the basis of the population scrutinised and then compared. The researcher organised responses into groups of emerging themes and made inferences accordingly. Data were organised and put together through the finding of patterns and themes.

Thematic analysis is a systematic method to the analysis of qualitative data that includes recognizing themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and categorising data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalties, all-embracing patterns, associations, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles (Lapadat, 2010:2). Braun & Clarke (2006:6) indicate that thematic data analysis refers to examining, identifying and reporting designs (themes) within data. It organises and describes one's data set in (rich) detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic. Thematic data analysis can be conducted in numerous ways such as: becoming acquainted with the data, searching for themes, producing initial codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and generating the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006:8).

1.21 Limitations

The study was limited by the following constraints, which could influence the acquisition of knowledge gained about the MPMLP policy:

- Interviewing the participants took place after working hours, when some of them felt they were being deprived of their leisure time;
- Interviews were conducted at a time when schools were about to close for spring vacations and some of the participants were under duress;
- Some educators rescheduled their interview appointments with the researcher for another date due to their personal reasons;

- The interviews were conducted in English, which is the second language of most of the participants;
- Some parents are uneducated or found it difficult to comprehend or answer the questions. Therefore, some found it difficult to express themselves clearly and this required the researcher to use their vernacular during interviews;
- The researcher sometimes had to rephrase questions and prompt participants if it appeared that they were experiencing language difficulties in providing responses.
- It was difficult to obtain honest responses from the participants about this sensitive matter as they sometimes wanted to hide personal experiences or protect their learners, children or family.

The research topic is sensitive in nature, and as a result some of the participants were not comfortable in answering some questions honestly or might give socially acceptable answers. This was likely to affect the trustworthiness of the data gathered. However, if a researcher builds a good rapport with the interviewees, and has convinced them that their information will be treated confidentially and their identities would remain anonymous, the problem could be addressed to a great degree. Research with vulnerable participants is in itself challenging; therefore, the researcher protected their interests very carefully.

Research has also highlighted that participants feel that by agreeing to take part in the research, their story might be of benefit to others. Many other susceptible participants, however, experience pains when speaking about their past painful experience (Westlake and Forrester, 2016:8).

Overcoming the Limitations

The researcher was always punctual for the interview meetings after knock off time and worked within the borders of the period of the interviews agreed upon to evade nervousness on the side of the participants. The researcher accommodated those participants, who had to postpone their engagements for interviews for another dates to allow them time for mental easing so that they could increase their opinions about

the effects of learner pregnancy in their interview meetings. The researcher also remained flexible to accommodate some parents, who expressed themselves in the language they are comfortable in. All reasonable measures were implemented to protect the vulnerable participants, the learners, by ensuring that private venues for interviews were arranged to ensure that participants were at ease to express themselves. Participants' names shall not be used in this study, but fictitious names will be applicable to protect the individuals concerned.

1.22 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is of the paramount importance in qualitative study. It refers to the truthfulness and accuracy of the qualitative data. The researcher considered the following criteria to enhance the validity of the results: credibility, transferability, consistency dependability and conformability. Hittleman and Simon (2006:191) defined trustworthiness as the concern of all researchers to ensure that the collected data is representative.

The researcher used multiple methods of data collection such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field notes that led to trustworthiness of the data. The researcher also involved peer researchers to compare notes and understandings to assist with the interpretation of the data that could enhance trustworthiness. Maree (2011:40) contends that crystallisation allows one to move from seeing something as a fixed, rigid, two-dimensional object toward the idea of a crystal, which permits for an infinite variety of shapes, transmutations, substance, dimensions and angles of approach. It provides researchers with a difficult and deeper understanding of the phenomenon

To ensure trustworthiness, the following approaches were used by the researcher: all interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim; the recorded data were confirmed with participants; and direct quotations from the recorded data were used to demonstrate the participants' views. There must be cross checking of data to establish their validity, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. In addition, the research was completed in the natural setting of the participants,

especially with parents and learners, where the mother tongue of the participants and the researcher was used.

Coding of data by the researcher to extract meaning, content and message was utilised. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014:265), coding is the process of marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names. The coding process refers to the time, when data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences (de Vos, 2011:412). The researcher utilised open coding that entailed the labelling of phenomena, grouping concepts or categorising the phenomenon, naming a category, developing categories in terms of their properties and write the code notes. The first step in the coding of data is to label phenomena by comparing incident with incident, then group or categorise the concepts and later name a category (de Vos, 2011:412). The researcher developed categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. Categories are generated through line by line analysis, which becomes the basis of one's theoretical sampling. The researcher immersed himself totally in the data, which enabled him to form themes and patterns. Finally, he analysed and interpreted the gathered data for the study. He sought to find out more about the role players' views, their knowledge and understanding of the MPMLP and its implementation in public schools.

1.23 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought permission from the Limpopo Department of Education to conduct the research by interviewing principals, educators, learners and parents at the eight selected secondary schools in the Pietersburg and Seshego Circuits. He also obtained a letter from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee, allowing him to continue with the fieldwork. The researcher ensured that he complied with all ethical issues or considerations to protect the respondents / participants and his own integrity. Special care had to be taken to see to it that no harm came to children and parents because of the stigmas that can easily be attached to pregnant teenagers.

1.23.1 Voluntary participation

The participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to pull out at any time. They were also informed about the purpose of the research and the way the information was to be used. The researcher gave the participants a letter of consent, in which the research procedure was outlined. He asked the participants to read the letter, ask questions to gain clarity and sign the consent form, if they were willing to be involved in the research. The minors were assisted by their parents.

1.23.2 Privacy / confidentiality

Confidentiality of data and anonymity of participants was respected under all circumstances. The participants were informed about the outcome of the research. The researcher ensured that participants' identities were protected; in the case of learners, a letter of consent was signed by parents, granting permission to interview the learners. All audio cassettes were destroyed handed in for storage at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies when the study was completed. The participants' privacy, dignity, autonomy and basic human rights as individuals were respected. The researcher explained orally to the participants before and after the interview that the information given was protected and confidential. He presented them with a consent form or letter, which was signed by both the participant and the researcher, ensuring that the data gathered would never be divulged to any other person and their names would not be used.

1.23.3 Social value / protection from harm

The results of this study will benefit the broader community and the nation at large in addressing the role players' views on the MPMLP and its implementation. The study was respectful and understanding toward all participants. If, by any chance, the participants required debriefing after an interview, the researcher provided this, or made the necessary referral to a professional who could provide such a service (DoE, 2007:5). The researcher ensured that learners who did not feel sure enough to

part with their information when they were alone with the researcher, he then obtained assistance from a trusted parent or social worker in the area. The researcher also organised a private venue for consultation in the event that some parents and learners did not feel at ease in a public space to participate in the interview. During the interview, there was no mention of names, but instead, codes or fictitious names were used.

1.24 Significance of the Study

This research is important in the field of teaching and learning in general. It discovered the schooling experiences confronted by pregnant learners in high schools. It offers alternative ways in which teachers and school principals can assist pregnant learners to realise their full potential.

The study added knowledge of the role-players' views on MPMLP and on the success or failure of policy implementation. It provides information that could support teachers and school principals when assisting pregnant learners to realise their full ability. Teachers would gain more insight into the phenomenon of learner pregnancy and the problems regarding the implementation of the policy. The study findings and recommendations could be used in the further development of the argument for the equitable treatment of pregnant learners. It is also relevant to the vital issue of fair treatment of pregnant learners. The study enabled role players other than the pregnant girls to respond confidently and efficiently in assisting pregnant learners in the challenges they face.

This research also intended to raise teachers' alertness of the experiences of pregnant learners in public schools. It will also look into the role of the boy child who, in this instance, is the father of the child that needs to be raised. The Department of Basic Education needs to capacitate Life Skills and Life Orientation educators to be more relevant in addressing youth challenges such as puberty, sex and teenage pregnancy. Pregnant learners must be referred to adult centres and social workers be assigned to one of them to deal with social and health challenges.

1.25 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyse the views of different stakeholders and participants that are impacting the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in public schools. The researcher anticipated that the outcomes from the research would give school principals, educators, learners and parents a better understanding into the educational problems caused by schoolgirl pregnancy and expose factors that were acting as obstacles to the successful implementation of the policy. It was envisaged that the data from this study would be of value to all the appropriate stakeholders in education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

South Africa has been a constitutional democracy since 1994. Informing the foundation of this democracy was the dream of a newly-born, united nation, where everybody would feel at home and where all people irrespective of race, culture, gender or any other demographic difference would be respected as equals (Beckmann & Sehoole, 2004). Education reform has been a priority in South Africa since the inception of the democratic government in 1994 and has played a key role in redressing the injustices of apartheid. Impressive progress has been made in education legislation, policy development, curriculum reform and the implementation of new ways of delivering education, but many challenges remain in many areas, such as student outcomes and the implementation of crafted policies (DoE, 2001). These policy changes included, among other things, the creation of a single education system and the development of a policy that is committed to human rights and social justice in South Africa (Stofile, 2008).

Teenage pregnancy has escalated beyond control worldwide. About 16 million adolescent girls between 15 and 19 years of age give birth each year (WHO, 2011). Prior to the democratically elected government assuming power in South Africa in 1994, pregnant learners were expelled from schools immediately after their condition came to the school's knowledge. However, such expulsion constitutes an infringement of some of the rights in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (the Constitution). The Constitution provides that no learners may be discriminated against unfairly amongst other things on the basis of pregnancy, colour, race, religion or gender. The Constitution and other related legislation and policies are in place, ensuring that learners are not discriminated against unfairly.

The focus of this study is the views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP) and its implementation in public schools in the Polokwane cluster of the Capricorn District in Limpopo Province. This policy was published by the Department of Education in South Africa in 2007, with the intention to address the escalation of teenage pregnancy in SA's schools and the management thereof, if pregnancy has occurred among learners. These policy measures are firmly anchored within a prevention context and the intended reduction of teenage pregnancies. The policy measures also address the issues of HIV and Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases to promote the development of a healthy lifestyle and learning for all learners (DoE, 2007:1).

In this chapter, the researcher will explore the literature pertaining to learner pregnancy and education. The researcher will address learner pregnancy in the international and national context, and policies and strategies dealing with this problem; challenges that people experience with the (MPMLP) policy; and the factors that influence the understanding of the policy.

2.2 International Statistics and Perspectives

Annually, 15 million women worldwide below 20 years of age give birth, representing up to one-fifth of all births. A total of about 529,000 females die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth-related health problems annually (Malahlela, 2012:1). Worldwide, one in five girls has given birth by the age of 18, and this number does not comprise juveniles below the age of 15. Teenage pregnancy is a main worry to international societies, with the US ranking at the uppermost with almost 1,000,000 learner pregnancies happening every year (Williams, 2010:1). This escalation of teenage pregnancy takes place both in developed and developing countries. However, the largest incidence occurs in developing countries. According to WHO (2014:1) the average global birth rate statistic among the girls ranging from 15 to 19 year-olds is 49 per 1,000 girls. Country rates range from 1 to 299 births per 1,000 girls, with the maximum rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2014:1).

Learner pregnancy remains a challenge, requiring immediate resolution the world over (United Nations Population Fund, 2013). The World Health Organization (2014) reported that, 11% of all births were of women aged 15-19 years. Learner pregnancies occurring in emerging countries is about 95%, with 36.4 million women becoming mothers before the age of 18 (United Nations Population Fund, 2013).

Also, according to the WHO (2014:1), education is the main protective aspect against early pregnancy and the more years of schooling girls obtain, the less early pregnancies occur. Women with low education levels' birth rate are higher than those with secondary or tertiary education. However, this finding could also be interpreted to mean that a significantly larger proportion of girls who did not fall pregnant in their early teens continued with higher education and those who fell pregnant dropped out from secondary (and tertiary) education.

The World Health Assembly (2011) adopted a resolution urging member countries to hasten actions to improve the health of young people. The resolution included these specific measures:

- The policies that are to protect young people from early child-bearing be reviewed and revised.
- Contraception and reproductive healthcare services be provided;
- Promoting access to accurate information on sexual and reproductive health.

If the availability of policies, information sharing and access to reproductive healthcare services had anything to do with the actual implementation and usage of resources, the world would be better off than it is now.

In 2014, US teen births accounted for 6.3% of all births and 13.9% of all non-marital births (Solomon-Fears, 2016:1). The birth rate among US juveniles aged 15 to 19 increased in 2006 and 2007 after a stable deterioration since 1991. According to Solomon-Fears (2016:1) although the birth rate for US juveniles has dipped in 22 of the past 24 years, it remains higher than the juvenile birth rate of most developed nations. Preventing juvenile pregnancy is commonly considered a priority among policymakers and the public because of its high social, economic and health costs

for learners' parents and their families (Nyarko, 2015). According to Hamilton *et al.* (2009), juvenile pregnancy is a common public health problem international, which is harmful to the health of mother and child and has long been considered a high-risk situation.

Adolescents and young people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will constitute 19.6% (224,432,000) of the region's population by 2015. The region is characterised by unemployment, particularly among the youth, with the employment to population ratio at only 45.8%. (Lukale & Okondo, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest occurrence of learner pregnancy in the world in 2013 (United Nations Population Fund, 2013). According to United Nations Population Fund (2013:4) births by teenage mothers accounted for more than half of all the births in this region, an estimated 101 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. Other authors indicated that the majority of countries with teenage pregnancy levels above 30% occur in sub-Saharan Africa (Loaiza & Liang, 2013:3). The government and non-governmental organisations have tried to resolve this problem through policies and other initiatives. Teenage pregnancy remains at disaster proportions in most African countries, in spite of huge investments and refinement of these policies, (UNFPA, 2010).

According to Mkwanzani & Odimegwu (2015:5) the levels and trends of teenage pregnancy per region in sub-Saharan Africa between 1992 and 2011 are shown in Figure 1. In 1992 the level of juvenile pregnancy for all sub-regions was alike; yet, the trajectories differed. East Africa had the highest level in 1992, decreasing in 2000 and 2005 to have the lowest level in 2011 at 16.3%. West Africa's level of teenage pregnancy decreased to some extent from 1992, to reach 27.9% in 2011. The level of teenage pregnancy in Southern Africa was the lowest in 1992, increased in 2005 and was the highest in 2011, standing at 28.9%.

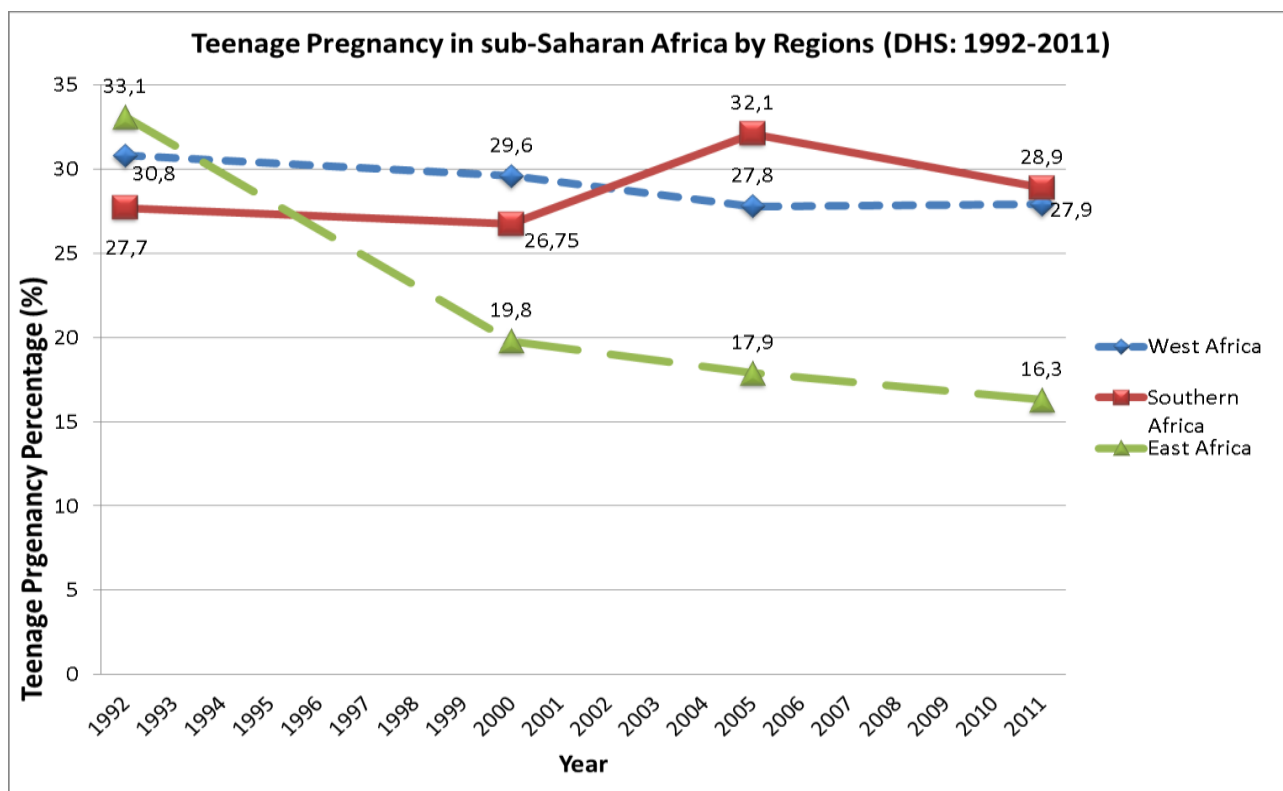


Figure 2.1 Source: Teenage Pregnancy Levels and Trend in sub-Saharan Africa. (Demographic and Health Survey StatsCompiler)

While learner pregnancy is decreasing in general, high rates continue in many countries, mostly where poverty and poor health are widespread. In emerging countries most girls are living at risk of juvenile pregnancy. On average, one third of the young women living in least developed countries give birth before the age of 20 (Rowbottom, 2007).

Learner pregnancy is prevalent in Ethiopia and is a significant demographic factor as Ethiopia is the second most crowded country in Africa with a total projected population of 77.1 million in 2007 (CSA, 2007). Pregnancies among girls under the age of 18 years have irreparable consequences. The rights of these young girls are violated by pregnancy and childbirth such as the right to education, with dangerous consequences in terms of sexual and reproductive health, and poses high development costs for populations, particularly in continuing the cycle of poverty.

Current studies on adolescent pregnancy in Sub-Saharan Africa looked at individual demographics, socio-economic and reproductive health knowledge and behaviour parameters (Molosiwa & Moswela, 2012; Nwogwugwu, 2013; Nyakubega, 2010). In this research socio-economic status and education are identified as stable causes of juvenile pregnancy in Sub-Saharan African countries. Other studies discovered the effect of household variables on teenage pregnancy in Nigeria, Kenya, and Lesotho, display household size and parents' marital status as important predictors of juvenile pregnancy (Ifeoma, 2008; Ugoji, 2011).

2.3 South African Perspective

Pregnancy and parenting among school-going learners is common in South Africa, and the focus on parenting in this regard remains exclusively on girls. According to Shefer, Bhana & Morrel (2013:5) the knowledge of being pregnant and parenting, while being a learner, is moulded by wider social and school-based responses to learner pregnancy, parenting and female sexuality in general. In 2007, for example, nearly 50,000 learners became pregnant, with high rates in poorer provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo (Department of Basic Education, 2010). While the Constitution and current educational policy state that pregnant and parenting learners may continue schooling, the context of teenage pregnancy is shaped by a wide range of discourses relating to teenage sexuality, pregnancy and motherhood (Macleod, 2011). As evident in one of the articles in a nationwide newspaper, entitled 'Pregnancy Tsunami' (*The Times*, 21 February, 2011), learner pregnancy is a sensitive issue in South Africa, created in the popular media and in much of the scientific literature as fundamentally difficult, "damaging" and "disastrous", not only for the young women, but also for wider society. Macleod (2011:5) argued that at the fundamental of this popular representation of learner pregnancy is a variety of normative assumptions about what young people should or should not do with respect to sexuality and reproduction, pervaded by leading cultural, moral and ideological positions on sexuality, pregnancy, parenting and families.

South Africa, as a developing country, is confronted on a daily basis by unplanned teenage pregnancies in schools, especially in the rural provinces such as Limpopo,

KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. Rural provinces in South Africa, especially among the predominantly black communities, are affected more than urban areas. According to Karra and Lee (2012:12), the rate of pregnancy among school girls in South Africa remains high by worldwide comparison and at the rate of 13% in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal is twice the national average of 6.5%. According to Govender (2015:28), more than 176,000 teenagers fell pregnant in South Africa in 2013. Of these girls, 2,903 were only 13 years old. In 2014, 3,858 pregnant teenagers visited the pregnancy counselling centre Africa Cares for Life, which has 67 branches across South Africa (Govender, 2015).

Statistics South Africa’s latest data on teenage pregnancies shows a “fairly stable” trend. The percentages indicate the proportion of 15-19-year-olds who had been pregnant in the preceding year:

Table 2.1

Year	Percentage
2009	6.4
2010	6.9
2011	6.4
2012	6.7
2013	7.2
2014	6.6
2015	5.6

Source: Statistics South Africa (Published: 1st June 2016 06:39)

When the researcher examined the long-term trends between 2009 and 2015, it emerged that, overall; the trend has continued fairly constant, though with some variations from year to year. However, there was a considerable deterioration from 2013 to 2015.

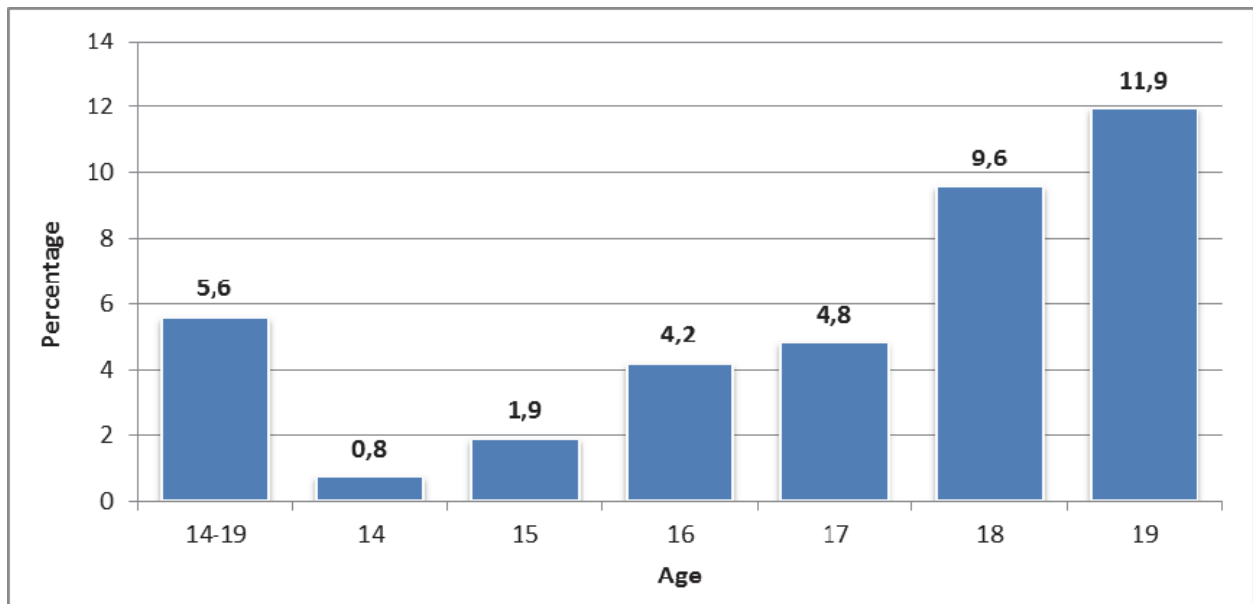


Figure 2.2: Percentage of females aged 14–19 who were pregnant during the year preceding the survey, 2014, Source: Statistics South Africa.

2.4 Policies and Strategies Dealing with this Problem

2.4.1 Court cases

The Constitutional Court (CCT 103/12) [2013] ZACC 25;) ruling in *Head of Department, Department of Education, Free State Province v Welkom High School and Another; Head of Department, Department of Education, Free State Province v Harmony High School and Another* pertaining to the matters between the Free State Department of Basic Education represented by their Head of Department (HOD) and Welkom and Harmony High Schools about the expulsion of pregnant learners shows that:

- Discriminated unfairly against pregnant learners in breach of section 9 of the Constitution;
- The school SGB and principal violated the fundamental rights of these learners to education in breach of section 29 of the Constitution;
- The school SGB and principal violated the learners' right to privacy in relation to their own bodies;

- The schools' policies are punitive in nature in that they discriminate against pregnant learners' right to education and that every pregnant learner must stay home;
- The schools' policies prohibit pregnant learners from returning to school the same year after giving birth and hence leads to stigmatisation;
- The schools' SGBs have no constitutional powers to expel pregnant learners from the schools without the mandate and sanction of the HOD;
- The expulsion of pregnant learners is gender discrimination in that it is confined to female learners and says nothing about male learners;
- Pregnant learners drop out from school without finishing their desired grades; and consequently, levels of illiteracy and dependency are increased; and
- The eradication of poverty and inequality among the poor black learners and society is compromised.

The Constitutional Court ruling on the expulsion of pregnant learners has vital and fundamental implications for the application of the MPMLP and the two high schools' pregnancy policies. The MPMLP is gender insensitive, punitive and does not address gender equality in its entirety. Its only emphasis is on pregnant girl learners and it does not deal with boy learners. Pregnant girl learners cannot complete their grades or school when found to be pregnant, irrespective of how pregnancy occurred. The expulsion of pregnant girl learners constitutes discrimination against their basic human rights such as the right to education, dignity and equality.

The reality is that the Constitutional Court ruling and basic human rights allow these learners to study further, irrespective of their pregnancy. It also addresses the gender inequality that prevails in our society in that both the pregnant girls and the boy learners who might have impregnated the girl should be responsible for their actions. Pregnant learners who are given an opportunity to finish their basic schooling will help in the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment in SA's society. Even though the intention of the MPMLP was to help reduce the high level of pregnancy among SA's school learners, it is seen as punitive in that identified pregnant learners cannot attend school for a specified period. The MPMLP sought to reduce pregnancies among pupils, and arm teenage mothers with the

knowledge to make informed choices on healthcare during pregnancy and after giving birth. It preserves the norms and practices of the society that regards teenage pregnancy as a sign of immorality (DoE, 2007).

In the High Court case ruling in the case between Utjiua Karuaihe, a grade 11 learner and the principal of Windhoek Hoer Skool, the court found that it was unconstitutional to deny Utjiua re-admission in the same year to further her studies (Sasman:2005). Initially, the High Court ruled that the temporary guidelines approved by Cabinet were not binding on schools that had the duty to exercise discretion on issues relating to pregnancy among learners. The court stated further that it could not reasonably be the intention of the Cabinet policy to prohibit the enrolment of teenage mothers, where the mother has a support system (Sasman: 2005). The judgment decided that as much as people may abhor learner pregnancies with sound reason, it is not the intention of the Cabinet policy to punish learners who happen to find themselves in the position of Utjiua.

Based on the ruling that the principal of the school should exercise his discretion in light of the court decision, the principal decided to deny Utjiua re-admission on the basis that she must stay home for a year and take care of her child. The Permanent Secretary of the Namibian Cabinet also stated that the small child has the right to be taken care of by his/her parents and the time spent with her little baby is to the benefit of such baby and his/her future development. Based on the argument above, Utjiua was denied re-admission to the school, and her basic human rights in terms of the Namibian Constitution were violated. The right to education, dignity, equal treatment and gender equality were violated. The Namibian and South African teenage pregnancy policies have much in common or may even have influenced each other because of the neighbouring countries' proximity, but the Namibian policy differs in that it emphasises that both the girl learner and the boy learner who impregnated her are supposed to attend counselling to prepare them for their parenting responsibility. Both the girl learner and boy learners ought to go on 12 months' leave of absence from the school in order to raise their new born child. This speaks to gender equality, gender equity, responsibility and accountability.

2.4.2 International Pregnancy challenge

Teenage pregnancy is not just a South African problem, but an international problem that challenges all nations. The study conducted by Kara and Maharaj (2015) indicated that early / teenage childbearing is prevalent throughout the world. They stated that over the past several decades there has been a steady decline in the total fertility rate globally, but the rate of early childbearing remains high. It is estimated that 11% of all births worldwide are to girls aged 15 to 19 years, resulting in 16 million teenage girls giving birth each year.

Teenage pregnancy cuts across all racial groups, nationalities and economic statuses, while acknowledging that curbing it is a challenge that is facing the entire world. Clarke (2005) considered the costs of juvenile pregnancies as overwhelming in South Africa and internationally. His point of view is reinforced by the above health statistics (see paragraph 2.4.2) in South Africa, which reflect the rising number of pregnant learners. Teenage mothers may be less likely to get married, more likely to go on permanent welfare for financial support; their academic future is compromised and thus it puts a great deal of pressure on countries that provide social grants to the needy (Chauke, 2013; Suane, 2015). Many countries of the world have therefore developed teenage pregnancy policies or strategies to manage the problem, either in case it occurs or to prevent it before it happens.

The developed countries, with more monetary and human resources, and the advantage of more scientific research on the topic, are also battling with the same phenomenon. England introduced a pregnancy policy in 1999, intending to address this social, physical and economic problem. The United Kingdom has a long tradition of fairly high numbers of teenage pregnancies. In spite of the fact that the rates have shown an inconsiderable decrease over recent decades, this decline has been substantially lower than that observed in other Western European countries (Ingham, 2005). The study conducted by Ingham (2005) emphasised that the policy was based on both the improved prevention of early conceptions through comprehensive sex- and relationships education, improved health / social services, and more open communication between parents and children. It also aimed to improve support for those women who consciously chose to have children in their teenage years.

Based on the policy output, the British Government further developed a strategic plan to enhance the implementation of a pregnancy policy, which aims to reduce the high pregnancy rate in public schools (Ingham, 2005). The following are the four key facets, of the action plan that aimed to attain the identified goals:

- A national campaign to improve understanding and change behaviour;
- Joined-up action with new mechanisms to interrelate action at both national and local levels and ensure that the plan of action is on track;
- Better prevention of the causes of teenage pregnancy, including better education in and out of school, access to contraception, and targeting of high-risk groups, with a new focus on reaching young men;
- Better support for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, with a new focus on returning to education with childcare to help;
- Working to a position, where no under 18 single parent is put in a single inhabitancy;
- Pilot studies around the country providing rigorous support for parents and child.

Santelli and Melnikas (2010:366) established that the main cause for the lower learner birth rates in Europe compared to the US is higher level of contraception use. Further both Santelli & Melnikas (2010:379) contend that the key reason for higher contraception use by European teenagers is that parents are more likely to regularise both contraception use and sexual activity, especially in the Netherlands, which has the lowest learner pregnancy rate.

The right of pregnant learners to continue education in the US is based on two laws, which all American states and districts are compelled to adopt and implement in their schools. In terms of 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 teenagers in schools is prohibited (Key *et al.*, 2001; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). According to McGaha-Garnett (2007:15), in the US, Teen parents are mandated to attend school despite circumstances and are prosecuted or fined when unexpected absence becomes problematic. The element of accountability and

responsibility is balanced in that learners are supposed to attend school in the condition in which they are and are also fined in the event they do not show up for school.

According to Kearney & Levine (2012:2) dual method use of less sexual activity at a juvenile age and increased contraceptive use rather than an upsurge in abortions contribute hugely to the deterioration in teenage births in the United States. Not only have US juvenile births deteriorated in recent years, but fewer learners are sexually active or fall pregnant. However, birth rates for Hispanic, black and American Indian / Alaska Native teenagers continue to be much higher than those of other racial / ethnic groups (Solomon-Fears, 2016:4).

Some African countries have designed national education policies that protect pregnant and former pregnant teenagers against discrimination, particularly with respect to educational access. These policies are aimed at achieving gender parity in all public spheres, including educational access by instituting measures that reduce female dropout rates at all levels of education (Sadie, 2001).

Some countries' policies require the pregnant girl not to attend school for one year after childbirth, so that she can look after the child. Chilisa (2002: 29) observed that, in Botswana, the policy requires the girl to withdraw from school immediately when her pregnancy is discovered, only to return 12 months after delivery. Likewise, the Malawian, Namibian and Zambian school girl pregnancy policies all require a pregnant learner to withdraw and re-enrol after at least one year of maternity leave from school (Hubbard *et al.*, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). In the main, the South African learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP) requires that a learner stays at home for two years after giving birth, so that she will take care of the child and to ensure that the child is healthy enough so that someone else can look after him / her. Consequently, parents and guardians are required by the policy to ensure that teen mothers attend school, while they assist with baby care (Department of Education [DoE], 2007; SASA, 1996).

2.4.3 National

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (hereafter the Constitution), the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. The Constitution serves as the cornerstone and the foundation upon which all regulations, policies and prescripts that deal with pregnancies or teenage pregnancies at public and private schools are built. Though the basis of the Constitution is to allow learners equal access to education and deal with unfair discrimination against pregnant learners, much still needs to be done.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 by implication permits teenagers to stay in school, while pregnant and return to school after childbirth. Before the introduction of SASA (1996), the principals had the sole responsibility to decide on the fate of the pregnant girl learners, and in most cases, these pregnant learners were expelled from the schools. In addition, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (the Equality Act) also has the intent that school learners who become pregnant should not be unfairly discriminated against (Lince, 2011). However, while the law is clear that such learners cannot be turned away from school when pregnant, it is less clear about how schools should deal with pregnant learners and learner-parents (Bhana et al. 2008: 78). The law is also silent on the moral aspect regarding teenage pregnancy, which is regarded as a taboo and deviant in some cultures. Like Bhana *et al.* (2008), the researcher believes it is a problem and highlights inequality that there is an absence of the father being stated in teenage pregnancy laws and acts, there is broader acceptance of early male sexuality, while female sexuality is replied to in more punishing ways.

The introduction of the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP) by the Department of Education in 2007 intended to fill the gap identified in SASA and the Constitution of South Africa. The policy intended to encourage the prevention of teenage pregnancy and the management thereof, if pregnancy has occurred. However, it has been heavily critiqued for having some

conservative language such as: 'strongly advocating abstinence' (Chohan, 2010) and for having some recommendations that do not seem to support girls returning to school and realising their right to education. In addition, it states that a girl may not return to school in the same year she gives birth and recommends that a mother should take a two-year break from school. The health of the pregnant learner and the child is not fully addressed within the policy itself.

The study by Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013) indicates that the Department of Basic Education should also strive to ensure that educators and school principals are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to learner pregnancy. Schools should also ensure that parents are adequately informed about these measures. The two aspects indicated above are key in the implementation of the MPMLP and in reducing the high level of teenage pregnancy in Limpopo Province. Macleod and Tracy (2009) further argue that capacity at provincial and district level is identified as an obstacle to implementation in general, and that educators as well as district and provincial level coordinators and management experience a lack of resources that impinge on interventions. This leaves educators, together with SMTs, with few or no options to deal with teenage pregnancy at school (Tracy, 2009).

The launch of the joint Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP) in October 2012 by the Departments of Basic Education (DoBE) and Health (DoH) sought to ensure that sexual and reproductive health services and rights are addressed within schools. The policy outlines a number of critical spaces in which this can be done. The attention should be given to abuse (sexual, physical and emotional abuse, including bullying and violence); sexual and reproductive health; menstruation; contraception; sexually transmitted infections (STIs, including HIV / Aids); male circumcision; teenage pregnancy, Choice of Termination of Pregnancy (CToP), PMTCT; HIV counselling and testing (HCT) and stigma mitigation in Life Orientation classes. The health aspect contained in the ISHP seeks to address the gap identified in both the MPMLP and SASA, so that pregnant learners could know their health status and their delivery time. The Departments of Health and Basic Education must ensure that there are nurses deployed to schools who will assist in terms of prevention of teenage pregnancy processes and who conduct general health checks. Most

teenage pregnancies are unplanned, while some may even be planned, but teenage pregnancies can be harmful to the body and life of a teenager. Regardless of whether a juvenile pregnancy is deliberate or not, it is vital to recognise that pregnancies among young teenagers can be medically unsafe for the pregnant mother.

2.4.4 Provincial – Limpopo

Along with the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, the Limpopo Province has been identified as one of the three provinces with very high teenage pregnancy rates in South Africa. These three provinces in South Africa seem to be dominated by rural rather than urban areas, and there are many factors that contribute toward this high level of pregnancy in schools. Despite government strategies to reduce the number of unintended and unplanned pregnancies, such as making contraception a basic human right to human dignity, the number of adolescent pregnancies in Limpopo Province continues to rise (Manena-Netshikweta, 2007). The Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province seems to have a High learner pregnancy rates. This was also confirmed by Morake (2011:3), who indicated that statistics shows that four out of ten girls fall pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20. According to Mothiba & Maputle (2012:4) some parents and many public institutions, are either embarrassed about dealing with young people's sexuality or try to disregard it fully and this leads to the situation, where it seems as if sex is seen to be 'compulsory' among juveniles without thinking about reaching maturity before engaging in sexual intercourse.

Hlungwani (2011:1) reported in the *Sowetan Live* that pupils at Mavalani Secondary School outside Giyani, Limpopo, went on the riot, destroying property after blaming the principal of reporting that 57 of their schoolmates were pregnant and the youngest expectant mother was 13 years old. This is an example of the high rate of pregnancy among learners who are still at school and sometimes responded irrational. Principals face this challenge of learner pregnancy daily. According to Bhana *et al.* (2008:88), principals of schools have neither the skills nor the capacity to deal with pregnant learners or how to implement education for learners as to how

to avoid falling pregnant in the first place; hence, all they do is to encourage learners to begin again schooling after giving birth.

2.5 Challenges that People Experience with this Policy

2.5.1 In the schooling context

The current policy on teenage pregnancy seems to have “softened” the stance as compared to how school principals used to handle pregnant learners prior to 1994 in that pregnant girls are now at least allowed to remain at school. The implementation of the MPMLP in SA’s schools seems to have created some uncertainty, however, as school principals are not fully equipped and trained on how this policy needs to be implemented and executed. Some stakeholders seem to be totally ignorant about this policy although they are expected to implement it and as such it creates some uneven implementation. This uneven implementation of the teenage pregnancy policy in various schools across the Limpopo province results sometimes in the suspension or expulsion of pregnant teenagers, poor academic performance prior to the girls’ child delivery, few child-caring alternatives being considered, inadequate support from families, peers and the school environment, as well as the social stigma of being a teenage mother (Department of Basic Education, 2010). Furthermore, some parents may not send their girls to school because they consider the benefits of education for girls to be limited and the cost of sending them to school to be unnecessary for the family to carry (Department of Basic Education, 2010:42). They prefer them to stay home, help around the home and start families of their own.

The study conducted by Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013:5) indicates that stakeholders at school, who are educators, parents, learners and, more specifically, school management teams (SMTs), do not have the know-how to manage and deal with learner pregnancy. Some parents as primary stakeholders are supposed to assist in the implementation of the MPMLP in curbing teenage pregnancy, school dropout and managing a pregnant learner still attending school. However, these stakeholders have never been trained or taught how to deal with pregnant learners attending school. According to Macupe (2016), the parents said that the pupils should be

expelled from school as a way to protect other pupils from the bad influences of pregnant learners. The parents further argued that allowing pregnant pupils to attend school was a burden on teachers as it was not their duty to care for pregnant pupils.

Limpopo Province is more rural and often produces the lowest grade 12 results every year. Learner pregnancy may be one of the issues contributing to the failure rate. The increase in learner pregnancy activates a need for training SMTs in how to deal with pregnant learners at school because some principals tend to discourage learners from continuing with school when they are pregnant, the reason being that they are frightened to face the situation where a learner may give birth at school. While South African legislation prevents young mothers from being discriminated against unfairly at school, there is still significant evidence to suggest that pregnant school-goers are asked to leave school during their pregnancies. This is probably because pregnant girl learners are seen as a bad inspiration on other girl learners (Macleod & Tracy, 2009). This confirms that stakeholders do not know how to deal with learner pregnancy, and the Department of Basic Education is not in a position to provide schools with nurses and psychologists to assist in cases of an emergency.

2.5.2 Gender insensitivity, inequality and punitive actions

Gender equality speaks to the status of boy and girl learners in the school environment and how they are treated in terms of their actions and responsibilities.

Gender equality means that women and men are equally present in all segments of public and private life, that they have an equal status, equal access to all rights and equal benefits from achieved results (Croatian Gender Equality Act of Parliament, 2008). Gender refers to the social roles, responsibilities and behaviours believed to belong to men and women; for example, “men as income earners” and “women as child care givers. Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment (UNESCO, 2015). Both girls and boys must have equal opportunities to enter school, as well as to participate in and benefit from the range of subjects or other learning experiences offered in schools and classrooms in order to realise gender equalities. Regardless of their gender, both girls and boys become equally armed with the life skills and

knowledge they will need to attain their full potential within and outside of the education system.

The policy on teenage pregnancy (MPMLP) in schools seems to be insensitive towards gender equality since it provides that every pregnant girl should stay home for two years after giving birth. This policy does not implicate or state that the boy learner, who is responsible for impregnating the girl learner, should also stay home. It is therefore the responsibility of the girl learner alone to take care of the new-born baby; hence the girl learner also lags behind in her studies and may drop out of school altogether. Schools continue to be places where girls experience increasingly more subtle gender inequalities, which make them difficult to deal with (Rarieya *et al.*, 2014).

Pregnancy has been identified as a major reason for girls dropping out of school (SAHRC, 2012). Therefore, the adoption of a 'return to school' policy for girls who fall pregnant while in school is an attempt to ensure the retention and equal participation of girls in schools. The Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Guidelines (2007) seek to eradicate the expulsion of and unfair discrimination against girls who fall pregnant while in school. It states that girls should return to school no later than 24 months after giving birth. Both girls and boys learners must be equally treated, have equal opportunities and responsibilities for their actions. UNESCO promotes gender equality in and through education so as to ensure that women and men, girls and boys have equal access to learning opportunities, as well as fair treatment in the learning processes, equitable outcomes and advancement in all spheres of life (UNESCO, 2015).

The MPMLP seems to address gender inequality in schools in terms of allowing the pregnant learner to resume her studies at a later stage, which may be difficult for her after an absence from a learning environment for such a long time and after having taken up a number of domestic and child-caring tasks at home. Also, the policy seems to be punitive in that it is only pregnant girl, who visibly displays the signs of her supposed 'misconduct', who pays the price of leaving school and damaging her future. She is the one who must accept the sole responsibility and bear the primary duty to raise the child. She is supposed to report the matter to the class teacher or

guardian and that amounts to victimisation and stigmatisation within the school environment. Boys who are responsible for impregnating girl learners are allowed to pursue their academic work without hindrances. According to the School Policy on Learner Pregnancy (2008) in Namibia, the pregnant girl is supposed to stay out of school for twelve months, taking care of the baby. This also applies to the boy learner responsible for impregnating the girl learner. Both the boy and the girl should be equally responsible for their action, and this sounds fair. However, it has the potential to make one or both drop out of school, ensuring that they work and raise resources for the child.

The Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy of 2011 (EDSEC) explicitly states that every child, irrespective of their life circumstance has the right to be re-integrated into the same institution that the girl was previously attending. However, the policy indicates that when the girl child is discovered being pregnant, she must stay out of school until the child is born and thereafter, the girl 'mother' can be re-integrated into the school. It is therefore not fair for the pregnant girl to be expelled upon discovery of pregnancy, though culturally it is regarded as an immoral act that must be discouraged among the learners. The Swaziland policy allows the girl child to resume her studies immediately after giving birth.

2.5.3 Inadequate resources

The successful implementation of MPMLP is premised on sufficient allocation of financial resources and well-equipped human resources. The people responsible for implementing the policy must be equipped, informed and capacitated so that they can influence, inform and transform the thinking capacity of the various stakeholders. Provincial education departments must provide every school with a copy of these measures and ensure compliance. They should also strive to ensure that educators and managers are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to learner pregnancy. Schools should also ensure that parents are adequately informed about these measures (MPMLP, 2007). The responsibility of the employer is to provide adequate human and financial resources for this policy to be fully implemented. However, the Limpopo Department of Education is not even able to service its core mandate, which is curriculum delivery.

The Department of Education as the employer must make available personnel training to capacitate all stakeholders involved in the running of schools and addressing challenges thereof. According to Johanson (2009:6) training funds may be single purpose, but most have multiple purposes. Johanson (2009:8) further outlines that these may include mobilising resources, pooling of income from various sources, expanding the volume of enterprise training, building training capacities, providing access to training by disadvantaged populations, improving the relevance and quality of training, using resources efficiently and developing competitive training markets. Even though the researcher agrees with the sentiments indicated above, the challenge remains the prioritising of funding for this project and for outsourcing to skilled people who can assist in training all the stakeholders involved.

The implementation of MPMLP in Limpopo Province needs to start with senior personnel in human resources training, the governance section and the legal section of head office and all district directors, together with their circuit managers. Capacitation needs to further go to all principals, SGBs, teachers and parents, together with the learner representative councils. According to the MPMLP (2007), the measures are firmly anchored in the prevention and reduction of teenage pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, in order to promote learning, development and healthy lifestyles for all learners. The MPMLP highlights the importance of sexuality education, HIV and Aids education programmes and peer education among learners. This transfer of knowledge and information should assist all stakeholders in dealing with the challenges of these problems and capacitate them to be more effective in dealing with them.

2.6 Factors that Influence the Understanding of the Policy

2.6.1 Teachers' knowledge of the law

The Department of Education's (2007:3) Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (hereafter MPMLP) outlines a range of measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and how to manage it, if and when it does

occur. A provincial department of basic education must provide every school with a copy of these measures and ensure their compliance. Ramulumo, & Pitsoe (2013) indicates that Department of Education should also strive to ensure that educators and managers are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to teenage learner pregnancy and ensure that schools adequately informed stakeholders about these measures.

A study conducted by Willan (2013) found that most educators and principals were ignorant about the MPMLP policy to the extent that some learners were encouraged to report for school a week after giving birth. The implementation of the policy depended in some circles on the principal's interpretation of the policy. There was a lack of support and understanding from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that fair implementation takes place across the board. Educators know that learners should not be expelled from school because of their pregnancy, but the actual policy on teenage pregnancy and how it is implemented is probably less known.

In a study by Runhare (2014) it became evident that there was inadequate knowledge of national policies by educators, parents and SGB members, and members of the communities did not know or had very little knowledge about the guidelines on learner pregnancy management. SGB members and educators opposed the policy as it was against their cultural values (Runhare, 2010). Educators indicated that they had heard, but not seen, the pregnant learner management policy (Runhare, 2010). Stakeholders at school level, particularly school principals used their own initiatives to ensure that pregnant learners are not expelled from schools.

Mpanza and Nzima (2010:432) found that due to beliefs that schools were not meant for pregnant learners and were not adequately equipped to meet their health needs, some teachers were not willing to allow pregnant learners to continue attending school. Teachers also reported a lack of training to meet the health needs of pregnant learners. Mpanza and Nzima (2010:433) further indicate that some schools 'turn a blind eye to pregnant learners' by refraining from playing an active role in attending to the specific needs of pregnant learners. These situations then lead to an uncomfortable presence of pregnant learners in secondary schools, as secondary

schools cannot adequately provide for the health, social and emotional needs of these learners. A study conducted by Shefer, Bhana & Morrel (2013) indicates that teachers and principals also expressed their outrage and resistance to what they regarded as 'young women's lack of shame', for they remain convinced that being pregnant at school is shameful, and that the problem with government policy is that it is diffusing this shame, making it acceptable, thus undermining public 'moral standards'.

2.6.2 Communication within the education system

Communication is the sharing of information with an individual or group of people to reach a common understanding (Nazarova, 2015). According to the Chambers Dictionary (2006: 309), communication means a connecting passage or channel, giving and receiving information such as speech, telecommunication and the press. The intended message is passed from one person or office to another with the intention of conveying a clear and unambiguous message or directive; however, the gist of the message might be lost along the way. The success of the implementation of the MPMLP is clearly also linked to the ability to transfer information and express ideas to others. The goal of communication is to ensure the understanding of the information that was exchanged. Both the sender of information and the receiver must have a clear and common understanding of the information communicated.

The Department of Basic Education in Limpopo Province is an organ consisting of different sections, directorates and sub-divisions intended to enhance efficiency and effective realisation of its main goals. For effective implementation of the MPMLP in Limpopo public schools to be realised, effective communication among these sections and directorates needs to be well managed. Communication in government signifies a multifaceted purposeful structure of the movement of information, instructions, aspirations and references made up of two partially complementary systems: an official communication network and a casual communication network (Turkalj & Fosić, 2006:34). Turkalj and Fosić (2006:35) further indicate that official communication is an organised and formal procedure of information transmission in

spoken and written form planned in advance, and attuned to the requirements of the organisation.

Macleod and Tracy (2009) designate that capacity at provincial and district level has been identified as a difficulty to implementation of strategy in general, and that educators, district and provincial level coordinators and management experience a serious lack of resources that imposes on interventions. The Limpopo Department of Basic Education is divided into districts, which are not well resourced; hence, the implementation of the MPMLP lacks financial and human resources to ensure that circuits and schools receive copies of this policy. Further, the district and circuit offices must ensure that school principals and SGBs are workshopped on the policy implementation and that the policy is thoroughly addressed and commonly understood.

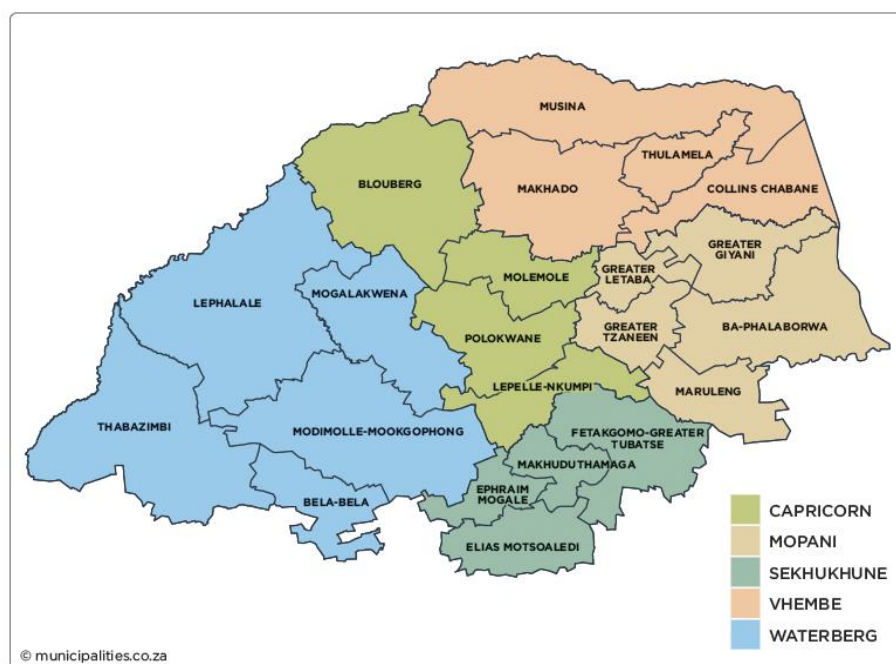


Figure 2.3: Limpopo Province Districts: Source: <https://www.municipalities.co.za> (accessed on 28 June 2018)

The Limpopo Province is divided into five districts, which are Capricorn, Vhembe, Waterberg, Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune. The study was conducted in the

Capricorn District, which includes Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo. This district is highly populated due to the influx of people from the rural communities looking for better living and work opportunities in the city. Most schools in this district have high enrolment rates; hence, there is a need to build more schools to accommodate these learners.

2.6.2 Lack of public awareness and support

The public in this context refers to all stakeholders that have an interest in the development and the running of the schools. For the public to be aware and buy into the idea of guiding learners in the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy information sharing and capacitation are vital. They must be informed and engaged at a certain level, where a workshop on MPMLP implementation could be very useful. It should be noted that good implementation of policy is linked to the participation of all stakeholders in education. These stakeholders include parents, teachers, learners, SGBs, government departments and the private sector (Modisaotsile, 2012). The effective implementation of MPMLP in SA's schools depends to a great deal on the awareness and involvement of stakeholders, especially parents. According to Macupe (2016:7), parents felt that allowing pregnant pupils to attend school was a burden on teachers as it is not their duty to care for pregnant pupils. Further, parents indicated a lack of knowledge pertaining to the pregnancy policy by indicating that pregnant learners must stay at home until they give birth as their presence at school disturbs the smooth running and discipline of the other learners.

According to Mkalipi (2013:1) love-Life is an organisation that works to empower parents and the youth to shape their conduct. Learner pregnancy and becoming a parent are life-changing actions, and discussions about sex are ways of empowering learners about the penalties of having unprotected sex, as well as about the responsibilities that come with parenthood (Mkalipi, 2013:1). The main focus of this organisation is to empower parents and youth in dealing with their behaviour, especially about sex and its consequences. The parents must learn to be open enough to engage with their children in matters that affect them and their future.

2.6.3 Content and contextual factors

2.6.4.1 Lack of parental care and child-headed families

Parents' role in the family setup cannot be overlooked or neglected since every child needs care and their parents' voice to grow up responsibly. The child has the right to be treated in an appropriate manner and live in conditions that take account of the child's age. The child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child in terms of Section 28 (2) of the Constitution. According to Panday (2009:62), household operational features play a significant part in understanding and shaping juvenile sexual conduct, as well as pregnancy. Learners learn practical life from their parents on daily basis. Teenagers are more likely to initiate sex and experience pregnancy if their parents or other family members have or are cohabitating with sexual partners other than their spouses (Panday, 2009:63).

Gyan (2013) agrees that teenage pregnancy may result from poor parenting and that parents can play an essential part in reducing learner pregnancy through proper parenting skills and parental attitudes. Gyan (2013) further asserts that most juveniles' reliance on their peers for information makes them become victims to learner pregnancy, and that peer influence has a greater influence on the behaviour of juveniles than that from their parents. Some learners who live without parents due to death as a result of illness or other reasons may be vulnerable to sexual activities that may lead to early pregnancy. It is difficult to talk about leadership and family in South Africa with diverse family structures in the sense that, in addition to traditional core families, some families consist of single parents, others are child headed and others co-habiting.

According to a study conducted by Miriri, Ramathuba and Mangena-Netshikweta from the University of Venda (2014) about social factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in the Makhado Municipality of the Limpopo Province, South Africa, teenage girls and boys need information on biological changes, sexual issues and reproductive health services, so that they can use protection when having sex. According to Bezuidenhout (2013:74), there is a great deal of misinformation about

sex and the use of contraceptives. Linked to misconceptions about fertility and the use of birth control measures, some teens think they will not get pregnant the first time they have sex or they think they are sterile. Some young black males view family planning programmes in South Africa as a strategy of the apartheid government to limit the growth of the black population. However, this could also be a rationalisation of a deeper wish to have unprotected sex and the belief that the actual pregnancy and the resulting child are not their problem.

Child-headed families are usually defined as families where all members are younger than 18 years (Meintjes, 2009). The absence of older parents in various homes compels the older children to assume parental roles and responsibilities for their younger siblings. This assumption of the parental role of and care for other siblings is caused by various factors. According to Statistics South Africa (2013:30), not all child-headed families result from Aids but through other socio-economic development issues like displacement, war in other countries, separation, desertion and migrant work. Statistics SA (2013:30) further states that most children living in child-headed households are not orphans and that only 8% of children living in child-headed households have lost both parents while 80% still had a mother living.

A study conducted by Pillay (2006) about child-headed household indicated that girl children are the ones who are sexually abused by 'sugar daddies' or uncles because they need money to buy food for their siblings. Some are sexually abused by married men who may pretend to assist the children who end up being pregnant at an early age. According to Bezuidenhout (2013:99), an unidentified percentage of learners fall pregnant intentionally because they hope this will provide an answer to their problems, real or imagined and also hope that the male will marry them. Lack of knowledge, information and proper guidance on teenage learner pregnancy seem to hinder the implementation of the MPMLP.

2.6.4.2 Poverty

According to Bridges and Alford (2010), learner pregnancy is part of the 'cycle of poverty', in which very young mothers stay poor" due to lack of education,

knowledge, lack of jobs, and their children go on to experience teenage pregnancy, poverty and lower academic outcomes. Researchers have identified poverty as one of the major contributors to teenage (schoolgirl) pregnancies (Rangiah, 2012:11). Schoolgirls from poor families' background often engage in unprotected sexual activities to fall pregnant, hoping to receive money from the father or from a child grant to improve their situations (Karra & Lee, 2012:17). Vavi (2011:8) attributed the learner-pregnancy situation, among other things, to poverty, unemployment and a lack of recreational facilities, which leaves young people feeling hopeless and worthless.

The Human Sciences Research Council's (hereafter HSRC) survey on learner pregnancy in South Africa found that learners from poor households who struggle to meet immediate material needs often make trade-offs between their reproductive health and economic security (HSRC, 2009:58). Teenagers living in the rural communities often sacrifice their health, future and aspirations by engaging in sexual interaction in order to support and sustain their daily living.

Luker and Kristin (2006) observed that learner pregnancy is caused by poverty. Learners who become pregnant in schools achieve below par due to the double role of being a mother and a learner. The school attendance is disturbed by the demanding situation. As a result of poverty, girls engage in unprotected sex and consequently face the danger of also contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/Aids, gonorrhoea and other related illnesses. It seems that the prevention of learner pregnancy in terms of the MPMLP is greatly compromised due to ignorance, lack of knowledge and personal decision on the side of the learner.

2.6.4.3 Child social grants

There is a strong perception among the poor communities that government's child support grant contributes largely to the high rate of teenage pregnancy today. Kanku and Mash (2010:566) conducted interviews with teenagers from a community branded by poor socio-economic circumstances, which include reliance on

government grants, unemployment, poverty and limited opportunities for teenagers. Their research revealed the following:

- Government child support grants were seen as one of the means to increasing the household income and an incentive for teenagers to contribute through having a baby;
- Teenagers, especially schoolgirls, saw the grant as a way of getting pocket-money for cell phones or clothes; and
- Having a baby from an older working man may secure financial support for the baby and could also provide income for the broader family.

However, some observers suggested that the child support grant provided by the state was not an incentive to young girls to fall pregnant (Irin, 2007:1). Makiwane *et al.* (2006) found that there was no proof to back up the public opinion that girl learners are falling pregnant so they can claim the child support grant. Lack of proper information the learner may have about teenage pregnancy may cause the learner to obstruct the objectives of the MPMLP, hoping to receive some grants in the event of pregnancy.

2.6.4.4 The influence of media and pornographic material

There is no consensus that media can be linked directly to action. However, the influence of the media cannot be ignored. Media plays a significant role in shaping one's mind, thoughts, behaviour, attitude and perceptions. Both print and electronic media have the ability to influence SA's teenagers positively or negatively. Media might function as a super-peer in terms of convincing learners into having sex earlier than anticipated (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2009:226). According to Panday *et al.* (2009:36), there is no question that television also contributes to sexual activities among school children. Those who spend much time in front of the television could end up watching programmes exclusively meant for adults. Too much information from television programmes may entice teenagers' feeling that everyone is having sex excluding them, and more teenagers engage in sexual intercourse earlier (Strasburger, *et al.*, 2009:226).

In her research, Rangiah (2012:13) established that adolescent girls and boys who were more exposed to sexuality in the media were also more likely to involve in sexual activities. These sexual activities could lead to early teenage pregnancy, which denies most of the youth an opportunity the desired educational progress. According to the research conducted by the Limpopo Department of Health (2012) about factors associated with teenage pregnancy in Limpopo Province, teenagers are infatuated by the idea of sex and wait until midnight to watch pornographic movies, copying the sex styles and screaming. This is indeed an indication of the influence that media and pornography may have on teenagers having unprotected sex and falling pregnant.

Life Orientation educators, parents, NGOs and other agencies provide information and education that capacitate learners with the power to make better informed sexual behaviour decisions based on the educators' skills, values and knowledge. This information should enable learners to take responsibility for their own actions and be accountable for the consequences thereof. The adherence of learners to sex education guidance regarding sexual abstinence until marriage and faithfulness to their partners enhances the implementation of the MPMLP, while learners who watch too much electronic and print media that display explicit sex may defeat the primary goal of this policy.

2.6.4.5 Drugs and alcohol

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011), learner pregnancy is conceptualised as a social problem in many parts of the world. The moral fibre of the society is measured by the conduct of its youth who are vulnerable to drugs and alcohol. Learner pregnancy is caused by among other things, the high rate of drug and alcohol misuse. According to Panday (2009:61), the psychoactive results of drugs and alcohol abuse are thought to increase sexual urging and longing, diminish decision-making capacity, decrease inhibition and tenseness, ruling and sense of responsibility and in the main disempower both women and men to resist unwanted sex. The use of alcohol and drugs by teenagers seems to limit the ability to think soberly and make reasonable decisions, thus making them vulnerable to unprotected sex, which results in unplanned pregnancy and infection with HIV / Aids.

The inability to make sober judgements, make reasonable or sensible decisions and have visionary judgement in matters that affect learners' health and the absence of a healthy lifestyle and good education prospects adversely affect the prevention of learner pregnancy. The use of drugs and alcohol by school learners seems to contribute significantly to learners having unprotected sex and teenage girls falling pregnant since it affects their minds and decision-making.

2.6.4.6 Tradition and culture

Tradition is the handing down from generation to generation of the same customs, beliefs especially by word of mouth (Collins English Dictionary, 2012: 1765). Traditional practices are passed over from one generation to another, at times without written references, entailing initiation ceremonies, marriages and burial practices. Firstly, there were some sexual control traditional observations such as initiation ceremonies and vaginal inspection that were practised by many African societies.

Culture comprises the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. In certain cultures, learner pregnancy is accepted and embraced. Bezuidenhout (2017:33), states that the present research specifies a change in belief that it is significant in some countries to prove one's fruitfulness prior to marriage, this value are still found to be present, thereby placing the learner or young adult at risk of pregnancy. Teenagers fall pregnant early because men want to be sure that they can give birth before considering marriage. Men also wish to be a girl's 'first' experience.

In some African cultures, it is believed that a boy must go to initiation school to be given lessons that may have the unintended consequence of leading them into early sexual activities. Teenagers are taught issues relating to manhood, sexuality, leadership, responsibility and sometimes provision for a family. Sex is a subject that is never discussed with teenagers in some of these cultures. Teenagers find it difficult to discuss physiological and other changes in their bodies with their parents; as such they turn to their peers for advice. This increases the chances of teenagers experimenting with sex, the outcome of which is sometimes an unwanted pregnancy.

As parents are responsible for rearing and socialisation of their children, and through socialisation they transfer important values and standards to their children, this may serve to help them make informed decisions about their sexuality (Bezuidenhout, 2017:72). The role that parents play seems to be very minimal in transferring information to their teenage children. This creates room for external forces to manipulate the situation and destroy the future of these young people.

Sethosa (2007) states that cultural factors influence teenage pregnancy in a number of ways, first, the breakdown of traditional values and sexual control measures is seen as contributing to sexual behaviour conducive to unmarried teenage pregnancy. Second, the cultural values placed on fertility are believed to encourage teenage pregnancy. Girls were reported by their parents as suffering from inferiority complexes and they felt it was necessary to become pregnant to prove something to their boyfriends. Traditional practices in sexual behaviour have the potential to defeat the primary goal of teenage learner pregnancy prevention and management.

2.6.4.7 Religion

According to Soanes & Stevenson (2006) religion is a particular system of faith and worship. It is also the belief in a superhuman, controlling power, especially in a personal God entitled to obedience and worship (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006). Religion has a big influence on the way people live their lives. Most religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and African traditional religions have traditional beliefs, customs and morality. Although these religions are different in their operation, there are some similarities regarding issues such as teenage pregnancy.

Sexual education is regarded as taboo in some churches. Religious beliefs may perpetuate ignorance on issues relating to sexuality, and discussion on sex is severely restricted by some religious and social norms (Thobejane, 2015:274). Christians argue that premarital sex is a sin before God and it is highly condemned. Teenagers are encouraged to conduct themselves well in terms of their faith until they are married. Christian faith encourages abstinence from sex until holy

matrimony. However, it is a fact that many teenagers engage in sex before marriage, while confessing a Christian faith, As such, faith communities does not encourage the use of condoms or contraceptives. Some religions put forward programmes that would seek to have all believers refrain from any sex other than that between husband and wife (Stanley, 2011). In fact, the most prevalent reason that virgin learner girls give for not engaging in sex is that it is against their religion or morals.

Evangelical Christians, Catholics, Muslims, Mormons and Orthodox Jews are likely to hold specific ideas about sexuality, warning against premarital sex and emphasising heterosexual marriage as the scripturally ordained context for sex (Whitehead, Wilcox & Rostosky, 2001:6). In the Western Cape, it is not uncommon for Muslim-based schools to expel pregnant girls, as well as the boys, if they are the fathers, on the grounds that they have contravened the Shari'ah (Islamic law), which prohibits sexual intercourse outside of marriage (Davids & Waghid, 2013). In Islam, premarital sex is not permissible and is therefore considered immoral. From a young age, children are taught about the immorality of pre-marital sex, indicating that sex before marriage is prohibited and therefore regarded as a sin, which infringes moral values.

African traditional religion is based on knowledge and information that is passed on from one generation to another. This knowledge is not contained in written codes, but the elderly people preserve it for generations to come. It is also based on customs, morals and traditional practices that are encouraged (Beyers, 2010). The study conducted by Kumba (2015) claim that African traditional religion believes that teenage pregnancy is a taboo and anyone found pregnant at that early age is stigmatised. In traditional black communities, young girls are taught that sex is meant for adults and married people (Spengane, 2015). However, if any girl may be found pregnant, her parents are to take on the responsibility in terms of caring for the young baby, while the young mother is encouraged to complete her studies. Learners who do not care about their lifestyles, health and academic future end up hindering the implementation of the teenage learner pregnancy policy. They do not consider the consequences of their actions and engage in sexual acts that may lead to pregnancy and could be infected with some diseases such as STD, HIV and Aids.

2.7 Conclusion

The prevalence of teenage pregnancy is high in both developed and developing countries, but particularly the latter. The reduction of teenage pregnancy is dependent among others on the effective use of contraceptives, open discussion between parents and learners on sex and sexuality. There is gender inequality between a girl learner and a boy learner when pregnancy occurs and is discovered by school principals and SGBs. Girl learners who become pregnant will lag behind in their studies because they ultimately stay home for one or two years, taking care of the baby after giving birth, while the boy learner responsible for impregnating the girl learner continues his schooling uninterrupted. Teenage pregnancy has the potential to lead to school dropout, illiteracy, dependency on social grants and poverty.

The researcher in chapter four will look into policy implementation and the barriers to the implementation thereof. The focus will be on the role that stakeholders should play in the implementation of pregnancy policy, the knowledge they should have about this policy and the role of the government, civil society, communities, parents and the private sector in educating all stakeholders about this policy.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The chapter provides information about the research design that was employed in the study, a thorough report of the study area, population and the sample selection method research techniques and data collection approaches as well as data analysis techniques. Ethical issues covered in the study include permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Furthermore, it presents a discussion on the strengths of the methodological choices as well as the challenges the researcher encountered.

In this study, a non-probability, purposive sampling method was used to identify schools and the learners, teachers, parents and school principals who would participate in the study. The aim of the study was to explore the stakeholders' views about teenage learner pregnancy in public schools and how the teenage learner pregnancy policy is implemented.

3.2 Research Design

The research approach used in this study was a qualitative multiple case studies design because the study sought to discover the stakeholders' views about the high rate of learner pregnancy in public schools and the effect of the implementation of the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learners Pregnancy Policy (DoE, 2007:2). Creswell (2008) states that qualitative research is a means for scrutinising and understanding the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. The procedure of research includes emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analysing the data inductively, building from particular to general themes; and making interpretation of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2008). Since this study sought to understand the stakeholders' views on the prevention and management of the teenage learner pregnancy policy and its implementation in secondary schools as perceived by principals, educators, learners and parents, the researcher found a qualitative design to be relevant.

According to Kumar (2014:95) a research design is the road map that you decide to follow during your research journey to find answers to your research questions as exactly, reliably, without prejudice and economically as possible. Kumar (2014:95) further indicates that it is a procedural cum operational strategy that details what and how different methods and procedures to be applied during the research process. The purpose of the research design is to achieve greater control of the study and improve the validity of the study in examining the research problem. McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 20) point that a research design describes the techniques for conducting the study, including the strategy for generating empirical evidence to be used to answer the research question.

Qualitative research was considered appropriate for the study as it attempts to describe and understand human behaviour and analyses social representations rather than just explaining it (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). Furthermore, to meet the requirements of a qualitative study, the researcher collected data through:

- semi-structured interviews,
- documents and
- observations in their natural context (Babbie & Mouton, 2011).

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2006) a qualitative design allowed the researcher to obtain valid and trustworthy information on the stakeholders' views on the prevention and management of the teenage learner pregnancy policy and its implementation in public schools, their perceptions of teenage pregnancy, and to explore underlying social factors. Shwetha, Reddy, Patil, Radhika, Praveen, Limaye (2015:82) indicate that qualitative study is an investigation, in the researchers collect data through face-to-face interaction with selected participants , describing and examining people's individual and collective social actions, opinions, thoughts and beliefs. It provided the researcher with evidence about the human side of the often-contradictory behaviours, opinions, beliefs, emotions and relationships of individuals (Shwetha et. al. 2015:82).

Bryman (2012:46), Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey (2011:10) and McMillan (2012: 18) state that a qualitative research approach is aimed at providing a better, richer and more in-depth understanding and descriptive analysis of the phenomenon as it

occurs in a natural setting. McMillan (2012) further states that it is also good for providing an in-depth perception of the research issues that embrace the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:106) state that qualitative data refer to a gathering of pictures, words, symbols or other numerical records, material or art of acts that are collected by a researcher and are data that have relevance for the group under the study. In qualitative research, the data go beyond simple description of actions and phenomena to also creating understanding for subjective clarification and for critical analysis (Leedy and Ormrod (2010:106). In this regard, this research study sought to explore, describe and interpret the MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. The researcher intended looking at the alignment of this policy and the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy that is escalating in SA's schools.

3.2.1 Case study

The study employed a multiple case study to investigate the views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP) and its implementation in public schools in the Capricorn District in Limpopo Province, South Africa. According to Punch (2011:113) multiple case studies involve a strategy for setting up certain comparisons of a group of similar cases. In this study each school and home are regarded as a case study, so the eight high schools and four homes formed the multiple case studies (Punch, 2011:113). Multiple-case studies enable the researcher to discover differences within and between cases. The goal is to reproduce findings across cases and allow the researcher to analyse within each setting and across settings (Maree, 2016). McMillan (2012) states that a case study plan is a detailed analysis of one or more events, programs, settings, communities social groups, individuals or other bounded systems in their natural context. Hancock and Algozzine (2006:16) confirm that through case study, researchers hope to increase in depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved and the insights collected from case studies can directly influence policy and procedures.

A case study is an existential inquiry that examines a current phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-life setting, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2014:109). Case study research is consistently portrayed as a useful form of qualitative inquiry most appropriate for an all-inclusive, holistic, and in-depth inquiry of a complex issue (phenomena, event, situation, organization, program individual or group) in context, where the boundary between the context and issue is unclear and contains many variables (Creswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2011:301). According to Kumar (2014:123) the case study is founded upon the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a certain type and therefore a single case can offer insight into the events and situations predominant in a group from where the case has been drawn. Further, Kumar (2014:123) states that the case you select becomes the foundation of a detailed, all-inclusive and in-depth exploration of the aspects that you want to find out about. The total study population should be treated as one entity.

The researcher made use of a case study method from an interpretive paradigm, which strives towards a comprehensive or holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study. Within the interpretivist method, researchers focus mainly on people's subjective experiences, when they aim to understand the social world from within. The interpretive paradigm uses natural approaches in data collection; hence, researchers are expected to conduct their studies within their normal locations to interpret issues as outlined.

The researcher explored the views of various stakeholders pertaining to the MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. This opens the possibility of giving a voice to the voiceless and powerless; it enables the researcher to come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation (Alho, 2016). Primarily investigative and descriptive in nature, case study is used to gain an understanding of the issue in real life settings and recommended to answer how and why or less frequently what research questions (Flyvbjerg, 2011:305; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stewart, 2014; Yin, 2014). Data gathered is largely qualitative, and tools to collect data include interviews, documentation review and observation. The case in question is

the escalation of teenage pregnancy in public schools, which contributes to learner school dropouts, illiteracy and gender inequality

3.3 Research Methods

Research methods are the tools, techniques or processes that one uses in research to collect the data that will enable one to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. They provide insights into the problem or help to develop ideas. The researcher used semi-structured interviews, document analysis and tape-recorder as data collection instruments. The researcher chose to utilise a non-participant observation to gain in-depth insight into the manifestations of reality (De Vos, 2011:352). And further De Vos, 2011:352) indicated that the researcher's focus was on the everyday and natural experiences of the participants, which exposed him to gaining feelings and impressions. It is vital for a researcher to study and know the customs, lifestyle and cultural contexts of the respondents in a culturally sensitive manner (De Vos, 2011:352).

3.3.1 Semi structured interviews

The researcher utilised semi-structured one-on-one interviews, which allowed for the probing and elucidation of answers. The researcher conducted one on one in-depth interview by visiting the particular participants' schools and homes and making individual contact with selected participants, especially interviews were carried out after knock off time and in all interviews the researcher secured appointments with all the participants.

De Vos (2011:352) believes that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to obtain an all-inclusive picture of a participant's opinions about, or understanding or accounts of a particular topic. The technique gave the researcher and participants much more flexibility to follow up particular interesting avenues that arose in the interview, and the participants were able to give a fuller picture. The semi-structured interview allowed the researcher and participants to discover on issue of particular interest, focused and confused. It was used to determine the individuals' perceptions

and opinions, to obtain facts and forecast and also to cultivate a relationship between the researcher and the sampled participants. This kind of meeting allowed the researcher to evoke and extract information to accomplish understanding of the participants' point of view or situation, thus it was interactional in nature (de Vos, 2011). The researcher puts down predetermined questions on an interview schedule, wherein participants are regarded as experts on the subject, but the interview is guided rather than dictated by the schedule (de Vos, 2011).

The researcher decided not to utilise ethnographic interviews since they are associated with a particular kind of speech event. Ethnographic interviews are distinguished from other types of interview analytically by their focus on cultural meanings. The emphasis in this kind of interview is on culture or validation of observations made during the participants' observation; hence, the researcher's focus was on current social challenges. The researcher did not use the email interview method in this study because not all stakeholders have easy access to email. In e-mail interviews, the researcher misses the non-verbal cues, it has an impersonality aspect and there is no immediate personal interaction and follow-ups. In telephone interviews, personal expression, physical expression and emotional sensitivity are lacking; hence, this study, which deals with sensitive issues, needed the personal face-to-face interview method to be employed.

Hennink *et.all.* (2011:53) explain that the interview is used to acquire a in depth picture of participants' beliefs about and viewpoints on the facts, experiences, feelings and motives, present and past behaviours, standards of behaviour and conscious reasons for actions or feelings. De Vos (2011:353) indicates that this kind of interviews usually last for a substantial amount of time and can become deep and involved, depending on the particular topic. The purpose is to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher understand the stakeholders and participants' construction of knowledge and social reality (De Vos, 2011). The aim of an interview is to source valuable information as seen, viewed and correctly provided by the participant.

Atkins and Wallace (2012) explain that interviews are highly flexible research tools used to gather a variety of different types of information; hence, they are useful as a

means of answering a wide range of questions. Silverman (2011) points out that positivists have a goal of a pure interview conducted within a sterilised context as this will provide a 'mirror reflection' of the reality that exists in the social world. In contrast, social constructionists suggest that no knowledge about the reality out there in the social world can be obtained from an interview, because the interview is clearly and completely an interaction between the interviewer and interview subject, in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world (Silverman, 2011:9).

Creswell (2013) describes a natural setting as a site where participants experience the issue, wherein the researchers study things as they are, they do not manipulate the environment. Since the problem under study was confined to a school as an environment, the principals' offices, teachers' offices and parents' houses were used as sites for conducting the interviews, especially because interviewees are attached to different schools. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with principals after school in the principals' offices after hours. The visited schools were coded as school A, school B, school C, school D, school E, school F, school G and school H for identification purposes. Each school provided the researcher with the principal, teacher, learner and parent who were interviewed on separate days for administrative purposes. The participants were coded principal 1, principal 2, principal 3 and principal 4, principal 5, principal 6, principal 7, principal 8 and this procedure was also used for learners and parents.

The researcher allocated a day to interview two principals and this process took four days. For the next session, four days were allocated to interview eight teachers from eight schools in the afternoon in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere. Parents were visited by the researcher at their homes or a convenient private place where they could freely express themselves; this session took four days and only two parents were interviewed per day. Learners were visited at home, some in the presence of their parents for further engagement and participation, intending to draw information about their experiences with teenage pregnancy. Two principals forgot the interviews arrangements and the researcher had to set a new time to start. In schools C and H, teachers scheduled for interviews changed the date at the last minute and that caused the researcher to reschedule the interview. Parents 3 and 4 initially agreed to

the interviews, but later they were not available and the researcher had to make an alternative plan to replace them. The common challenge across the four sets of participants was to start the interviews on time as scheduled and also to finish on time as agreed.

The researcher categorised questions for semi structured interviews into four kinds of participants namely principals, teachers, parents and learners. Participants responded to the following questions varying from simple to complex.

PRINCIPALS

Principals were asked the following questions:

1. Could you please tell me about your experiences with teenage pregnancies in your school?
1. What procedures do you follow if you become aware of a teenage pregnancy?
2. In your opinion, what causes teenage pregnancies?
3. Are you aware of the national learner pregnancy policy in our schools? If yes, what is your opinion of its implementability? What is your opinion of the main pillars on which the policy rests?
4. If a teenage pregnancy occurs, with whom should the school engage? And in what manner?
5. If a teenage pregnancy occurs, with whom should the school communicate? And in what manner?
6. Do you have a record of pregnant learners in your record book since 2007 to date? If yes, what do your records tell you about teenage pregnancies?
7. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and its implementation?
8. How do you usually find out about a teenage pregnancy?

TEACHERS

Teachers were asked the following questions:

1. Could you please tell me about your experiences with teenage pregnancies?
2. How does teenage pregnancy affect the affected learner's or learners' education?

3. In your opinion, what causes teenage pregnancies?
4. With what people do you engage or communicate in case of a teenage pregnancy?
5. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools? If yes, do you think it is your responsibility to implement it? If it is your responsibility in your opinion, what does the policy expect you to do if a teenage pregnancy occurs?
6. What do people you support do in case of a teenage pregnancy? How do you do it?
7. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and its implementation?
8. How do you usually find out about a teenage pregnancy?

PARENTS

Parents were asked the following questions:

1. How did you learn about your child's pregnancy?
2. How did you feel or react at first when you learned about this pregnancy?
3. What was your relationship with your child like before the pregnancy?
4. What was your relationship with your child like during the pregnancy?
5. What is your relationship with your child like after the pregnancy?
6. Prior to your child's pregnancy, did you talk to, and engage with your child about sex and sexuality? If yes, please explain how you did it and why you did it.
7. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools? If yes, what was your experience with its implementation regarding your child? If no, why do you think you did not hear about it?
8. If you heard that your son was responsible for the pregnancy of a school girl, how did you respond to the news? What did you expect your son to do before, during and after the pregnancy? Have you interacted with the girl in any way? If yes, what did you do?
9. Do you think your child should attend school, while she is pregnant? If yes, why? If no, why not?
10. In your opinion, what should happen after the baby has been born?

11. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and its implementation?

LEARNERS

Learners were asked the following questions:

1. When and how did you find out that you were pregnant?
2. What are your experiences of being a mother?
3. What kind of thoughts went through your mind when you realised that you were pregnant?
4. Did you personally inform your parents about your pregnancy? If yes, how? If no, why not?
5. When at first informing the father of your child, how did he respond to the news?
6. What were your challenges after realising that you were pregnant? What were your challenges during your pregnancy? What were your challenges after your pregnancy?
7. How did your school teachers and peers respond to you when they found out about your pregnancy?
8. What did you learn from this experience, namely teenage pregnancy or being a teenage mother?
9. What advice would give to teenagers to help them make good decisions?
10. What are your aspirations for the future? Have they changed after your pregnancy? If yes, how? If no, how is it going to be possible for you to reach your aspirations even though you are a teenage mother?
11. Who supported you during and after the pregnancy? Are there people that should have supported you, but did not do so? Explain, why you believe that they should have supported you.
12. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools? If yes, how did you find out about it? If yes, was it of any help to you? Please explain. If no, explain, why you do not know about it.
13. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and its implementation?

The interview sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed, in order to confirm completeness and dependability of information. The researcher carefully listened to the recorded interviews and compared these with the notes taken. The notes or tape-recorded version was made available to the participants on request and to verify the contents. The participants had the right to ask for the copy of a taped recorded interview. When tape recordings were not done, the thorough process notes of the interviews were taken, which were later clarified, elaborated and verified by the participants (member checking) as soon after conclusion of the interviews as possible (De Vos, 2011).

3.3.2 Document analysis

Document analysis is a methodical process for reviewing or assessing documents, both printed and electronic material (Bowen, 2009:27). It requires that data be scrutinised and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009:32). The researcher looked at documents accessed from the schools such as minutes books, SA-SAMS (South African School Administration and Management System) which is a robust, actively developed and maintained computer application, specifically designed to meet all School Administration, Management and Governance needs of South African Schools, transfer learner books entailing the number of learners who left school due to teenage pregnancy. According to Bowen (2009:28) document analysis is an important research tool in its own right, and is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation. Further Bowen (200:29) indicates that the purpose of triangulating is to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility.

Document is a data gathering method that includes all types of written communication or words that may shed light on the phenomenon that the researcher is investigating (McMillan, 2012). Bryman (2012:125) indicates that documents are used to offer first-hand information based on direct experiences with the phenomenon gained through interviews. The researcher employed thematic content analysis, which is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis. Bowen (2009:32) outlines that thematic

content analysis includes a cautious, more attentive re-reading and review of the data that takes a closer look at the selected data and performs coding and category construction, based on the data's characteristics, to discover themes relevant to a phenomenon. The researcher also applied textual analysis, which focused on interpreting the meaning a document might have.

Document is a piece of written official paper, printed, or file of text produced and held on a computer that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007). According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1990: 345) a document is a piece of written or printed matter that offers a record or evidence of events, an agreement, ownership and identification. A document therefore serves as a record, evidence to support or prove a matter. The researcher then conducts the analysis based on a written document, be it print or electronic document, with the aim to draw conclusions for the topic under research (De Vos, 2011:377). De Vos (2011:377) asserts that document analysis includes the study of current documents, either to comprehend their practical content or to illuminate deeper meanings, which may be exposed by their style and coverage.

Content analysis is defined as a methodical, replicable technique for compressing many words of the text into fewer content categories based on clear rules of coding (Stemler, 2001). Maree (2012:82) believes that content analysis refers to the analysis of brochures, books, transcripts, written papers and television. It is a process of looking at data from different angles with a view to identifying keys in the text that will assist a researcher comprehend and analyse raw data within context (Maree, 2012:82). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1277) claim that content analysis can easily be confused with other qualitative data-analysis methods, such as grounded theory method or phenomenology. For this reason qualitative content analysis is the analysis plan of choice in qualitative descriptive studies (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). This means that the role-player's views cannot be isolated from the social and community context.

For this study, the researcher visited school principals for the second time to peruse documents such as school journals; SGB minutes books, discipline books, transfer booklets and SA-SAMS, to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings, which may be revealed by their style and coverage. These documents are classified as primary and secondary sources of information. Maree (2012:82) states that primary sources are previously unpublished data like a letter in a newspaper, while secondary sources refer to any material such as books or articles that are based on previously published work. Documents should serve to verify the evidence from other sources indicated above. According to Creswell (2009:187) documents enable a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants at a time convenient to the researcher as an unobtrusive source of information and it saves a researcher the time and expense of transcribing.

3.3.3 Observation

Observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them (Maree, 2016:83). Further Maree (2016:84) contends that observation is a type of qualitative research method which not only comprised participant's observation, but also covered ethnography and research work in the field. Multiple study sites are involved in the observational research design. Observational data can be combined as supplementary or confirmatory research. Observational methods are, sometimes, additional means for verifying research findings (Jamshed, 2014).The researcher has realised that observation is an everyday activity, whereby one uses sight, but also one's intuition to gather bits of data. Maree (2016:84) further agrees that observation is used to allow the researcher to gain deeper vision and understanding of the phenomenon being observed. The researcher developed most of the findings by participating and being immersed in the research situation. Observation as data-gathering technique holds the possibility of providing the researcher with an insider perspective of the participants' dynamics and behaviours in different settings (Maree (2016:84).

Non-Participant observation is used when a researcher endeavours to gain a detailed understanding into the manifestations of reality; this usually takes place over a long period of time Maree (2012:84). The researcher became part of the process and worked with the participants in the situation to design and develop intervention strategies. De Vos (2012) argues that the researcher should endeavour at all times to gain feelings and impressions and experience the conditions of the real world of participants by interpreting and sharing their activities. The researcher has to study and know the customs, lifestyles and cultural contexts of the participants in a culture-sensitive manner. In the case of this study, it helped the researcher comprehend the circumstances around participants as he became part of the real and daily routine and played the dual role of data collector and interpreter of the data. The researcher asked the main questions, allowed the participants to fully answer them and made follow-ups where needed to get more clarity.

The researcher observed participants' actions, facial expressions, eye contact, nodding of head, shaking of heads, hands movements, especially when emphasising a point. These observations or expressions were noted down in the memo book or field note book for further engagement. The researcher used short hand notes to record exactly what was displayed and expressed from time to time during the interviews. The researcher had a personal experience with participants, recorded information as it occurred; features were noticed during observation and useful in discovering topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.

3.3.4 Sampling and population

It would not have been possible to use the entire South African principal, teacher, parent and learner populations as participants. Purposive sampling was chosen in this study. Purposive sampling is regarded as the most appropriate technique because the intention of the study was not to generalise findings, but rather to "highlight the role-players' views of the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in public schools (Ntho-Ntho, 2013:95).

According to De Vos (2012:232), purposive selection is made up of fundamentals that encompass the most characteristics or typical qualities of the population that

serve the aim of the study and offer rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about that context. The use of purposive sampling made it possible for the researcher to include principals, teachers, learners and parents who were willing, available and accessible for participation.

A sample is a representative part of the population from which generalisations are made about the inhabitants, or sampling is merely stated as selecting a part of the population, in the research area, which will be a representation of the entire population (Mugo, 2002:2). The participants for this study were principals, educators, learners and parents selected from the Pietersburg and Seshego circuits' secondary schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. The researcher selected eight secondary schools, eight principals, and eight educators, four parents, four learners in the Pietersburg and Seshego circuits, which was used as the areas of study focus to derive a total number of 24 participants. Out of the eight secondary schools, four were from the Pietersburg circuit, which comprises predominantly white schools and four secondary schools from the Seshego circuit, consisting mainly of semi-urban township locations and villages.

The selection of these particular parents and teachers was based on the fact that some of their children / learners had gone through teenage pregnancy. Some parents and teachers had gone through teenage pregnancy themselves, which gave them personal and practical experience. Learners who were selected for the interviews were those whose friends had gone through teenage pregnancy and some had themselves been pregnant at some stage. The principals of schools were selected on the basis that they faced the real situation of having pregnant learners within the school premises. They are the ones who have to ensure that the MPMLP is implemented fully with human consideration and appropriate to the circumstances.

There are no hard and fast procedures for a sample size in a qualitative investigation. However, the size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the enquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, the credibility aspect and what can be done with available time and resources (De Vos, Stardom, Douche & Deport (2011:225). The size of a sampled population has the potential to give the

researcher more valuable data needed and expand the horizon of knowledge. For this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to collect data from different participants.

Purposive or judgmental sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling, in which the components to be observed are carefully chosen on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which one will be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2007). Tongco (2007:147) explained that the purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability selection that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural area with well-informed experts within, and it is a sampling technique also called judgement sampling, which is a thoughtful choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. Therefore, purposive sampling is most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection (Rwegoshora, 2014).

3.3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing, emerging or non-linear process. Data from the various participants is transcribed verbatim from tape recordings, analysed and examined to identify sub-categories, categories and key themes. Data analysis involves transcribing interviews, optimally scanning material, typing up field notes, cataloguing all of the visual material and sorting and arranging the data into different themes (Creswell, 2016).

Maree (2012:99) asserts that qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretive philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. Maree (2011:101) further believes that, when analysing qualitative data, the objective is to summarise what one has seen or heard in terms of common phrases, words, themes or patterns that would aid the understanding and interpretation of that which is emerging. Qualitative data consists of words and observations and the goal of an analysis is to interpret and make sense of what is in the data and decoding the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning (Maree, 2011:101).

Qualitative data analysis is ambiguous and time consuming, not orderly, but it is also an original and interesting process (De Vos, 2011:398). De Vos (2011:398) argues that qualitative data analysis is first and foremost a process of inductive reasoning thinking and theorising, which certainly is far detached from mechanical, structured and technical procedures to make implications from empirical data of social life. This approach is interactive in practice, the various stages are interrelated.

On the following page, the researcher provides a flow chart to explain the process of data analysis followed.

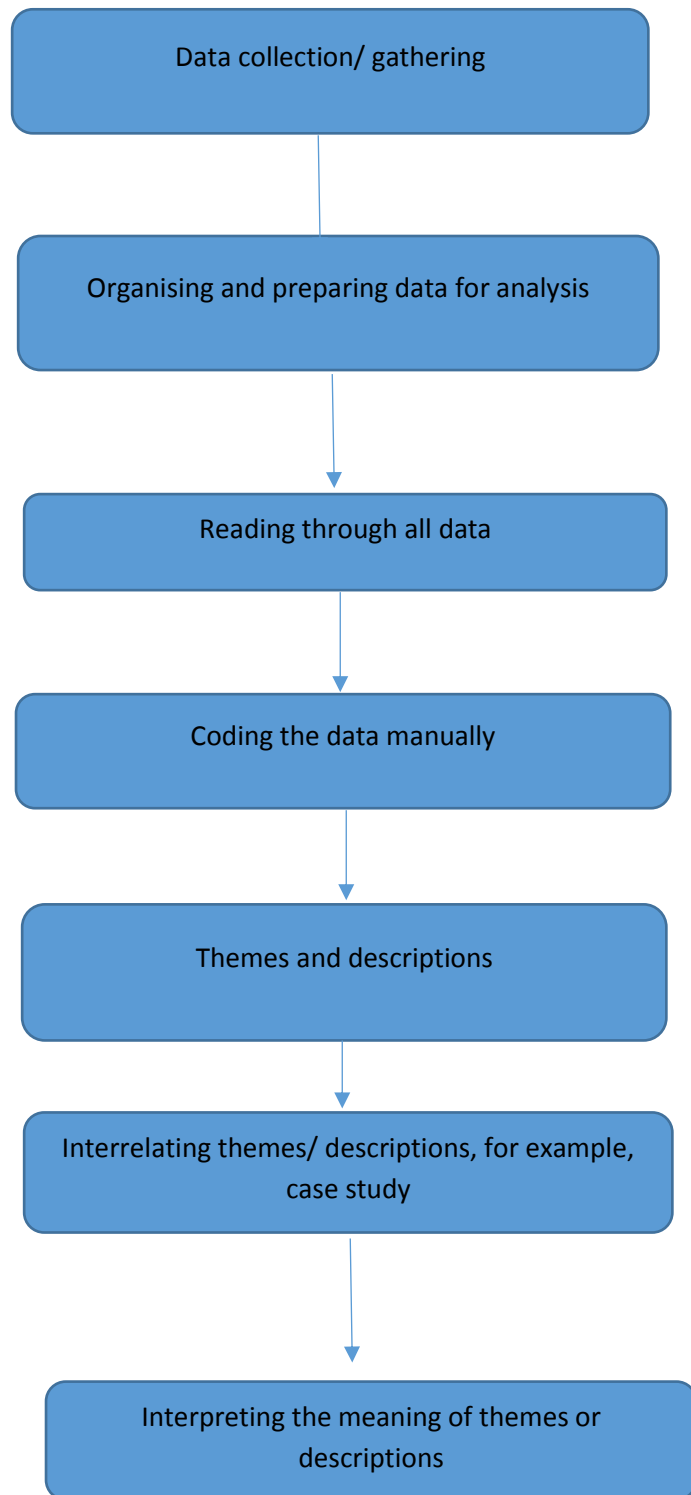


Figure 3.1: Process of data analysis.

The researcher undertook various steps to analyse the data captured in the interviews, documents, field-notes and tape recordings. The researcher organised

and prepared the data analysis by transcribing interviews, optimally scanning material, typing up field-notes, cataloguing all the visual material and sorting or arranging the data into different types, depending on the sources of information. He then read and looked at scrutinised data, the general ideas from participants, the tone of the ideas, the overall depth, credibility and usefulness of the information. The researcher coded all the data. According to Creswell (2014:197), coding is the procedure of arranging the data by bracketing portions or text and writing a word representing a category in the margins. This involved taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or images into categories. Creswell (2014:197) further states that the researcher used the coding process to produce a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. According to Creswell (2014:198) description involved a detailed rendering of information about people, places or events in a setting to derive a description and themes that will be represented in the qualitative narrative. A final step in data analysis involved interpreting the findings or results (Creswell 2014:198).

Hermeneutic analysis is based on interpreting various methods of analysis (Pentti, 2007:1). It enables the researcher to evoke an in-depth understanding of meanings, for example: human practices, culture, works of art and texts. Understanding is produced through systematic interpretation processes (Pentti, 2007:1). Maree (2011:101) asserts that a hermeneutic data analysis process means that interpretation is meant at deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in analysing the data one is searching for, unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning of the text. The researcher acquired data from the participants through interviews, documents and observation, which he interpreted within a social and human context. The data received from participants needed to be interpreted factually and holistically to get the actual understanding of various stakeholders' views about teenage pregnancy and the implementation of MPMLP in public schools.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the technique, in which the interviewer is able to convince the listeners that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of high quality (Maree, 2011:80). Data must be accurate and believable. The researcher argued that engaging multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews, observation and documents analysis lead to trustworthiness and involving several investigators or peer researchers also assist with the interpretation of data, which could enhance trustworthiness (Maree, 2011:80).

In this study, trustworthiness is the degree, to which the practitioners, researchers, scholars and educationist turn to, rely on and use the concepts, methods and inferences used in the study as the basis of their own theorising, research and practice (Ntho-Ntho, 2013:109). The researcher used trustworthiness as a criterion against which data analysis findings and conclusions could be assessed as they occurred in this study. The aim of establishing trustworthiness is to ensure that research findings are worth paying attention to. The researcher made sure that he adhered to the methodological norms of interpretive research. He also ensured that the criteria for credibility, thick description and conformability were met for this interpretive research.

Atkins and Wallace (2012) stated that research outcomes become reliable, if the same data would have emerged, even if a different or same researcher was to collect data with the same instrument as being used in this project, or a different one. This refers to consistency or stability of research findings. Reliability is a criterion mostly used for quantitative paradigms and addresses applicability concerns raised by positivist researchers.

Dependability refers to the immoderation to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did certainly occur as the researcher says they did (Maree, 2012:299). According to Anney (2014:278), dependability refers to the reliability of results over time. Dependability involves participants assessing the results and the interpretation and recommendations of the research to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from the informants. The researcher aimed to attain this by

engaging member-checking and identified themes were discussed with the participants to guarantee that they were precise and reliable (Anney, 2014:278). In addition, Anney (2014:278) states that the researcher triangulated all data collected during the research process, including the results of the interviews, field-notes and observations to search for common themes to provide reliable findings.

The rigour of the qualitative findings was ensured by making use of trustworthiness criteria due to the philosophical and methodological assumptions in qualitative approach. The philosophical paradigms, which were applied in this project, included interpretivism warranted the use of trustworthiness over validity and reliability, which are mostly used in quantitative researches.

3.4.1 Credibility

Anney (2014) defines credibility as the assurance placed by the researcher in the fact of research findings, by establishing whether or not research outcomes are a reasonable representation and interpretation of information gathered from the participants' original data. A number of strategies were implemented to comply with this trustworthiness criterion, and these will be discussed in the sub-sections below. Credibility contributes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data through the following attributes: referential adequacy; persistent observations; triangulation; prolonged engagement; peer debriefing; and member checks (DeVault, 2018:1).

According to (Birt, et al. 2016:1) triangulation and member checks are primary and commonly used methods to address credibility. Triangulation is accomplished by asking the same research questions of different study participants, by collecting data from different sources and by using different methods to answer those research questions (Birt, et al. 2016:1). Member checks occurred when the researcher asked participants to review both the data collected by the interviewer and the researcher's interpretation of that interview data (Birt, et al. 2016:1). Participants are generally appreciative of the member check process, and thus know that they had a chance to verify their statements. This tends to cause study participants to willingly fill in any

gaps from earlier interviews. Trust is an important aspect of the member check process (Birt, et al. 2016:1).

Anney (2014) indicates that one purpose of researchers is to familiarise themselves with the participants' world is to gain insight into the context of the study to minimise distortions of information that may arise due the researchers' presence in the field. This experience provided the researcher with knowledge on the subject matter to identify any misrepresentation of the information provided by informants. De Vos (2012) claims that prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation of different methods, peer debriefing and member checks increase the credibility of qualitative research.

3.4.2 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Anney, 2014:279). Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination but are clearly derived from the data (Anney, 2014:279). Studies suggest that confirmability of qualitative inquiry is achieved through a reflective diary or journal and triangulation. The researcher used a reflexive note journal to ascertain confirmability of data. Anney (2014:279) further describes a reflective journal as reflective documents kept by the researcher in order to reflect on, tentatively interpret and plan data collection. The researcher is required to keep a reflective journal, which should include all events that happened in the field, personal reflections in relation to the study. The participants in this project were purposefully selected on the basis that they would be a position to provide a detailed description of the enquiry due to their experience, which also speaks much about teenage pregnancy and the implementation of the MPMLP, which is a subject under scrutiny.

The data and the interpretation presented in this study were not allusions to the researcher's experiences, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions, but to those of the school principals, teachers, parents and learners who participated in the study. As

the researcher was aware that the interviews could be influenced by him to a certain extent and thereby making all interpretations subjective, he kept on searching for deeper understanding and interpretation by asking multiple but related questions at various stages during the interview. Toward the end of the interviews, when the tape recorder had been switched off, the researcher engaged the participants in discussion, where they were free to correct, accept or reject the interpretation of the interviews.

Some participants were chosen on the basis of their being experienced and well-informed individuals. Biesta (2010) maintains that enlightenment is a process of emancipation, which is evident in one's use of reason, being independent and autonomous. This research topic in itself has an element of interpretivism and requires that the participants thereof be those who have shared experiences about the topic.

Anney (2014), in explaining the nature of a qualitative inquirer, says that the researcher and participants depend on each other and share a relationship. Therefore, the researcher's choice of participants in this research inquiry was based on those individuals whom the researcher deemed to be directly or indirectly affected by teenage pregnancy in public schools.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

3.5.1 Permission

Permission to collect data from schools was sought from the Capricorn District Senior Manager, Pietersburg and Seshego Circuit managers, the teachers and the principals of the schools through written letters. Parents signed informed consent forms on behalf of learners before participating in the study. Permission to conduct interviews in schools was granted in writing by the District Senior Manager. Participants were made aware of the use of an audio tape-recorder and oral interview questions. Creswell (2013) stipulates that a critical issue in every research

is that the participants should grant informed consent before participating in the study.

The researcher travelled from one school to another, requesting permission to interview relevant stakeholders, including principals, educators, learners and parents. Each participant was well-versed about the resolve, importance and benefits of the study, and the time required to complete the interviews. Individually participant received a covering letter from the researcher that contained a space in which participants could place the signatures to signify their consent. After the permission had been granted, the researcher started to conduct one-on-one interviews with the participants at various schools, sometimes visiting parents at homes, where this was more convenient for interviewees.

3.5.2 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Written informed consent is a necessary condition and not an impediment for research (De Vos, 2011). The researcher, either before or during the opening of the interviews, communicated to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to terminate participation in the study. The concept of informed consent posits that participants have a right to be informed of the research and that they are aware they are being researched (Barbas, 2017:75). Further, Barbas (2017: 75) confirms that informed consent ensures potential participants are agreeing to take part in research voluntarily and knowingly informed consent forms allow institutional ethical review boards to monitor the voluntary nature of participation in research by participants. Confidentiality was also carefully observed and upheld during both the data collection and processing.

3.5.3 Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy

The participants must remain anonymous and all information collected during the study must be treated as confidential unless agreed on through informed consent (McMillan, 2010:55). Confidentiality refers to an active attempt over the course of the research process to remove any elements that identify participants in any way, as

well as non-disclosure of important and personal information discussed between the researcher and participant. (Barbas, 2017:80). In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were asked not to give their actual names when answering questions or during interviews. The participants' confidentiality and anonymity were respected under all circumstances. The participants were also informed about the outcome of the research. The participants' privacy, autonomy, dignity and basic human rights as individuals were respected and their names, photos and video cameras were not used in the study. They were also informed about the purpose of the research and the way the information was to be used.

3.5.4 Social value / protection from harm

The researcher has to ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical, emotional or psychological harm (De Vos, 2011:115). According to Beckmann (2017:18) the process of conducting research must not expose the subjects to substantial risk of personal harm that includes physiological or psychological experiments, procedures that are intrusive, and steps involving responses to an abnormally stressful stimulus or activity. Due to the sensitivity of the study, the researcher decided to use fictitious names when interviewing participants, ensured that the meeting place was not public and in case of learners, the parents and social workers were part of setting to assist when a situation became emotional. According to Maree (2012:301), all participants' information and responses shared during a study have to be kept private and results presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. The confidentiality of the results and findings of the study must be clear to participants to avoid embarrassment, shame, stigma and humiliation.

3.6. Conclusion

The process of gathering the data accorded the researcher the opportunity to grow in his role within the qualitative paradigm; it was indeed a rewarding experience. The provision of an interview schedule helped restricting responses that might not be

beneficial to this study. The time factor remained the main challenge; therefore, the interview duration was limited to one hour.

The researcher met with various groups of participants, namely principals, teachers, parents and learners who varied greatly in their understanding and approaches to the issue of teenage pregnancy. Their diversified views on the implementation of MPMLP will broaden the scope of the study and also allow for multiple approaches to the challenge itself.

Although the plan was not executed rigidly due to participants' availability and travelling inconveniences, the researcher aimed to obtain the required results. The interview process was flexible, interactive and continuous, rather than cast in stone. The responses provided by the participants were analysed and interpreted and will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research design and the research methodology. The sampling process was explained and the research design followed by the researcher was also explained (Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.3.4). In this chapter, the researcher focuses on data presentation, analysis and discussion of the qualitative data that was acquired, using a qualitative approach. The chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data that emerged from the study conducted through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis.

Creswell (2014) points out that a qualitative researcher gathers data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, documents and audio-visual material rather than relying on a single data source. This method of data collection enriches and broadens one's scope of knowledge and understanding. Data from interviews were interpreted, using a thematic analysis based on categories of emerging themes and codes. The researcher corroborated data from interviews with observations that he had recorded in his reflective research journal and with documents made available by the eight participating schools.

The researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews, during which he recorded the proceedings, wrote field-note observations for his reflective journal and later perused relevant documents made available to him. The interviews were recorded and later copied to the researcher's lap top and memory stick for security reasons. The researcher listened to each of the interviews and transcribed them. Thereafter, he printed out all the transcriptions and manually coded them. Hand coding is a laborious and time-consuming process even for data from a few individuals (Creswell, 2014). However, this process gave the researcher an overview

of and insight into all the interviews and made it easier for him to analyse the captured data.

The purpose of the research was to investigate role-players' views on the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP) (DoE, 2007) and its implementation in public schools. The views of different stakeholders provided a clear picture of their understanding of the core issues, including factors that hinder the full or effective implementation of the MPMLP. In order for the researcher to fully address the problem statement indicated above, he used one main question and several sub-questions.

The main question was:

- What are role-players' views on the implementation of MPMLP in public schools?

Sub questions were:

- What are the views of the role-players regarding the learner pregnancy policy?
- What are the views of the role-players in terms of the extent to which the policy has been successfully implemented?
- What are the factors that enable or hinder the implementation of the policy?
- Why is the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy ineffective in some public schools?
- How is the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP) implemented in selected public schools?

The data collected by means of interviews was captured from eight schools in the Pietersburg and Seshego Circuits in Limpopo Province, which were purposely sampled and from which eight principals, eight teachers, four parents and four learners per school participated. The individual interview sessions ranged from 18 minutes to 35 minutes per participant. The researcher employed a purposive sampling method based on the following criteria: Those coming from towns, townships, villages and informal settlements that had experienced cases of teenage pregnancy.

The transcripts as well as documents that show how the researcher analysed the data will also be stored at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria.

4.2 Profile of Participants

Table 4.1 below is a summary of the biographical information of participants:

Table 4.1 Summary of the biographical information

Position	Number of Participants	Gender	
		Male	Female
Principals	8	5	3
Teachers	8	0	8
Parents	4	0	4
Learners	4	0	4
TOTAL	24	5	19

The biographical information entails the gender and occupational category or position that an individual holds. The rationale for checking gender in each category was to establish how many females or males were interviewed in the study. The study shows that five male principals and three female principals were interviewed, which shows the domination of male principals in the Polokwane cluster. There were eight female teachers, four female parents and four female learners interviewed, as women in general are taking responsibility in ensuring that learner pregnancy is addressed in SA's schools. Out of participants, only five were males, all of them principals of the participating schools.

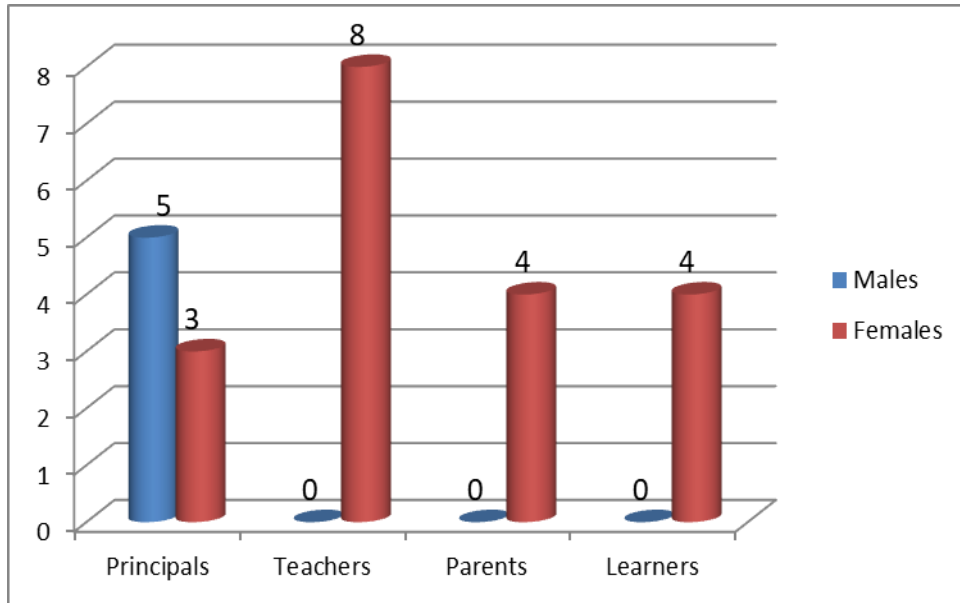


Figure 4.1: Biological information

The figure above shows the number of stakeholders who participated in the research interviews and their gender. Females participated more than males across the different stakeholder categories. This seems to indicate that females (even those who are not directly affected) are more involved than males in dealing with learner pregnancy.

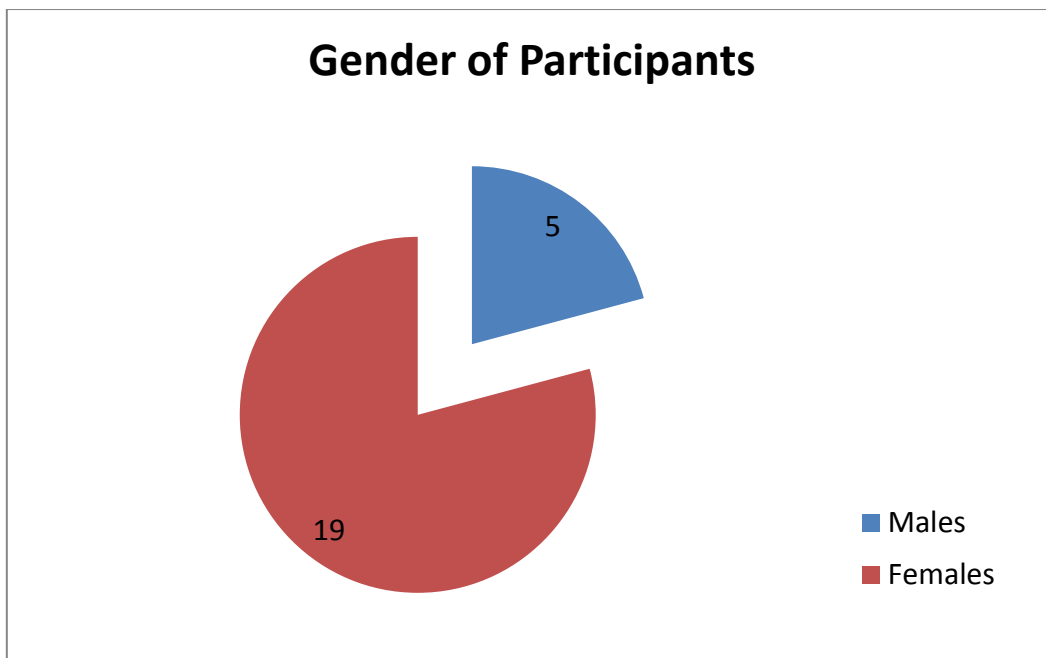


Figure 4.2: Gender of participants

4.3 The demographics of the research

The table below provides a summary of the study demographics:

Table 4.2: Summary of the study demographics

Position	Gender	Location	Type of School	Level of Qualification
Principal 1	Male	Township	Ordinary Public school	B.Com and MBA
Principal 2	Male	Informal settlement	Ordinary Public School	B.Ed Honours
Principal 3	Female	Town	Ordinary Public school	Bachelor of Arts
Principal 4	Male	Informal settlement	Combined Ordinary Public School	B.Ed Honours
Principal 5	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	B.Ed Honours
Principal 6	Male	Village	Ordinary Public School	Bachelor of Arts
Principal 7	Male	Township	Ordinary Public School	Bachelor of Arts
Principal 8	Female	Village	Ordinary Public School	B.Ed. Honours
Teacher 1	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	S.T.D III
Teacher 2	Female	Informal settlement	Ordinary Public School	Bachelor of Arts
Teacher 3	Female	Town	Ordinary Public School	B.Ed. Honours
Teacher 4	Female	Informal settlement	Combined Ordinary Public High School	B.Ed. Honours
Teacher 5	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	S.T.D III
Teacher 6	Female	Village	Ordinary Public School	Bachelor of Arts
Teacher 7	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	B.Ed. Honours
Teacher 8	Female	Village	Ordinary Public School	Bachelor of Arts
Parent 1	Female	Town	Ordinary Public School	Grade 12

Parent 2	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	Grade 11
Parent 3	Female	Informal settlement	Ordinary Public School	Grade 10
Parent 4	Female	Informal settlement	Ordinary Public School	Grade 12
Learner 1	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	Grade 12
Learner 2	Female	Informal settlement	Ordinary Public School	Grade 11
Learner 3	Female	Township	Ordinary Public School	Grade 12
Learner 4	Female	Town	Ordinary Public School	Grade 12

The researcher has found that the majority of participants in the study are females than males among all the stake-holders. This suggests that in most schools and families' females are taking a leading role in addressing teenage pregnancy. The researcher also found no significant differences in the information provided by various participants. Both males and females participants agree that teenage pregnancy among the black communities is high due to the social ills prevailing. The level of teenage pregnancy differs marginally from one community to the other in the sense that in the rural areas is higher, in the informal settlements is high and it's lower in the townships and town. The participants agree that policy formulation was not inclusive; the policy itself is not known and not implemented in our schools.

4.4 Themes and Categories that Emerged from the Analysis

The process of data analysis includes working on the data to make sense of it in light of the research questions that guided the study (Boeije, 2010). The following were the categories of participants from whom data was sourced mainly through semi-structured interviews: principals, teachers, parents and learners. Data were presented, analysed and interpreted, using a qualitative approach as outlined in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.5. Five main themes emerged from the data and these themes were developed from categories that were derived from the assignment of

codes to meaningful segments identified in the transcripts. The codes were clustered as categories, from which themes could be developed. The table on the following page summarises the themes and categories that emerged from the interpreted and analysed data.

Table 4.4 Themes and Categories

	Themes	Categories
4.4.1	Knowledge of the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP)	4.4.1.1 Positive factors relating to the knowledge of the MPMLP a. Reduction of pregnancy rate b. Educational rights and gender equality of pregnant learners respected c. Effects of MPMLP on the high rate of pregnancy 4.4.1.2 Negative factors re lack of knowledge of the MPMLP A. Learners' underperformance B. Schools' underperformance C. Causes of a high rate of pregnancy D. Policy as a cause of unfortunate choices
4.4.2	Management of the Learner Pregnancy Policy in public schools.	4.4.2.1 Communication with stakeholders 4.4.2.2 Value of statistics or record keeping of pregnant learners 4.4.2.3 Leave of absence 4.4.2.4 Male educators' incapacity to handle pregnant learners 4.4.2.5 Collusion and cover up of pregnancy
4.4.3	Stakeholders' involvement, co-operation and participation in the life of a pregnant learner.	4.4.3.1 Presence of the parents at school 4.4.3.2 Stakeholders' support, advice, and acceptance of responsibility
4.4.4	Challenges relating to the implementation of the Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP in Public Schools.	4.4.4.1 Lack of knowledge of MPMLP 4.4.4.2 Institutional and infrastructural incapacity to handle pregnant learners. 4.4.4.3 Lack of parental involvement, advocacy and support
4.4.5	Recommendations on policy implementation	4.4.5.1 Organise workshops for stakeholders 4.4.5.2 Advocacy of the MPLMP 4.4.5.3 Make copies of the policy available to all stakeholders 4.4.5.4 Invite parents to school meetings and workshops. 4.4.5.5 Provide infrastructure and human resources. 4.4.5.6 Presence of parents in teenagers' daily lives.

4.4.1 Knowledge of the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP)

This section of the report on the analysis of data outlines the different participants' understanding of the existing policy guidelines that direct schools on how to manage pregnant learners within the formal school setting. These guidelines are also intended to ensure that educators and managers are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to learner pregnancy. However, five principals out of the total of eight, eight teachers out of eight, four out of four learners and four out of four parents all indicated that they do not know this policy, which they are expected to implement. Although this is not a quantitative study, the above figures suggest the existence of a serious problem.

When Principal 3 was asked whether he knew about MPMLP, he said, *"No, I'm not aware, I have not read it"*. Principal 7 indicated that he probably was not aware of it. Principal 6 indicated that he knew about the policy, but when asked to outline the principles of the policy, he said, *"No, we don't have it"*. When Principal 5 was asked as to whether he is aware of MPMLP he said, *"No, I'm not aware."* Principal 2 said, *"Not really because we have developed our own policy"*. Parent 1 said, *"No we are not aware of those pregnancy policies and if there are any policies that are there, we parents don't know about it"*. When Teacher 1 was asked as to whether she knew about the teenage pregnancy policy, she said, *"I was not aware of the policy as I was going through some of the things that are new"*. Parent 4 was asked whether she was aware of the MPMLP and she replied: *"No, I am not aware of it"*. When Learner 1 was asked for clarity about her knowledge of the MPMLP, she said, *"No, I am not aware of the policy"*. She earlier confused MPMLP with school policy drafted by the school SGB, which is more localised and contextualised. Learners 1, 2 and 3 all said they were not aware of such a policy.

Teacher 5 raised a new thought when asked whether she was aware of the pregnancy policy. She said that, *"I'm not aware of that; we just heard the principal talking about it and she promised to make copies for us. This means that we don't have the policy and we have not yet started following the policy and we are not doing anything and that is why it is not implemented because we will have no learners at our school"*. This participant was the only one to raise the idea that if the policy is

implemented properly, schools might lose learners. However, it seemed as if a lack or no knowledge of the policy among principals, teachers and learners is unacceptably high. Almost no one among the interviewees seemed properly aware of it. This situation does not help to reduce the number of pregnant learners at school because one cannot implement a policy that one does not know. The principal and teachers do not seem to be interested in ensuring that all stakeholders are on board and the implementation is on course to achieve the desired results.

In a study by Runhare (2014) it became evident that there is inadequate knowledge of national policies by the participants: educators, parents, SGB members and members of the communities did not know nor had very little knowledge about the guidelines on learner pregnancy management. A study conducted by Willan (2013) also found that most educators and principals reflected ignorance about the MPMLP policy, to the extent that some learners were encouraged to report for school a week after giving birth. In a significant number of cases, the implementation of the policy depended on the principal's interpretation of the policy.

4.4.1.1 Positive factors relating to the knowledge of MPMLP

A. Reduction of the pregnancy rate

Even though the implementation of the MPMLP was formally introduced by the national Department of Education (hereafter DoE) in 2007 with the intention of preventing and managing teenage pregnancies, the desired outcomes seem to be but minimally realised. Schoolgirls' pregnancies are increasing in number each year and are occurring at younger ages (Ndluli, 2012). The policy deals with the prevention of learner pregnancy, intervention in case pregnancy has occurred and the support of teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancy in schools.

When Principal 4 was asked about the rate of teenage pregnancy at his school, he said, "*Currently, this year, at this institution, I found only two*". Learner 2 claimed that the implementation of MPMLP was preventing learners from falling pregnant.

Though it may look like punishment to ask the pregnant learner to stay home for two years bringing up the child, it brings desirable outcomes. These words were said by the principal who knows about MPMLP and has tried to implement it. When Principal 8 was asked about the rate of pregnancy in his school he said, *“Yes, yes, of course there are learners in our school who are pregnant, this year we are having four already, two have delivered their children and they are back. The policy of the department does not allow us to expel them from school.”* Principal 1, who is also familiar with the MPMLP, has indicated a different picture when asked about the rate of pregnancy in her school. She said, *“Learner pregnancy in my school is high between grade 9 and grade 12”*. She did not mention the specific number.

Teacher 6 experienced a high number of pregnant girls each year in their school, where the pregnancy policy is not known. When asked about the number of pregnant learners at her school, she said it was approximately thirty. She also said that she was not aware of the policy and had never seen it. She only heard about such a policy when a mother came with her child to school during the last month of pregnancy.

From the responses of Principal 4 and Principal 8, it seems that knowledge of the MPMLP plays a positive role in reducing the high rate of learner pregnancy. However, Principal 1, Teachers 6 and 8 did not seem to agree. It appears that the MPMLP alone cannot substantially reduce the high levels of pregnancy, but a combination of various factors such as a sound moral and values base, knowledge of the value of abstinence and the support or involvement of parents or community can influence it.

B. Educational rights of pregnant learners and gender equality

The aim of the MPMLP is to clarify the position regarding learner pregnancies, to inform the affected learners about their right to continue access to education, to support teachers in managing the effects of learner pregnancies, create procedures and provide guidelines to be followed in cases where prevention has failed and pregnancy has occurred. This is confirmed by the policy (DoE, 2007) which states

that, in cases where prevention measures fail and learners do fall pregnant, the interests of the individual against those of other learners, educators, the school and its community are to be taken into account. The policy (MPMLP) further indicates that the aim of this management plan is therefore to help and support the learner who is pregnant, to guide the father of the child, if he is also a learner, regarding his responsibilities as well as assist other learners, staff members and parents who are affected by the pregnancy. The MPMLP emphasises the right to basic education of the pregnant girl child and encourages all pregnant learners to finish their basic education. These measures provide a framework for educating and assisting learners to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities in accordance with a healthy lifestyle.

Gender equality speaks to the status of the boys and girls, still learners in the school environment and how they are treated in terms of their actions and responsibilities. The Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Guidelines (Department of Education, 2007) seeks to dramatically reduce and even eradicate the expulsion of and unfair discrimination against girls who fall pregnant, while still attending school. The policy suggests that the emphasis should be placed on having both the girl child and the boy child taking equal responsibility and being treated differently but fairly. According to the Namibian (2008) policy on teenage pregnancy, if a girl child becomes pregnant by a school boy child; both of them are to leave the school when the time of delivery comes. They should be counselled in order to develop their sense of responsibility and accountability in the emotional, moral and financial spheres.

The researcher raised the issue of teenage pregnancy with *Principal 2* and this is how he responded: "*But normally our teachers advise our girl learners about teenage pregnancy, wherein they discuss relevant issues and ultimately, teachers would advise them according to their lives*". The emphasis on teenage pregnancy is placed on the girl child alone as is clear from the participants' responses.

Principal 3 said a pregnant child is told to report to the teachers and from there she is referred to the teacher responsible for assisting pregnant learners (Principal 3).

Principal 8 said that if a girl is impregnated by a boy in the same school, both of them are put on leave when the girl goes to deliver and both remain on leave until such time as the girl returns to school.

Teacher 1 indicated that from the seventh to the ninth month of pregnancy, the parent of the child who is pregnant comes to stay at the school on a daily basis. The parents stay at the gate so that, if there is an emergency, the parents can take care of the girl. When Parent 1 was asked whether she thought that pregnant learners should continue attending school she said that the best thing was for the pregnant children to go to school and for the mother to support the child.

The sentiments indicated above highlight the fact that parents, teachers and principals are willing to let pregnant learners complete their grade 12 and enable them to further their studies in order to achieve their dreams. In terms of Section 3 (1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996b), education is compulsory for children from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of 15 years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. Although education is not compulsory for learners beyond grade 9, government encourages learners to enrol beyond grade 9 and no learner who wishes to continue to grade 12 should be denied access to schooling (Department of Basic Education, 2010:10) because education is regarded as a very valuable common good. The Department of Basic Education has made quintile 1 to 3 schools non-fee-paying schools, where books, infrastructure, food and human resource personnel are provided free of charge in order to make it possible and affordable for learners coming from a poor family background to attend school. The value of education has been summed up by the former President of South Africa, Mr Nelson Mandela, when he said that education is the most powerful weapon, which one can use to change the world. Education entails the transfer of knowledge, skills and values. Education is a non-negotiable prerequisite for a successful future.

Education has become accessible from the foundation phase to higher education and FETs in order to have a society that is equipped, capacitated and enlightened

for the future. The Department of Higher Education and Training has announced the introduction, from 2018, of free university education to all learners whose family income is below R 360,000 per annum. This decision serves to encourage learners to further realise their goals in life.

However, the indication is that, in South Africa, there is no equality between a girl child and a boy child in terms of how they are treated during and after pregnancy. The researcher discovered that in the same circuit, schools address the issue of pregnancy differently. He found that Principal 8 handled the issue of pregnancy very differently compared to other principals in the sense that the boy child and the girl child are held equally responsible for the pregnancy, while at other schools, it is the responsibility of the girl child alone.

C. Effects of MPMLP on the pregnancy rate

The MPMLP seems to have an insignificant effect on the high rate of pregnancy in SA's public schools. The main focus of the MPMLP is to address the prevention of teenage pregnancy, intervene if pregnancy has occurred and manage the pregnant learner. However, this policy has not fully realised its goal and objectives since its inception in 2007 for a number of reasons. From the interaction the researcher had with various stakeholders, he realised that the majority of them do not know the policy or its content and therefore cannot implement it. Principal 1 indicated that,

Yes, it is not implementable because there are a lot of things that are needed in the policy; you don't find support from educators themselves because they will be saying they have a lot of work to do in terms of the curriculum.

When Principal 3 was asked whether he knew about the policy, he said: *"No, I'm not aware of it, I have not read it. No, I have not seen it. When was this policy implemented or promulgated?"*

When Parent 2 was asked, why learners who knew the policy still continued to fall pregnant, she said, *"These learners are competing against each other; they are*

encouraged by the child support grant, which the government is giving to all children."

Teacher 1 pointed out that, if teachers told pregnant learners that their parent would have to be at school on a daily basis in the last quarter to look after them at school, it would help to deter these learners from becoming pregnant. The implication of the statement above is that the implementation of the policy has dire consequences for parents and it also paints a gloomy picture for the learner herself. The researcher realised that this policy would not yield significant results while some stakeholders are not party to and committed to it and its implementation is highly unsatisfactory. This policy seems to originate from the education authorities instead of all stakeholders and it is understandable that so many parents, teachers and learners do not know it and therefore cannot relate to it. It seems that the Department of Basic Education must hold a workshop and conduct advocacy, if they want to improve the level of distribution of the policy documents, knowledge of its content and implementation at the schools.

4.4.1.2 Negative factors relating to a lack of knowledge of the MPMLP

In paragraph 4.3.1 above, the researcher reported the views of role-players that revealed some of the factors relating to the knowledge of MPMLP in public schools. This section presents the participants' views on negative factors that relate to lack of knowledge of the MPMLP.

A. Learners' underperformance

Various participants voiced anxiety that expectant learners at public schools could cause poor educational standards. The school as a public institution has a clear mandate, which seeks to educate learners in many respects, including moral, spiritual, physical and emotional maturity. When the researcher asked Parent 2 about the performance of pregnant learners, she said,

A learner who is pregnant becomes shy in the class, her performance deteriorates, she does not come to school regularly,

and she does not do her school work. We suffer a lot when a learner who is pregnant still comes to school.

Learner 4 agreed and also acknowledged that after she had given birth she struggled to study and that affected her performance in class because her child was always crying.

When talking to Principal 4, the researcher wanted to know if there is a relationship between school results in relation to a pregnant teenage learner in his school and he responded by saying,

A pregnant child may, after delivery, be motivated to work hard, while in some areas, pregnant learners are being laughed at or scorned by other learners at school and their performance will ultimately drop.

Principal 6 agreed with the statement when he said the pregnant learners' performance is negatively affected because they do not come to school every day, they go for medical examinations, from time to time they are sick, and they go to the clinic most of the time and do not perform like learners who are not pregnant.

Teacher 5 alluded to the fact that performance is negatively affected by a lack of policy knowledge. She said, *"Of course, her performance will be affected because pregnancy in itself changes the behaviour of a person"*. She further said, *"If the learner is pregnant, she gets tired, attends the clinic and sometimes skips attending school for two to three days. Lagging behind, it is very difficult to maintain her performance"*. Teacher 6 said, *"Learners are just not taking anything seriously and you know we are not even allowed to punish them"*.

Learner pregnancy has an undesirable result on the performance of individual learners and possibly even the school at large. Learner 1 indicated that she struggled to study at home and, while at school, she slept a lot. These are signs that the learner does not cope with the situation and could hardly produce good results. All the participants concurred that teenage pregnancy has bad effects on individual

results, except Principal 4, who indicated that the relationship between performance and pregnancy depends on the circumstances of the pregnant learner.

The study conducted by Malahlela (2012:20) confirmed that when a learner is pregnant, her schoolwork is clearly going to be disturbed and she would immediately be placed in a disadvantaged position, especially when having to rear her baby. Poor academic performance leads to poor employment and financial prospects, which in turn may have detrimental effects on all the other aspects of the life of the mother and her baby (Malahlela, 2012:20).

B. Schools' underperformance

Schools that perform well have a high standard of discipline among learners, teachers and principals. Good performance cannot be found in isolation from other important factors. It is evident that schools that are performing well are led by good leaders who have raised the standards among all stakeholders. On the other hand, schools' underperformance is the result, among others, of ill-discipline and a very low morale and a lack of leadership. The performance of the school is also dependent on the performance of individual learners. Pregnant teenage learners contribute significantly to poor or underperformance because of the many distracting factors as a result of their parental responsibilities.

A study conducted by Runhare (2014) postulated that, due to teenage motherhood and other contributing variables, which include prior poor school performance, domestic responsibilities and being a primary child caregiver, school dropout usually results from teenage pregnancy. The author further indicated that, after giving birth, the situation was worse than when one was pregnant because now the baby added to the workload. During study time, the young mother could not focus because the child needed her full attention. When the child cried, she would have to take care of the child instead of concentrating on her studies. At that time, she would be tired, which resulted in her not learning. Consequently, she would have to repeat grades and struggle to cope with the results of failure. Learner 1 concurred with the statement above and conveyed her problem, when she was asked about the challenges after giving birth, she said,

I was struggling to study because the child was always crying, not getting enough sleep. When at school, I was always slumbering because at home I did not get enough sleep; during the night, I was breastfeeding my child.

When a pregnant learner could not produce good performance, it was as a result of tiredness, not sleeping during the night, no time for studying or doing homework, which culminated in her repeating some grades and this led to poor learner performance and also poor school performance.

Principal 3 said pregnancies had complications,

We have to deal with these complications and even though pregnant learners are compelled to come to school while pregnant, results are compromised because one cannot have the best of both worlds.

The lack of knowledge of the MPMLP is reflected in the increased teenage pregnancy rate and indiscipline in schools. Teachers and principals expressed concern that pregnant learners at public schools could cause poor educational standards. Some claimed that pregnant learners and teenage mothers did not focus on their education but had divided attention and that might negatively impact 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. Schools that perform well academically have a high standard of discipline, morals and they are regarded as excellent institutions for children. According to Hubbard *et al.* (2008), some communities are opposed to the re-enrolment of former pregnant teenagers into school on the basis that schools are solely meant for children and not mothers. Most pregnant learners' performance is poor due to the emotional state they find themselves in and because they are not coping well at all.

C. Causes of the high rate of pregnancy

Learner pregnancy cuts across all racial groups, nationalities and economic statuses. Curbing it is a challenge that is facing the entire world. There are various causes of teenage pregnancy. "According to Karra and Lee (2012:12), the pregnancy rate among school girls in South Africa remains high by international comparison and the rate of 13% in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal is twice the national average of 6.5%". Similar to the total fertility rate, adolescent fertility is much higher amongst black Africans and coloureds and lower amongst Indian/Asian and white adolescent women.(Stats SA, 2016:10). Learner pregnancy is higher among black South Africans than white South Africans; however, these incidences can be reduced and even overcome, while the real challenge is the high rate of ignorance and often naive assumptions that 'somebody is going to sort out the problems for them' among black African children.

When the researcher asked Parent 1 as to whether she had a talk with her child about sex and sexuality before her child fell pregnant, she said,

No, I did not engage her; I really thought she was too young to be told to go for family planning. So, I couldn't let her know about family planning because it's like sending my child to go and sleep around.

Some parents think that there will be a particular opportune time, which will present itself and which might be the right one for them to start talking about real issues that affect young boys and girls. This is, however, seldom the case. It seems that parents need to start informally engaging children about issues of sex and sexuality at an early age.

Parent 2 indicated that

These learners are competing against each other; they are encouraged by the child support grant, which the government is giving to all children.

Learners in this school seem to be competing with each other in terms of falling pregnant and giving birth, considering the number of children that might be eligible for social grants. The higher the number of babies one has, the more money one receives from the government.

The researcher asked Teacher 1 about the major causes of teenage pregnancy and she said, *“But I think its ignorance and curiosity. They think that if they indulge in sex once, they will not be pregnant.”* In responding to my earlier question, Teacher 2 said, *“Those learners are innocent and they get those boys who I cannot say they raped them. They experience being in a relation, where they don’t know how to prevent pregnancy. I can say it’s because of poverty or peer pressure and unemployment”.*

Teacher 3 started by laughing and then said, *“I think that the reason might be experimenting, they just want to experiment with sex. Sometimes, when you talk about abstinence, the boys will say no, Madam, no”.*

The researcher learned from the participants’ responses that knowledge about sex involves issues of curiosity, experimenting and ignorance. Parents in particular must be in the forefront when guiding their children from an early age to avoid embarrassment, even if the topic is taboo in some societies.

Principal 1 indicated that teenage pregnancy is high from grades 9 to 12 learners, and she said,

It’s a lot of things, mainly from child-headed families, parents are working far from home and they are not sleeping at home every day. Sometimes, you find it’s a lot of leniency from parents; it may be a lack of proper parenting or poor parenting.

Principal 2 added to the long list of causes when he said, *“Sometimes it is the issue of family background. If these learners don’t get anything at home, they are confronted by people who are ‘blessers’.”* A ‘blesser’ in South Africa is like a ‘sugar daddy’. ‘Blesser’ is a slang term for a rich man who offers support (typically financial

and material support) to a younger female companion in exchange for sex and / or friendship (Garsd and Crossan, 2017).

According to Teacher 6, poverty contributes to lack of privacy because parents and children sleep in the same room, especially in the informal settlements and it contributes immensely toward a high pregnancy among the teenagers. The teacher said, *“Teenagers implement what they see being done by their parents at home by practising what they have seen”*.

As a result of a lack of space, children watch as parents engage in sex and of course they are able to see everything that is done. Most of these children stay in one-room shacks and RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses consisting of two bedrooms, wherein some of the learners share a room with parents. This vicarious experience of sexual intercourse may influence them to such an extent that they will later practise that.

When asked about the causes of high teenage pregnancy, Teacher 5 replied: *“It’s caused by sexual activity, they engage in sex, but of course we guide them about pregnancy together with LO [Life Orientation] teachers and nurses so that they focus on their education”*. Furthermore, Teacher 8 hinted that poverty, alcohol and drug abuse play a crucial role in this regard when she said,

I think that one of the things that cause the pregnancy rate to be so high in the townships is because most townships are surrounded by drug dealers, alcohol abusers, poverty and some of our children are already involved or use alcohol and drugs.

Responding to the question about the high rate of pregnancy, Learner 3 said that learners should not sleep around, experimenting with sex. Learner 2 indicated that when some learners see certain things being done on social media like going out with ‘blessers’, driving big cars, they think they can sacrifice their values and integrity

in order to gain or get all those things. Some, unfortunately, fall pregnant at an early age, while others catch sexually transmitted diseases.

The table below summarises the major causes of teenage pregnancy as captured from different participants. In the main, there is general consensus among these stakeholders.

Table 4.4: Causes of the High Teenage Pregnancy Rate

Teachers	Parents	Principals	Learners
Unprotected sex	Technology	Poverty (family	Social Media
Experimenting with sex	(pornography)	background)	Love for money
Lack of knowledge	Type of food	Social grants	Driving big cars
Poverty	Social grants and	Child-headed families	Experimenting
Unemployment	competition	Peer pressure	with sex
Drugs and alcohol abuse	Children not taken	Orphans	
Absent parents	care of.	Love of money	
Ignorance			
Curiosity			

The causes of teenage pregnancy indicated by different participants or stakeholders can be summarised into three main categories, which are lack of parental presence or care, lack of knowledge and poverty. It is not only the responsibility of teachers and principals to ensure that teenage pregnancy is reduced, but in the main it is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders, especially parents at home who should guide, rebuke, correct and be examples to children in all respects.

D. Policy as a cause of unfortunate choices

The policy on teenage pregnancy seems to have softened the stance that had been taken in regard to pregnant girls prior to 1994 in that pregnant girls are now allowed to remain at school. The impact of culture and societal beliefs previously informed

the moral stance and moral fibre, upon which the treatment of teenage pregnancy was founded. Morals deal with what is right and what is wrong based on the convictions of a certain community.

A study conducted by Shefer, Bhana & Morrell (2013:2) found that teachers and principals expressed their outrage and resistance to what they regarded as young women's shame, for they remained convinced that being pregnant at school is shameful, and that the problem with government policy is that it is diffusing this shame, making people believe that it is now acceptable, thus undermining public 'moral standards. Learners were previously expelled from the school, if they were found to be pregnant, but the introduction of the MPMLP has ensured that pregnant learners remain at school until they give birth. Parents in particular did not discuss the issues relating to sex, falling in love, dating, experimenting with sexual activities and early child bearing because it was a taboo within their society, based on society's fundamental beliefs.

When Learner 1 was asked about her pregnancy, she said, "*I was just scared not knowing how to approach my parents since I'm the only child in the family – thinking about the disappointment and all those things*".

Principal 7 said that before the researcher arrived that morning, she was delayed in the office by addressing the love relationship between a girl learner and boy learner. The girl learner was beaten by the boy learner who accused her that she was sleeping around with other boy learners. The parents of this learner did not even see this as a problem or as disgusting as they support their child about this practice.

Principal 4 indicated that in order to reduce or minimise teenage pregnancies among SA's schools, learner engagement is very important. Teacher engagement and invitation of external people to the schools to speak to the learners about morals and self-discipline at assembly points are very essential.

From the evidence and interaction with learners it became clear, that although they are guided from various platforms, it seemed as if the intended message gets distorted along the way, to the extent that some learners deliberately attempt to fall

pregnant. At Principal 7's school, about 20 learners were pregnant and the school seemed to be quite representative of other similar 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. There were 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 not a wise choice.

4.4.2 Management of Pregnant Learners at Public Schools

The management of pregnant learners is a serious challenge in schools, especially for educators who have not been capacitated in that regard. The study by Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013) indicated that the Department of Basic Education should strive to ensure educators and managers are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to learner pregnancy. In addition, the study conducted by Willan (2013) confirmed that most educators and principals pleaded ignorance of the MPMLP policy, with the result that some learners were encouraged to report for school a week after giving birth. Although these learners intend to complete their matric (grade 12), they are not in a good position to do well in their academic work due to emotional, physical and psychological stress, and instability. The introduction of MPMLP (2007) encourages educators to manage these learners, but it is a taxing work because educators are not trained to do certain things relating to pregnancy such as assisting them to give birth, coping with nausea, inconsistent school attendance and ill-health. The researcher observed that pregnant learners are treated and accepted in school like learners who are not pregnant. The management of the school must deal with children's absenteeism, communication with parents and the unwillingness of parents to frankly and openly co-operate with them.

4.4.2.1 Communication with stakeholders

According to the policy (MPMLP, 2007), a learner who is pregnant, or has reason to believe she may be pregnant, should immediately inform someone in the school, preferably a senior educator designated by the principal. Parents and guardians

should ensure that the school is timeously informed about the condition of their child, that she attends a health clinic and that the report of the visit is communicated to the school. It is the responsibility of both the parents of pregnant learners and the school management to communicate with each other regarding the state of the learner. If the parents identify the pregnancy first, they must notify the school principal to show accountability and responsibility. It is also expected that when the principal identifies a learner pregnancy, the learners' parents must be invited to the school for more engagement as to how they are going to assist this learner. The learner must also notify her parents and or the class teacher about her pregnancy so that appropriate help can be given. However, in some cases, there is no teamwork between the learners' parents and the school.

When Learner 2 was asked whether she personally informed her parents and how she communicated that, she said, *"I informed my parents through WhatsApp"*. Learner 3 responded to the question by saying: *"No, I couldn't, I don't know why I couldn't."* When Learner 4 responded to the question, she said,

No, I was so scared I didn't know how to approach them because being pregnant at this age is not something that your parents will be proud of when you inform them

The responses from the three learners indicate that they did not personally inform their parents and two of them opted not to inform their parents until the parents themselves discovered the pregnancy, while one used WhatsApp to communicate the message. It was clear that communication between the parents and learners was not good and this may suggest that it also affected how they related to each other.

Communication between the parents and the learners must be sound in order to avoid unnecessary secrecy. The parents and the learners must talk or communicate daily to strengthen their bond and their communication must be about everything, including relationships, sexuality, contraception, responsibilities, and consequences in life, discipline and accountability.

Parent 1 was asked whether she engaged her child prior to and after realising that she was pregnant. She said that she did not engage her child about family planning and prevention because she thought that her child was too young to be exposed to family planning, which she felt would have made her daughter believe that she was allowing her to engage in sexual practices.

When Parent 3 responded to the question, she said, *“It was a normal relationship wherein we could easily treat her”*. She further indicated that, *“I had time to explain to her about her body changes, her menstruation cycle, which signifies that if you sleep with a man, you will ultimately get pregnant”*.

When Parent 4 answered the question about their relationship prior and after realising that the child was pregnant, she further said that,

It was really difficult because my husband did not accept that, we ultimately accepted that, but it was not easy. The principal has outlined to me that due to the pregnancy of your child, you are supposed to report to school every day or take leave on the eighth month, so that she stays home until delivery.

It is not part of the policy that parents must report to school at a particular period when their child is pregnant. Principal 7 claimed that this statement was given as some advice by the Circuit Manager in one of their routine meetings and was regarded in some schools as a policy; thus it is enforced on parents as such.

Parent 1 did not have time to engage with her child, while Parent 3 had a great deal of time to extensively engage with her child but, in both instances, the children ended up being pregnant. The question is whose fault it is and why. Even though the parents can play their role intensively, it remains the responsibility of the child to take a decision about her life and future. This is obvious from the fact that Parent 4 had an opportunity to talk and share her thoughts with her child pertaining to life and her sexual life, but despite the guidance given, the child became pregnant. At age 15 to 18, a learner must be able to make decisions on her own and maintain them.

Parent 4 did not inform the principal about her child's pregnancy even though she knew she was supposed to do so, but the principal acted responsibly by engaging with the learner's parents, calling for the mother's involvement and participation in the life of her child. It would appear that some parents do not want to take a leading role in ensuring that the relevant role players are duly informed about the pregnancy of their children. This was confirmed by Parent 4 who, upon realising that her child was pregnant, did not report her to the principal, but instead kept quiet until the school principal identified the learner and invited the parent.

When the researcher asked Teacher 1 about the secret behind the low number of pregnant learners in her school, she said, "*When we talk to them about teenage pregnancy, they promise that they will not be pregnant, even though they are engaged in sexual life*". The researcher also wanted to know how they treated pregnant learners and she indicated that if they knew or discovered that a learner was pregnant, they called the parents and let them know that their child was pregnant so that she would be able to attend pre-natal care on a monthly basis at the clinic.

The researcher wanted to know from Teacher 2 how the school engaged parents whose children were found to be pregnant while still in school. Teacher 2 said they communicated with parents only when they saw that the learner was highly pregnant and requested the parent to come to school every day with the learner to supervise her, as teachers are not well trained to look after pregnant learners.

When the researcher asked Teacher 4 about how the school engaged with learners about teenage pregnancy and how discussions translated into any reduction of pregnant learners, she said,

I made it my responsibility in the beginning of each term to speak and appeal to the girl learners just to learn to cross their legs and open up books. We did that in two consecutive years and somehow the numbers reduced to a point, where we began with 18 pregnant learners in one year, but then it came down to 12 learners.

Teachers 1 and 4 had one thing in common, which was to speak, talk or engage with learners about teenage pregnancy. In both instances, the teachers were able to convey and communicate a message to the learners, which made sense to them and contributed positively to the reduction of pregnancy among learners. The teachers were also able to communicate with parents, by phoning them or writing invitation letters in order to update each other. Communication between the learners and the teachers is very important as it brings both parties on board. On the other hand, the parents are vitally important to ensure that learners are taught about pregnancy at an early age. It is common place knowledge that no problem can be resolved without communicating, engaging each other and understanding.

In answering how parents communicate with the teachers in case of a pregnancy was identified Teacher 5 who said, *“That one is dealt with by the Principal, we just inform him about the learner who is pregnant.”*

Teacher 6 said,

We first consult with the child to check whether they have parents or not. Most of the parents are rejecting us. You see that public phone; I can sit on that phone trying to call some of the parents, but find no positive response.

Teacher 7 said,

We don't engage parents, because they don't come to school when called. You write a letter, they don't come. You only get the promise that they will come, but they don't come. We don't have support from parents because they cannot even come to school and report to us about their pregnant learner.

Teachers 5 and 8 were specific in highlighting that the principal is the one responsible for communicating with parents with regard to anything relating to the child or learner. Teacher 8 said, *“Normally, I actually ask the principal to communicate with parents. That part is handled by the principal, where he calls the*

parents in and explains to them the policies and how they should take care of the pregnant learner and I think they have forms that they must sign in and so forth”.

It was also evident that parents do not communicate with the teachers or the school regarding the learner’s pregnancy. The teachers or schools are on their own since there is no co-operation or support from parents. It is the researcher’s impression that the education of the learners in the schools is left entirely in the hands of teachers and principals. Parents seem to care little about their children. Even if they are invited to school, they do not avail themselves of the opportunity. Communication is one-sided.

Principals are responsible for the functioning of the schools and they must ensure that all stakeholders in the school environment take a leading and positive role in ensuring that schools are functional and run professionally. According to the DBE (PAM) (2016), principals should provide leadership within the school and interact with all stakeholders. This is also confirmed by Section 16a of SASA, which indicates that principals must provide the governing body with a report about the professional management relating to the public school. It is for this reason that communication remains key and paramount towards the attainment of a healthy situation wherein all are parties take part in communicating and are fully updated on the school policies.

The researcher asked the participants this question: What procedure do you follow if you are aware that a child is pregnant? Principal 1, said awareness might arise in two ways,

You find that a parent comes to school to inform the management of the school about her child’s pregnancy after she / he has discovered it, but if the school discovers it first, the parent is called and engaged and also advised on what to do.

Principal 3 said that the school tells the child to report her pregnancy to the class teacher and from there; the class teacher is the one who engages her and will know about her condition. Principal 4 said that there was a good communication system in terms of the communication line in the school, which assists in terms of unearthing some of these problems when there is a child ‘misbehaving’. Principal 5 said that

they usually call the parents to come to school so that the mother could be available for the learner. Principal 6 said that teachers communicate with parents as soon as they discover that a learner is pregnant and parents must report to school for further updates.

Principal 7 said, *“The minute I identify that the learner is pregnant, I call her to the office to ascertain the date she is going to deliver and from there, I need the parents to report to school in order to update them. Some respond positively and some do not”*. Principal 8 said that if the girl is pregnant, she has to report to the parents and later to the class teacher who will bring the pregnant girl to the principal’s office.

All the principals interviewed were of the opinion that the parents must report the pregnant learner to school, if the parent has identified the pregnancy first. If the principal has identified it first, he/she must call the parents to school for further engagement. In some schools, the pregnant learner must report her pregnancy to the class teacher or guardian teacher who in turn will inform the principal and parents thereof. The bottom line is that there should be a line of communication in place, which makes things easier and possible. While parents do not communicate that much, it must be noted that it is their responsibility to do so. However, principals are often the ones who take the initiative to invite parents to school.

4.4.2.2 Leave of absence

Like any other learner, pregnant learners have a right to education. Against the practices of the past era, where learners were expelled from school immediately after being identified pregnant by their teachers, the current situation allows them to study further even though found to be pregnant. The MPMLP (DBE, 2007) is underpinned by three important principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, which are: the right to equality, the right to a basic education and the rights of children. It encourages all pregnant learners to finish their basic education, and it proposes that the girl child who has delivered a baby should stay home for a period of two years, taking care of the baby.

According to the policy (MPMLP, 2007), a learner may request or be required to take a leave of absence from the school, including sufficient time to address both pre- and post-natal health concerns as well as the initial caring of the child. No pre-determined time is specific for this purpose since it will depend entirely on the circumstances of each case. It is evident that leave may be taken before the delivery of the baby, but there is no specific time or date stipulated. The policy is thus open and could thus be exploited or abused by all parties concerned. The only time specified is after the delivery of the baby, when a new mother can stay home for two years, taking care of the baby. It is the view of the Department of Basic Education that learners as parents should exercise responsibility for parenting and that a period of absence of up to two years may be necessary for this purpose (DoE, 2007).

During the interview sessions with various participants in different schools, it was clear that every school seems to implement some parts of the policy in terms of their own understanding, decisions taken and agreements with stakeholders. Obviously, this is also influenced by about half the sample not knowing the policy.

When Learner 4 was asked as to whether she knew about the teenage pregnancy policy and its implications, she indicated that she knew about the policy and also highlighted that pregnant learners must attend school until they are seven to eight months pregnant and from there, learners must be accompanied by their parents to school on a daily basis. She also claimed that if her boyfriend is in the same school, they both are supposed to leave by the time the girl goes for leave of absence.

Parent 4 said that she was called by her principal who outlined to her that due to the pregnancy of her child, she was supposed to report to school every day or take leave from work from the eighth month of her child's pregnancy so that she stayed home until delivery.

The issue of leave of absence is not treated the same way at every school because all principals use their own discretion. The response of Learner 4 shows that they can go on leave of absence anytime and return immediately after giving birth. There

was no fixed time limit given. Parent 4 was supposed to stay with the child at school from the eighth month until she delivers. It seems that educators need a common instrument to guide them because they are regulated by the same instructions from the Department. When the researcher asked Teacher 1 as to how a learner is treated before and after giving birth, she said, "*We give a period of a month for her to recuperate, even though it's not stipulated anywhere in the policy*". Teacher 2 also said,

The policy says the learner can stay at home for four weeks. The policy said so and they just put an X in the box, they didn't say it was leave; they just put that in the register, so they had it in black and white that it was their learner who was at home having a child. It was not leave; it was absence and not sick leave.

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 agreed that the pregnant learner is given one month or four weeks to stay at home after delivery of the baby. Teacher 1 acknowledged that it was not an official policy, although Teacher 2 indicated that permission to stay home for four weeks was a policy. It is clear that both these teachers do not know the actual policy and its application because Teacher 2 added; we just put X on the register, if the learner is absent. There is no uniform management of absence of pregnant learners and every school does as it wishes as if the Department of Education has no policies in place.

Teacher 3 said,

According to the Department, they say we must give them leave from seven months onwards, but seven months is too much. In that policy, I just know one, but I just know that learners must be given a leave from seven months. I don't know exactly what the policy entails.

Teacher 5 said, "They want to go for maternity for four months like teachers and this does not go well with us". Teacher 8 said, "I'm not sure about the number of days, but in most cases, the children decide for themselves. It's shocking that some of

them take three days off and come back to school. Just a few days off and come back”.

Teachers 3 and 8 showed an element of ignorance and confusion because they first said that pregnant learners can go on leave of absence from the seventh month onwards, but later said they do not know exactly what the policy entails. The submissions indicated that teachers do not know the policy; they rely on hearsay and they do not seem interested to obtain a copy of the document to go through the policy itself. Learners decide for themselves the period of their leave of absence; some take three days off, while others want four months off, the same as the official maternity leave for teachers. In this scenario, there is no leadership, no management and as such, every school interprets how they want to implement their own rules and regulations. The fact that teachers do not seem willing to find out what the policy is suggests a degree of unprofessional attitude towards their duty of care.

Legally, learners do not qualify for maternity leave as they are not employed. Learners who are absent must be accounted for and it must be very clear in the class register that a particular learner is still attending school or has left school. According to the Policy on Learner Attendance (DBE, 2010), if a learner is absent from school for ten consecutive school days or more, a principal must make reasonable attempts to ascertain from the learner’s parents whether the learner has been withdrawn from the school. If that learner decides to come back to school after a certain period, she/he must be readmitted to the class and the school. The policy is clear on this matter. The policy further stipulates that a female learner’s record may not be cancelled on the grounds that she is pregnant or has given birth. The contrast in the statements quoted above is that the learners who spent ten consecutive days away from school must be withdrawn, but the pregnant girl may not be withdrawn on account of pregnancy. There is no clear direction as to how the schools should deal with an absent pregnant girl in the school register.

During the researcher’s interaction with some principals, he wanted to find out from them whether they allowed the learner to remain at school until the date of delivery or whether they had other ways, in which they were dealing with it. Principal 2 said, *“We give them a minimum of three weeks to be at home. And I don’t want to call it*

maternity leave. I remember one learner delivered in the morning, she was in grade 12, by nine o'clock she was writing, we were embarrassed on how strong is this child, so we give them chance to come and write". Principal 4 indicated that, "After agreement with parents of the learner who has given birth, the school marks an X and Y in the school register next to the learner's name for two weeks".

Principal 8 indicated that the child was allowed to attend school until such time she went for leave of absence because the learner qualified for leave of absence. If the girl is impregnated by a boy in the same school, both of them must go on leave when the girl goes on to deliver her baby, until such time they both come back to school. It should be noted that these principals believed that allowing "leave of absence" was not valid as pregnant girls are not "employees".

The absence of pregnant learners from school to deliver a baby is dealt with inconsistently by the various schools. Principal 2 gave the learner three weeks off, Principal 4 gave the learner two weeks off and Principal 8 attached no specific time limit. The question arises as to why there are different time frames and what the guiding tool is. The observation is that these principals do not know the policy. Some claim to know the policy, but they misrepresent reality and truth. In the same circuit cluster, one question related to policy was given three different answers by the people who are seen as the custodians of the policy for the Department of Education. There is an indication of marking an X and Y on the school register, which is unlawful in terms of the policy on learner attendance (DBE, 2010). The policy states that when a learner is present, leave the square blank, except on a new learner's first day, when an "N" must be inserted in the square. If a learner is absent, write a single "a" in the centre of the square.

Principal 8 did not seem to care about the difference between a learner and a teacher because to him, they should be given the same maternity benefits and the entitlement to maternity leave for four months. The emphasis is on the pregnant girl child, except in the case of Principal 8, where both the boy and the girl are expected to go on leave of absence until the child is born. Nobody raised the problem of the boy causing the pregnancy, if he was at a different school. According to Principals 1 to 7, it is only the girl child who must abandon her studies, stay home and come back

to school after the child has been born. However, the policy provides for both the girl child and boy child to go on leave of absence until the child is born. Almost all the principals indicated that the mothers of pregnant learners must be at school daily once the learner is eight to nine months pregnant, ensuring that when an emergency occurs, the parent is available to assist the pregnant child. This provision is neither lawful nor found anywhere in the policy, but it was suggested by the Circuit Manager.

4.4.2.3 Value of statistics or record keeping of pregnant learners

Schools are legal entities that are regulated by policies and laws, wherein every significant incident ought to be recorded for reference and administrative purposes. It is the responsibility of all school managers to keep a clear record from which to address present and future challenges. However, during the researcher's interaction with various teachers and principals, he observed that much needs to be done in this regard in order to keep everybody on board. This speaks directly to the administrative capability of SA's school managers. Without records, there can be no accountability. Principals must have information to carry out their work, and records provide a reliable, legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and actions, which represent a particular and crucial source of information.

The researcher asked the principals as to whether the schools had a record of learner pregnancies since 2007. Principals 2 and 3 delegated the responsibility to a particular teacher of keeping the statistics of pregnant learners and did not bother to ensure safekeeping thereof. Principal 6 did not have any record for pregnant learners, while Principal 7 destroyed the record annually because she did not see its value and contribution in ensuring that this challenge was met.

Principal 1 said,

Yes there is, but you may find that not all learners are included because some of them did not disclose the status.

Oh for the past years, I don't know whether my deputy principal had a file record, but from now I think we will have them because the

system will update them all the time. But for the past years, I do not know whether she kept a record or not (Principal 3).

Yes, we have a dedicated educator who is keeping the record (Principal 2).

No we don't have, we don't monitor the pregnancy rate (Principal 6).

No, we only have a record for a year because we don't like it, we don't keep it, we don't use it and well, maybe the committee might be keeping it, but we don't use it. I'm not interested in it and I don't think we have that one of 2007 (Principal 7).

Principal 8 said that they kept the record for the previous years; it was just that in 2015, the school office and other offices were burned down, but thereafter they kept records. Teacher 4 said,

And the department, on the other hand also has this plan of taking down their names and statistics, but do nothing about it. You might as well leave it because you just need the numbers, which do not assist in curbing the high learners' pregnancy.

Principals 1, 2 and 8 confirmed that there is a record of pregnant learners at their schools. They recorded just the numbers. These statistics, however, do not provide anything relating to the growth or decrease of numbers in SA's schools. The important question remains why these statistics have to be kept. Are they merely for submission to the Department of Education to serve as a basis upon which one can build to address the challenge of teenage pregnancy and to ensure that more learners have access to education? The researcher observed that principals were not taking the issue of statistics seriously as they randomly delegated that responsibility to either the deputy principal or the Life Orientation teacher. This record was not kept safe, did not reflect the true situation and it served only for submission or reporting to the Department of Education. This may also suggest that the department does not audit the numbers.

Principals 1 and 6 indicated that they did not keep a record of pregnant learners because they did not see its value. Principals are by nature of their appointment the custodians of the policies of the Department of Basic Education and also the SGB. However, the challenge is how principals are appointed and manage to avoid undue influence, among others, by the unions, despite the provisions contained in education law and policy. They may think there is no need to monitor pregnancies because it does not help the school to deal with pregnancy. Principal 7 was seemingly inconsistent in answering these questions, not sure how to handle the issue of record keeping and did not provide leadership in dealing with this challenge. She displayed a lack of commitment and poor management in ensuring sound record-keeping. Principal 3 indicated that she had delegated her responsibility and accountability to someone else.

4.4.2.4 Male educators' incapacity to handle pregnant learners

Pregnant learners have the right to education, irrespective of their pregnancy, and must be treated like any other learner at school. Their stay at school benefits them and their future endeavours, even though the male educators find it difficult to deal with them. Male teachers have the same mandate and responsibility as the female teachers to ensure that girl learners receive education and are not discriminated against. However, their right should not infringe the rights of their teachers. Teachers are not trained to be nurses or midwives and as such there must be a way, in which girl learners find a suitable way to avoid exposing teachers to situations they are not trained for. A male doctor is trained to handle pregnancies, while a male teacher is not. In the event that a girl learner goes into labour while at school, teachers claim they are not allowed to touch or assist her. This was confirmed by Principal 8 when he said,

The teachers are not allowed to assist the pregnant learner, should they do that and the child the learner is concealing passes away, the teacher is highly responsible and will be charged because the guidelines say teachers are not trained in case of maternity.

Teacher 7 was asked whether they experienced the situation, where a child would either give birth or was about to give birth at school. She said, *"I think it happened last year or in June, whereby Madam X took one pregnant girl to the clinic and she delivered upon arrival"*. One can imagine the challenge and embarrassment caused, if such an event happens in the presence of the male teacher.

Teacher 6 concurred with the sentiment above when she indicated that the day before a learner, who was in labour rushed to her staffroom asking for help. She discovered that the learner was suffering an acute pain just below her abdomen and, because she was nine months pregnant, they had to allow her to go home because they knew that it was labour pains. Teachers are not allowed to do midwifery. It should be noted that this approach could also entail dangers for the child if she is not taken care of by a suitable professional nurse or doctor.

Teacher 3 also asked a pertinent question about what would happen, if a learner gave birth at school and the child happened to die. She asked if the teacher was going to be held accountable.

The teachers and learners should not be endangered by any situation. Policy regarding pregnant learners should be reconsidered; highly pregnant teenagers should stay at home until they have given birth and only then return to school. Teachers are not equipped for the task of working with pregnant learners (Modisaotsile, 2012). Parents and other stakeholders must play their part in ensuring that no girl learner gives birth or goes into labour in the classroom or school environment. It is not the responsibility of teachers to take learners to the clinic in order for them to give birth but the parents must play their role.

4.4.2.5 Collusion and cover up of pregnancy

Collusion is the act of collaborating with someone else on an assessment exercise which is intended to be wholly your own work, or the act of assisting someone else to commit plagiarism (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/develop-your-skills/study.../collusion/> accessed on 22 October 2016). Collusion entails helping

someone in the act of doing something that is wrong. Cover up of pregnancy refers to an act whereby the pregnant girl keeps her pregnancy secret from her parents, teachers and principals. Sometimes, such girls collude with their parents to keep the pregnancy secret and, as a result, some of the vital stakeholders would not know about this pregnancy unless they learn about it by chance. The learner would then come to school wearing clothes that hide her pregnancy. In some instances, some parents are also in collusion with their learner-child, pretending that they do not know about this pregnancy, while they are fully aware and informed.

There are various reasons why parents and learners opt to cover up a pregnancy and this has been highlighted during the interviews with various participants. When the researcher asked the question as to how their parents found out about their pregnancy and how they responded or reacted to it, Learner 1 said, *“I just decided to keep quiet; I didn’t want to tell anybody because after telling them, they shouted and complained”*. Learner 2 said, *“It just seemed like a lot would happen, I could get beatings. So I took time before telling her. I think she was trying to be supportive and I don’t think that’s how she felt because she tried to decorate the whole issue”*. Learner 3 said that she was taking a bath and her mother asked her when she last experienced menstruation. *“She was surprised as she said she never heard her asking for pads or talking about period pains. She took me to the provincial hospital, where nurses conducted some tests, which confirmed that I was eight months pregnant”*.

Learner 4 said,

Actually, I found out in about three weeks and I was scared not knowing how to approach my parents. I thought of committing abortion, but I couldn’t get through it, but then I kept it a secret until I was four months.

Learners 1, 2 and 4 tried to hide their pregnancies from their parents for some time because they feared that the parent/s would shout, complain and be shocked, but Parent 3 supported her child. The three learners kept their pregnancy a secret for fear of the repercussions to the extent that Learner 3 wanted to get an abortion.

These learners were able to keep their pregnancy secret for some months, living in the same family, with their parents, who did not even notice that something was wrong. This reflects negatively on parents' relationships with their children.

The researcher asked parents how they found about their child's pregnancy and how they responded to it. Parent 1 said that she usually checks her child's clothing on a regular basis and if she is on her menstrual cycle, she can identify it. So for the past two months, she did not notice anything on her clothing and that is when she realised that there was a problem, so she intervened. She felt sad, even stressed because her daughter was still very young at the age of 16. She did not expect her child to be pregnant at that age.

Parent 2 reported that her younger daughter fell pregnant while in grade 12 and her older sisters were able to identify her pregnancy and informed her. She felt bad and sad but decided that she would continue with her studies because she was already in grade 12. Parent 3 said, *"She is the one who initially informed me and later I informed her father. I did not even recognise that she was pregnant and never thought that she could be pregnant"*. Parent 4 said,

I only knew after a long time; I recognised that her face started shining and her tummy was growing; thus I realised that she was about seven to eight months pregnant. I informed my sister-in-law who informed her brother. It was very difficult because my husband did not accept that.

Teacher 1 referred to a pregnant learner who did not come to school. They kept asking her whether she was pregnant but she denied it and they tried to engage her mother. The mother, who knew the child was pregnant, said her child had menstruation challenges every time she was taken to the clinic. Realising that her pregnancy was too far and visible, the mother withdrew her from school without notifying the management of the school (Teacher 1).

Parents 1, 2 and 4 stayed with their children in the same house, but they did not realise that the children were several months pregnant because these children had a

way in which they could hide or cover up their pregnancy. They had a tendency of putting on oversized dresses or dresses that did not show their big tummies. These parents did not check their children or did not know their children's bodies very well. Only one parent indicated that her child did not hide her pregnancy, but instead told her on her own.

In the main, it does not seem easy for these teenagers to tell their parents about their pregnancy. However, these teenagers have to be encouraged to inform their parents about their pregnancies so that they can deal with the pressure, guilt, rejection and also all possible complications or health issues at an early stage. Teacher 1's situation explains what some parents can do in order to cover up the wrongs of their children. All interviewed parents found it difficult to deal with the teenage pregnancies and were sad and stressed to accept that their children were pregnant because it had a negative impact on their future lives.

4.4.3 The involvement, co-operation and participation of stakeholders in the lives of pregnant learners

Stakeholders such as parents are or should be very important in the lives of pregnant learners because they provide the fundamental basis of their existence at home and also the support base at school. Learners' parents and guardians may not be absolved from their responsibilities concerning their pregnant child. The parents should work together with the school to support and monitor their child's health and progress (DBE, 2007). It is not the sole responsibility of either parents or teachers to ensure that the pregnant child's health and education are being taken care of. Instead, it is the joint responsibility of every stakeholder, including obviously the learners themselves, but also the principals. There must be involvement, co-operation and participation of all stakeholders from the home and the school.

4.4.3.1 Presence of the parent at school

The parents of a pregnant child should be in close contact with the principal regarding the health of, and the support needed by the child. Different participants expressed the view that parents should assist the school physically at the school

upon realising the pregnancy of their child. A number of these participants quoted from school-based policies, indicating that a female parent must be at school on a daily basis to take care of the pregnant learner, but the reality is that they expressed the sentiments and guidance from the Circuit Manager, which does not constitute a policy. In a way, such interpretation is also discriminatory in that the female parent is expected to attend school with her child, possibly impacting her own job, while the male parent is not expected to assist his child.

Parent 4 indicated that, *“In the beginning of that year, I was called by her principal who outlined to me that due to the pregnancy of your child, you are supposed to report to school every day or take leave on the eighth month so that she stays at school until delivery”*. Parent 2 said that she had to go to school and inform the principal as a parent and also as an SGB member. She indicated to the principal that she could not be at school on a daily basis but opted to withdraw her child towards the ninth month. Unfortunately, her child gave birth over the weekend and on the Monday she had to go to school because she was already busy writing her matric exams. Parent 1 said that where she was working, they were implementing this kind of a policy, although she did not know if it was the same policy that when a child was seven months pregnant, she went to school with her mother.

There is an understanding and common talk among the parents that, when a child is seven to eight months pregnant, the parent ought to be at the school on a daily basis so that if anything happens to the child, the parent can assist instantly. This practice has a serious implication for the dignity of the learner’s parent who spends weeks sitting outside the school at the school gate. This can neither be legal nor humane. Parents or guardians should take steps to ensure that, as far as is possible, their child receives her class tasks and assignments during any period of absence from school and that all completed tasks and assignments are returned to the school for assessment (DBE, 2007).

The Policy declares that a pregnant learner must be at home from a certain stage of the pregnancy onwards, while the Circuit Manager’s guidance indicates that parent must come to school with her learner to ensure that the child is taken care of. The

learner may therefore request or be required to take leave of absence from school, including sufficient time to address both pre- and post-natal health concerns as well as the initial caring for the baby (DoE, 2007).

The researcher asked the participants how they worked with and assisted pregnant learners who were at school. Teacher 1 said that the parent of the pregnant child reported to school daily when her child was seven to eight months pregnant to deal with possible emergencies. Teacher 2 indicated that she wanted to know from parents how they lived with the child at home. She also wanted to know the date that the learner was going to give birth. Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 agreed that, when a learner is pregnant, the parent or mother should come to school on a daily basis to take care of any emergency. This practice seems common among the schools the researcher visited, where the teachers claimed that it is government policy.

Upon more interaction with the Deputy Manager of Governance at the Pietersburg Circuit, it was clear that this is not policy but advice, which was given to principals at a certain meeting. This practice was intended to help teachers in cases of emergency and also to deter learners from falling pregnant if they become aware that because it becomes uncomfortable for them when their parents / mothers will have to stay at the school gate from morning to afternoon on a daily basis until the baby is delivered. This will have a psychological and emotional effect on them. However, while discriminatory and inhumane, such practice would only be possible among the poor, where the mothers do not work. If they work, they may lose their jobs if they take such extended leave beyond the normal 15 working days allowed for annual leave. Such advice seems more punitive to the mothers, without considering their dignity, health or inclement weather and safety of having to wait at a school gate.

Parental involvement should be key in the safety of their children; hence the assumption that they must be available at school on a daily basis. The principals answered the question of parent availability at school in a number of ways. Principal 3 said that during examinations the parent of the pregnant learner must report to

school daily so that the learner cannot miss the examination. Principal 2 said that from the seventh to eighth month of pregnancy the mother of the pregnant learner must come to school with her daughter every day to wait for the child at school and, if it is during the examination, she must always be available because teachers are not allowed to tell the child to stay home because she is pregnant. Principal 5 said that when the learner is about eight to nine months pregnant, they usually call the parents to come to school so that the mother can look after her pregnant daughter. Until they give birth, the pregnant learner has to be allowed at school. *“There is no way one can chase them away; one cannot even reprimand her because she is pregnant.”* (Principal 6). Principal 8 said, *“Now the parents cannot take or remove the girl for a certain period until she gives birth, it will mean during the eighth month, when the child comes to school, the parents must accompany her so that when the learner is experiencing labour pains the parent could attend to her instantly”.*

Principals 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 were in agreement that, when the pregnant child is about seven to nine months pregnant, the parent of the learner must report to school on a daily basis ensuring that if the child goes into labour, she can be urgently assisted. They obviously assume that the mother will know what to do and will have transport available to take the child to hospital. Principals and teachers are not allowed to assist learners who are about to give birth because they are not trained for that and, if any mishap should happen, the individual teacher may be held accountable. Parents are therefore the ones who are called upon to help in case help is needed. It is surprising that no suggestion is made to have the school nurse take on this role, or where there is no school nurse available, that the principal or the class teachers call an ambulance to take the learner to a hospital. A nurse or doctor would surely be better equipped particularly in an urban area to handle such a situation than a non-qualified parent, considering possible complications with delivery. This practice, as has been indicated earlier, is contrary to the MPMLP, even though participants claim that it is the policy of the Department of Basic Education.

4.4.3.2 Support, advice, and responsibility among the stakeholders

All learners, irrespective of the state of their pregnancy, deserve to be supported and advised, whether their pregnancy was planned or unplanned. Pregnancy among teenage learners may be morally unacceptable in light of the moral convictions of many members of society. A range of normative assumptions about what young people should or should not do with respect to sexuality and reproductions are at play and are infused by the dominant moral, cultural and ideological positions on pregnancy, parenting and families of a particular society, culture or group (Shefer *et al.*, 2012:872).

The researcher asked the learners who supported them during after having fallen pregnant and why they thought these people supported them. Learner 2 said that her mother supported her unconditionally and in fact she thought that she did not deserve to be supported. Learner 3 said that she appreciated the support from her mother and her uncle. She also stated that she received all the advice and help needed. Learner 4 said, *“My parents acknowledged that anybody makes mistakes and as parents, I know it was not easy for them to understand that these things can happen, they have a heart for parenthood and it’s not easy to deal with these things at home. So as parents they have a forgiving heart and things continue”*.

Parents or family members have a duty to support and advise the pregnant learner, even if they do not condone what she has done, but because they want to be there for them in their time of need. All the learners indicated that their parents or family members supported them, irrespective of their pregnancy and that gave them an opportunity to look into the future. At school, it is the responsibility of both the teachers and principals to advise and support the pregnant learner so that she may not give up her future dreams and do well in her academic work. It is the duty of the teacher to construct this young mind and life instead of destroying her. Although the parents supported these pregnant girls and forgave them for the wrong they did in terms of their group morality, even if they did not condone the actions, their support was based on the fact that they want their learner to succeed and realise their academic ambitions.

4.4.4 Challenges relating to policy (MPMLP) implementation in public schools

It is generally known that the democratic era has brought with it good educational policies, but the challenge is still their implementation. While the policy arena is broadly supportive of enabling teenage girls to remain in school while pregnant and return to school sometime after having had the baby, implementation seems to remain a significant barrier. Morrell, Bhana, and Shefer (2012:19) noted, the legislative environment is not an automatic driver of gender equality in schools. There are insufficient consequences for schools, principals and governing bodies, if the policies are not known or ignored.

The way schools manage and implement policies is often influenced by communities and families, and this often affords people an opportunity to apply their own morals and values to implementation. Implementation is filtered through people's own views on teenage sexuality, and beliefs about appropriate norms for girls and boys. This has led to many violations of these policies (Shefer, 2012). If such policies are not communicated, open for inspection or not implemented, the problem of teenage pregnancies cannot be addressed.

4.4.4.1 Lack of Knowledge of MPMLP

The MPMLP cannot be implemented by the stakeholders concerned if they do not know this policy or if they do not believe that such policy is a legal requirement for all stakeholders. Only two of the principals the researcher interviewed have a basic knowledge of the policy, while 22 participants were ignorant of the contents of the policy or even its existence. Most teachers and principals have just heard about such policy but have never seen it. Some confuse the MPMLP with a school-based teenage pregnancy policy developed by a particular SGBs but in the main this policy (MPMLP) is not known by the participants. It appears as if this policy was launched by government without appropriate implementation strategies.

The researcher asked the participants whether they allowed learners who had given birth to immediately return to school. Teacher 1 said that they did not allow learners to return to school immediately if it was reported that she had given birth. Learners were given a month to recuperate, even though this period was not stipulated anywhere in the Policy. Parents had to provide documents to support that such learner was on leave of absence giving birth and could continue with her school work later because they did not want to deny them the right to education after giving birth. Teacher 2 supported the sentiments echoed by Teacher 1 when she said that they allowed the child to come back to school after four weeks.

Teacher 1 suggested that the parent and the school management could handle the issue on humanitarian terms, which did not have to depart from policy. The period these pregnant learners were absent from school was not regulated because different periods were chosen by different schools. Teacher 5 said that if they were to implement policy they would have no learners left at school and the school would not be viable. The implication of the statement above is that few learners will remain at school because of the higher numbers of pregnancy in the school indicated. Some learners will drop out of school while others will remain at home for two years taking care of the baby.

Implementation of this policy is filtered through people's own views on teenage sexuality, and beliefs about what should be appropriate girls' and boys' norms. The study conducted by Willan (2013:39) noted that, in many cases, policy violations were not only about moral objections to the policies or ignorance of them. In some cases, principals and teachers did not know how to implement them, even when they wished to do so. Some teachers noted the lack of training and professional help available to them as teachers to assist them in supporting the girls. However, in this study, it was obviously lack of access to the policies and knowing what they contained that led to most of the subjective interpretations by each school principal in addition to making their own 'comfortable' rules.

4.4.4.2 Institutional and infrastructural incapacity to handle pregnant learners

SA schools are not in a state where they can deal efficiently and effectively with the challenges of learner pregnancy. Concerns that 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 (Runhare, 2010). All educators and principals, supported by some of the interviewed parents raised the concern 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. They also lacked the necessary human resources (for example an in-house school nurse) and infrastructure.

The researcher asked teachers how they identified the pregnant learners at school and how they dealt with them. Teacher 4 said she could not confront any learner who was pregnant or alleged to be pregnant. Teacher 3 said, *"They don't come sometimes because we know them; you just see that this learner is pregnant"*. Teacher 5 responded that these learners do not inform them and as such they identify them very late. Teacher 6 said,

Yesterday, there was a learner who rushed to my staffroom asking for help. She said 'there is an acute pain just below my abdomen' and because she was nine months pregnant, we allowed her to go home, knowing that she was in labour pain. As teachers we are not allowed to be midwives".

Teacher 7 said, *"I usually use my maternal skills, in the beginning she will at first not agree, but ultimately she will agree because there will be some physical changes"*.

Female educators in particular are the ones who are capable of more readily identifying pregnant learners. Some teachers noted the lack of training and professional help available to them to assist them in supporting the girls (Willan, 2013). Teachers must be multi-gifted in that their job includes identifying, counselling and also assisting in case an emergency occurs. Teachers are not allowed to physically assist in case of an emergency or actual labour setting in. However,

circumstances sometimes demand that they find themselves having to take these learners to the clinic, hospital or home.

These schools do not have sick rooms, clinic sections, social workers, ambulances and conducive infrastructure suitable for a sick or pregnant learner to be taken care of. It would be much easier for schools to cater for pregnant learners, if the Department of Basic Education were to provide the resources for the integration of pregnant learners into the education system. Principal 4 stated that they were expected to have a very clean, clinical society that knew what needed to be done and did that exactly and correctly. He felt that schools should be provided with social workers, health practitioners to take care of health issues, psychological issues and rooms should be made available for consultation to be able to be offered there. Principal 7 said,

I think we'll keep calling the nurses and people who experienced this problem. Maybe it will help because they even tell us the repercussion, maybe the learners will improve.

Principal 7 agreed with Principal 4 that human resources and physical resources needed serious attention, if they were to keep pregnant learners at their schools. Their school infrastructure was not designed to accommodate pregnant learners without such extra human and physical resources.

The researcher's observations based on the interviews are that pregnant learners are treated the same as all other learners who are not pregnant even though there is a vast difference. The school community wants to embrace and accommodate pregnancy as a normal thing even though they know that these pregnant learners have many issues and challenges that disturb them. Pregnant learners should be afforded an opportunity to attend schools that are suitable for their condition, meaning schools with the needed infrastructure.

4.4.4.3 Lack of parental involvement, advocacy and support

Parents should be far more involved in the lives of their children to give guidance, support and so help shape their children into responsible adults. Most importantly, parents as the primary caregivers of children must be actively involved in the education and social welfare of their children. The inception of a new democracy has brought with it some tendencies, whereby parental involvement and accountability was shifted to government and teachers at schools. Parents who are well informed on policies and resource allocation in the education sector, and involved in decision-making regarding their children, can exert considerable influence and contribute solutions to challenges in the education system (Modisaotsile, 2012).

However, there seems to be a vacuum in the lives of many children and they live as if they do not have parents. During the researcher's interviews with several stakeholders, he enquired as to whether parents support or are involved in the lives of their children? Teacher 6 said,

What we are doing as school is to encourage and plead with parents to come and attend every meeting we are trying to call at our school so that we can try to make them aware of our situation because most of the parents do not come to meetings, even if is at the time of collecting reports. Instead, they send somebody who is a relative to come and collect them.

Teacher 2 said, *"In this village, most of the learners are staying with their grandparents, they are not staying with their parents and their parents are working far. They are staying with their grandparents who cannot take care of those teenagers"*.

Parental support must be given to all teachers in schools so that there is no gap between parents and teachers. The project of building, moulding and shaping a learner is all inclusive and it needs all stakeholders to fully participate. According to Modisaotsile (2012:3), involved communities are able to articulate local school needs, hold officials accountable and mobilise local resources to fill gaps when

government response is not adequate. All communities should value education for their children. Teachers 7 and 8 agreed that there is a general tendency for parents not to support the teachers and learners as required. They opt to stay away and remain passive in the schooling of their children. Parents must be involved in the “policy-making” process, and education must be governed by policies to which parents have agreed. Education as a public good, therefore, must not only be valued by the community, but must be advanced and protected or preserved to ensure a better future for all (Modisaotsile, 2012:3).

It is vital to have advocacy workshops, wherein all stakeholders can be informed, and capacitated on matters and issues affecting their children such as teenage pregnancy and policies involved. This advocacy must be done at local level, district level and provincial level to ensure that everybody is involved and everyone's views are expressed and documented. As has been mentioned, this is the responsibility of all community role-players and stakeholders, as well as the educational institutions themselves.

4.4.5 Recommendations on policy implementation

In the course of these interviews with different stakeholders, participants gave different opinions and inputs on how teenage pregnancy policy can be implemented in SA's schools. If implemented, some of these recommendations can go a long way toward ensuring maximum participation by stakeholders. According to Mthethwa (2012), policy implementation refers to the mechanisms, resources and relationships that link policies to programme action. More specifically, it means to intend to carry out, accomplish, fulfil, produce or complete a given task. Any policy is shaped by the context, in which it was designed, and its success depends on the willingness of policy makers and policy implementers to ensure that the desired goals are achieved. Principals, teachers, parents and learners interviewed showed willingness to suggest different recommendations, which are paving a way for better implementation of a teenage pregnancy policy.

4.4.5.1 Organise workshops for stakeholders

A workshop is a period of discussion or practical work on a particular subject in which a group of people share their knowledge or experience in intensive discussion (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/workshop> accessed on 27 July 2018). The policy must not only be distributed to all schools (with principals and teachers having access to and training on such policy) but also to parents and learners to let them know what is really contained in this document so that all parties can sign to show they have noted the content of the policy. In this way, the policy can be implemented (Principal 2). Teacher 3 said that the department must organise workshops about this policy in order to capacitate all stakeholders. However, Teacher 1 said that even if you make copies available to educators they will not read it. Their interest is only in content of teaching their subjects. Unless workshops are organised somewhere and teachers are encouraged to attend and are given this manual or policy and discuss this policy, nothing will happen.

Principal 6 said that the circuit office and district office must visit every school to educate parents and educators because they are not aware of the policy, what it means and how it is to be implemented. The Department of Basic Education should conduct workshops wherein all the stakeholders are present; it will bring to the attention of all stakeholders the existence of the policy, how to deal with learner pregnancy and how to implement the Policy (Principal 8). However, there is a strong possibility that only principals and a handful of teachers will attend. Learners will be too shy to express their opinions in the presence of principals, many parents will be absent and teachers will only execute what they are instructed to do by the principals. Most of the stakeholders will say that they cannot implement such or any other policy as they are not responsible for pregnant teenagers, they do not have the training, are not accountable and do not have the resources.

4.4.5.2 Advocacy of the MPLMP

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to express their views and concerns, have access to information and services, being able to defend and

promote their rights and responsibilities, and explore their choices and various options (<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/advocacy> accessed 15/June/2018). Teacher 6 said that the Department of Education should start liaising with municipalities, whereby counsellors arrange meetings with communities and are informed about the teenage pregnancy policy at the school. This is in an attempt to get the stakeholders involved in the drafting of school policies because many parents do not want to be involved in their children's education. This was evident recently during 2018 SGB elections in most schools, where parents could not quorate.

4.4.5.3 Make available copies of the policy to all stakeholders

Parent 2 said that government must ensure that this policy is distributed to all stakeholders. Principals must call for community meetings in order to brief them. Teacher 3 said, *"I think, if the Circuit Office can give it to the schools, then we will be aware of it"*. *"The principal must have this document so that copies can be made available to all teachers; a community meeting must be organised so that parents and learners can be addressed about this policy"* (Teacher 5). *"The proper channels must be followed, that is to give out the circulars from head office to circuits and schools and, alternatively, we could access policies online"* (Teacher 7).

4.4.5.4 Invite parents to school meetings and workshops

Learner 3 said, *"I think they should send people to school to tell us about it so that teachers can inform us as learners and they should call parents' meeting so that our parents can be well informed"*. Parent 4 said *"The principal himself had to inform us about these things right now so that all learners should know in advance"*. The parent recommended that the school must call a meeting so that all parents or stakeholders can engage in this scenario. Parent 3 said, *"As I said earlier, in our schools, we have SGBs that can call parent meetings in order to engage them"*. Teacher 8 said, *"I would give each stakeholder the policy document because some of us are not aware of it"*.

4.4.5.5 Provide infrastructure and human resources

Principal 4 said, *“The Department of Education must provide social workers, health practitioners, infrastructure, and rooms for consultation and a conducive environment for teaching”*.

4.4.5.6 The presence of parents in the lives of teenagers daily

Teacher 8 said, *“The first thing is to educate more in the classroom, secondly to get parents involved in their children's lives because I feel like these children feel a certain vacuum in their lives”*.

4.4.5.7 Social media

Social media is defined as the colonisation of the space between traditional broadcast and private dyadic communication, providing people with a scale of group size and degrees of privacy that we have termed scalable sociality (Miller et al, 2016:9). Further Miller *at all*, 2016:9 indicates that social media should not be seen primarily as the platforms upon which people post, but rather as the contents that are posted on these platforms and be used as a place within which we socialise, not just a means of communication.

Learner 2 said, “I think the policy should be put on social media because we prefer social media to the news; so if they put it on different places everybody will get access to it”.

The recommendations made by the various stakeholders interviewed can go some way towards ensuring that this policy is being implemented consistently. There is consensus among the participants on a number of recommendations, which include calling parents meetings and workshops with stakeholders. According to Mthethwa (2012), policy implementation is not necessarily a coherent, continuous process; instead, it is frequently fragmented and interrupted. Implementation involves an

ongoing process of decision-making by key actors who work in complex policy and institutional contexts and face pressures from interested as well as opposing parties. There will be areas where stakeholders will differ about the approaches that may seem suitable for the implementation of policy. One of the learners made the important contribution that to reach the younger generation, one needs to use social media, which can play a positive role in ensuring that they access the policy. The various implementation methods and strategies should consider the actual stakeholders and how best to reach them, ensuring that they complement each other for the success of this policy.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented the empirical data gathered from interviews with participants, observations and available documentary records on pregnant learners. The major purpose of the chapter was to investigate and explore the various role-players' views on the implementation of MPMLP in public schools. The role-players interviewed ranged from the principals, teachers, parents and learners coming from the town schools, township schools, village schools and informal settlements schools. This inclusive approach enabled the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding into the factors that cause learner pregnancy and how policy implementation can assist in reducing the teenage pregnancy rate.

Data were presented and analysed following five interrelated themes, namely knowledge of the Pregnant Learner Policy (MPMLP), management of pregnant learners at the public schools, the involvement, co-operation and participation of stakeholders in the lives of pregnant learners, challenges relating to policy (MPMLP) implementation in public schools and recommendations on policy implementation. The next chapter will cover an overview, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

OVERVIEW, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to investigate role-players' views on the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy (MPMLP) in public schools (DoE, 2007) and its implementation in public schools. The role-players interviewed in this study were principals, teachers, parents and learners who gave their views pertaining to teenage pregnancy in schools and how that challenge can be managed or controlled, especially through the introduction of the pregnancy policy. The issues explored included whether this policy is known among the role-players, how far it has been implemented and how can it assist in reducing the rate of pregnancy in SA's schools.

The emphasis was on the right to education of the pregnant learner, and the roles of the other stakeholders in assisting the pregnant girl during pregnancy, while she is still attending school. The researcher examined the factors that contributed toward the high pregnancy rate and how different policies and strategies dealt with teenage pregnancy. To examine the factors that contributed towards the high rate of learner pregnancy, the researcher employed a qualitative research plan and approaches in collecting the data required to respond to the research questions. The data were obtained through interviews, documents and observation, which were later analysed through thematic analysis, categorised into five themes.

In Chapter 5, the researcher focuses on the five themes indicated in Chapter 4 in light of the aims highlighted in Chapter 1. The researcher concludes this report by summarising the recommendations articulated by study participants and by offering his own recommendations in light of the findings and conclusions.

5.2 Overview

Chapter 1 stated the aim of this research study, namely to investigate the role-players' views on the management of the MPMLP and its implementation in public schools. The key question that drove the study was,

- What are role-players' views on the implementation of MPMLP in public schools?

The researcher formulated sub-questions that were of great assistance in answering this key research question, which provided an introduction to the literature review and gave a broad outline of the research design and methods.

Chapter 2 dealt with the constitutional rights of the pregnant learner and an international perspective on learner pregnancy policies. It analysed the literature to establish what the extent of knowledge in this regard is and also to identify in-depth in the literature that could inform the study.

The researcher discussed the research design and methods used in the study in Chapter 3. The researcher employed a qualitative case study with the appropriate data-collection methods encompassing interviews, documents and observation methods that helped him to obtain an in-depth understanding of different role-players' views on the management and implementation of this policy. Chapter 4 presented the data collected through interviews with 24 participants and other methods under five themes, (see Table 4.3: Themes and Categories that Emerged from the Analysis).

5.3 Findings

The study revealed that participants acknowledge that pregnant learners have a legal right to education in terms of the Constitution of South Africa of 1996, SASSA, 84 of 1996 and MPMLP (DoE, 2007). However, most of them do not know the pregnancy policy, which could assist them in managing pregnant learners and preventing or reducing the high rate of learner pregnancy in public schools. Lack of knowledge of the MPMLP is one of the major reasons that hinder the implementation of this policy in public schools. The timeous completion of curriculum and attainment

of good results could theoretically suffer if school management spends a lot of time addressing non-curriculum issues such as teenage learner pregnancy, leave of absence and the intervention of parents and health workers in the school environment, if they do not have clear rules and regulations as to how to deal with pregnant learners and who is responsible for what and when.

The promulgation of the learner pregnancy policy in 2007 by the Minister of Education assumed that all stakeholders would have full knowledge about the policy. The Minister, HOD and MEC for Education relied on all stakeholders receiving, reading, understanding and correctly applying SASA, the MPMLP, the Constitution of South Africa (1996) and other related legislation and policies within the education and school environment. Prior to this research, the researcher had also assumed that educators, principals and some educated parents could easily understand and apply this policy, but the reality is that very few have seen the policy and of the few who have, some have misinterpreted it.

The Department of Education did not consider the fact that new teachers are not inducted and workshopped about the new policies. The newly appointed principals and HODs are also not taken on board in acquainting them with these new policies and legislations. Language barriers (the policy is only available in English) could also play a role in that many principals and teachers, particularly those in rural areas, are not that comfortable with reading and understanding the policy document.

Some participants indicated that some stakeholders are not interested in the policy or its implementation. This attitude, together with limited access to or knowledge of the contents, led principals and teachers to use their own discretion in resolving issues related to teenage pregnancy. In some instances, schools formulate their own policies parallel to the MPMLP in order to address the teenage pregnancy situation and in the process create more problems than solutions. Findings from the interviews and documents suggest that principals address the challenges related to teenage pregnancy differently from one school to another because there is no common reference or application.

Through the interaction with the Department of Education officials in Limpopo at district and circuit levels, the researcher became aware that this policy is not known, let alone implemented. There seemed to be some indication that these stakeholders did not participate in any manner in the original formulation of this policy. It therefore seems that Department of Basic Education in Limpopo should intensify policy training and advocacy to all stakeholders.

The majority of principals and teachers did not want to get too deeply involved with teenage pregnancies at their schools, they felt they did not have the time or the capacity to deal with such pregnancies and were hiding behind the claim that there could potentially be legal claims in case something should go wrong with the delivery. It did not occur to them that they could just call for help from a local nurse, clinic or hospital. Informal settlement schools or village schools may be too far away from any such infrastructure. However, this argument does not apply to schools in towns or urban areas. Some educators were also hiding behind their gender, where they felt they could not handle the situation of teenage pregnancies; they wanted the child's mother called to the school to deal with the matter. Again, the gender shield repeats itself, as the pregnant learner's boyfriend, equally 'guilty' of causing the pregnancy, is only in the rarest situations called to sacrifice as much as the girl will have to sacrifice. While sexual activity is still being glamorised by the media and peer groups, and stereotypes of female and male roles and responsibilities do not change, it will be difficult to create a neutral attitude to pregnant teenage girls. Therefore, many principals and teachers are hesitant to divulge the truth about how teenage learners are treated in their schools or what was happening in their schools as they try to protect themselves and their colleagues.

It is evident that, for any successful implementation of the learner pregnancy policy, the Department of Education must consider visiting communities and those schools with the highest teenage pregnancy rates in villages and townships to make this process more inclusive. Community leaders, counsellors and churches must take the lead to ensure that everybody has a chance to contribute to this process, together with parents and guardians. They should make this policy available in all official languages, and not only in English. The effective implementation of the learner pregnancy policy aims to enhance and improve the academic results of SA's

schools, with all stake-holders as active participants in the process. However, until all obstacles to the policy's acceptance are removed, it will not play a major role in this scenario.

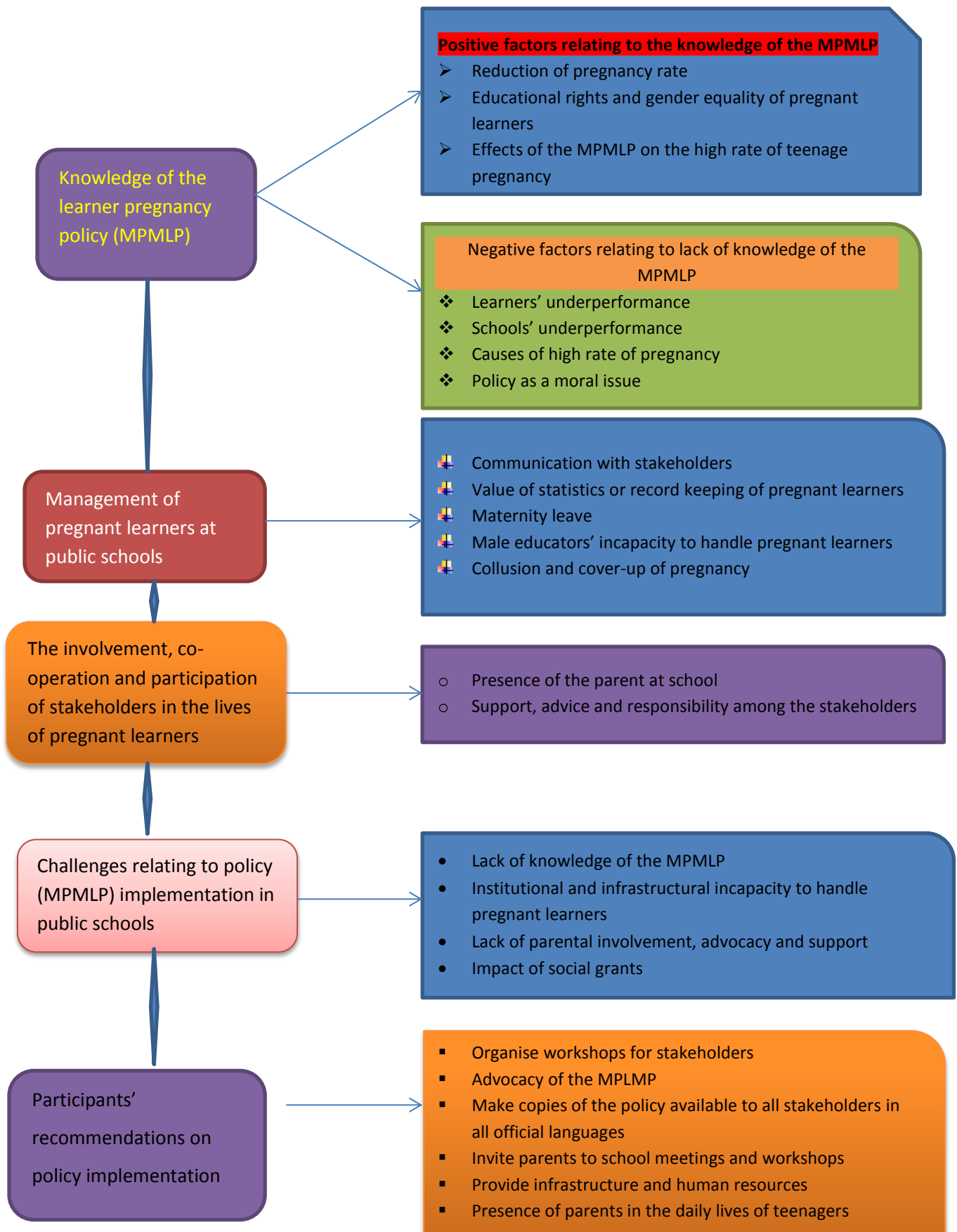
The highest prevalence of teenage pregnancy is in rural schools, followed by informal settlement schools and then township schools and town schools. The prevalence of poverty, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and non-caring parents all play a crucial role in the high rate of pregnancy among teenage learners. These learners are competing against each other for early experimentation with drugs, alcohol and sexual activities. They naively believe that the child support grant, which government is paying, will allow them to have spending money, not thinking that they will need this money to look after the baby. Many of these teenagers have not learnt from positive role-models what it is to hold on to high values and morals, work hard, and be responsible and accountable for one's actions. This reflects among many of them the absence of parents in families or child-headed families, parents that are not involved with their children and sometimes do not even notice if their daughters are pregnant.

The high teenage pregnancy rate in schools is a national and international challenge that calls upon parents to avail themselves in the lives of their children, assist principals in drafting their school pregnancy policies and engage with other stakeholders in advocating the learners' pregnancy policy known as MPMLP.

5.4 Five themes that emerged from the data analysis

5.4.1 Summary of themes and findings

Figure 5.1: below is a summary of themes and findings as captured from the responses to the questions asked of the 24 participants.



There are five themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with 24 participants, representing various stakeholders at eight public schools in the Polokwane Cluster in the Limpopo Province. These participants gave their earnest views pertaining to the management and implementation of teenage pregnancies. Very few of them knew of the MPMLP or even the policy content.

5.4.1.1 Knowledge of the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP)

As articulated in Chapters 1 to 4, the stakeholders were assumed to have a thorough knowledge of the pregnancy policy so that it could be comprehensively implemented in SA's public schools.

However, the policy is basically unknown. Attitudes towards a pregnancy policy are informed by both positive and negative factors. The positive factors relate to the fact that knowledge of such policy could result in the reduction of the teenage pregnancy rate and it could also promote the educational rights of all learners and enhance gender equality of pregnant learners.

However, only two of the eight principals knew the policy. Even though they had not seen or read the actual policy, they had a vague idea what it contains and associated the MPMLP with some positive effects. By applying some of the elements of the MPMLP, the level of pregnancy in their schools is lower than in others and there is mutual understanding and teamwork between the school management and parents.

Of the total sample of 24 participants, 22 do not know the MPMLP, which must be implemented in schools to assist in the reduction and management of pregnant learners. The lack of knowledge of the policy has severe negative consequences for the learners who need to be guided by the informed stakeholders. A study conducted by Willan (2013) found that most educators and principals reflected ignorance about the MPMLP policy, to the extent that some learners were encouraged to report for school a week after giving birth. One is reminded of what the Bible says in the book of Hosea, chapter 4 verse 6: "My people perish because of lack of knowledge".

Pregnant learners at schools where educators do not know the pregnancy policy or have insufficient knowledge of it suffer from underperformance, which leads to underperformance of the total school. It is suggested that the implementation of this policy in its current form leads to it being questioned regarding among others moral and discipline factors. Pregnant learners are allowed to attend school, leading to some learners believing that there is nothing wrong with their conduct, having early sexual experimentation and falling pregnant.

5.4.1.2 Management of pregnant learners at public schools

According to the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 and the MPMLP, pregnant learners are allowed to continue with their studies. They can remain at school until they give birth. While they are still at school, the challenge is how they are going to be taken care of and managed by teachers. It is evident from the research that teachers are hesitant when it comes to the question of taking care of pregnant learners. The Department of Education has not capacitated them for teenage pregnancies in class and in the schools. The Department of Basic Education should strive to ensure that schools are equipped to deal with the many challenges related to learner pregnancy (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). Parents are encouraged by school management to assist in taking care of their pregnant children, especially when they are seven to nine months pregnant. Teachers (especially male teachers) claim they are not capable of assisting pregnant learners, and state that they are also not allowed to assist the pregnant learner in the event of a complication during pregnancy or sudden delivery of the baby. They also believe that it interferes with their own primary task as educators. Therefore, in contradiction to the policy, they delegate the responsibility of the pregnant learner back to the parent, the mother. There is no infrastructure for pregnant learners at schools. There are no school nurses, sick rooms or rest rooms.

While it does not solve the issue of how to handle pregnant learners at school, it is nevertheless important that stakeholders must communicate with one another and the school management should try to keep in touch with the learners' parents and vice versa. Communication is vital in ensuring that both the parents and school management are updated about the pregnancy development of the learner. The

schools should also be forced to keep statistics on pregnant learners in their official records, which must assist the school to assess their progress in the fight against the high rate of teenage pregnancy. These numbers should not remain statistics but should turn into meaningful information and intelligence to assist the school in dealing with the issue. On a provincial and national level, such statistics (as long as they are complete and accurate) can also assist government when new policies are drafted and programmes are designed to solve the problems. They can then also be focused on specific aspects of the problem, specific areas and socio-economic features.

Expectant learners must be permitted to remain at school until shortly before giving birth in terms of the MPMLP, but the period is not specified and is not classified as maternity leave. The study has indicated that some learners want to be treated like their teachers, who qualify for four months' maternity leave, while others would only want to be away from school for about two weeks up to a month. However, there is no such category as maternity leave for pregnant learners, while it would actually make sense for them to stay home for two months before giving birth and two months thereafter. This would also solve the unlawful and inappropriate rule that the pregnant learner's mother is supposed to accompany her to school for the last two months of her pregnancy.

Some parents decide to hide the pregnancy of their children by not divulging the truth to the school management. They instead make up fictitious stories when confronted by the school as to why the child is not reporting at school and this cover tends to be exposed at a later stage.

5.4.1.3 The involvement, co-operation and participation of stakeholders in the lives of pregnant learners

Pregnant learners must be taken care of at all times in order to avoid miscarriages or complications during pregnancy. According to the research, some schools make arrangements with parents to report to school daily when their learner is between seven to nine months pregnant. This shifts the responsibility of the pregnant learner

back to the parent because teachers claim they are not allowed to assist the child, even just to call for medical assistance. The involvement and participation of parents in the lives of their children then eases the pressure that schools carry, even if this is a short-term solution that cries in the face of gender equality. It is evident that most parents comply to report their daughters' pregnancy to schools, while very few do not come and report to the school when their child is pregnant or co-operate with schools as expected.

The participation of parents in the lives of their children goes a long way in ensuring that proper support and advice are infused in the process. The support indicated embraces supporting the girl learner even after giving birth, whereby the mother of the girl child assumes the role of a caregiver. It is evident in the study that girl learners struggle with their academic work after giving birth because they play a dual role, being a learner and a mother to an infant. However, the expectation from the school that a parent will take over such role is futile, where the girl comes from a child-headed household, where parents are absent or work long hours. As it is, most women already cope with several roles in their lives: a full-time job as well as being wife and mother, often caregiver for elderly parents/in-laws as well as their role in churches and communities. Fathers or males in general, seldom feature in these roles if they live in traditional, male-dominated households and communities.

5.4.1.4 Challenges relating to policy (MPMLP) implementation in public schools

The successful implementation of this policy relies heavily on whether participants and stakeholders know the MPMLP. The researcher earlier indicated that most of the participants did not know this policy and so did not implement it because one cannot implement what one does not know. The school infrastructure and capacity were not designed to accommodate and handle pregnant learners. There are no sick rooms in which sick learners and pregnant learners can be accommodated when the need arises. The schools do not have ready access to social workers, nurses, psychologists, ambulances or clinics on site to take care of sick or pregnant learners who might experience labour pains. In the absence of the necessary infrastructure and health practitioners, parents are called upon to show support and be involved. It

is, however, evident from the study that advocacy of this policy has not been done by either the school management or the Department of Basic Education.

Some participants indicated that the high rate of teenage pregnancy in rural villages and informal settlements is as a result of the social grants these teenagers receive monthly from the government. The general sentiments and perception by participants suggest that the availability of, and access to social welfare benefits is the cause of the rise in teenage pregnancy as teenagers look for easy access to spending money, be it via social grants or even 'blessers'. However, Makiwane *et al.* (2006) believes that there is no proof to back the public opinion that young girls are falling pregnant merely so they can entitlement to the childcare allowance. The researcher felt that even though social grants were intended to alleviate poverty in the poor communities, this is only minimally realised. The reality is that many learners become pregnant because they hope that social grants will assist them in ensuring that they get money to address their basic human needs as well as giving them spending money. Therefore, indirectly, such social grants can encourage teenage pregnancy in the villages and informal settlements. Many young girls may also live with the romantic notion that their boyfriend will keep on loving them if they fall pregnant or even marry them and thereafter look after them. The reality is unfortunately that, if the father of the child-to-be is a teenager himself, he will not be able to support the mother of his child for a very long time to come.

5.4.1.5 Recommendations on policy implementation

The purpose of recommendations is to address the current lack of policy implementation. All the stakeholders and participants acknowledged that for the policy to succeed there must be various corrective steps taken that must be fully implemented. The majority of stakeholders and participants acknowledged that this policy is not known and as such they had to come up with different methods to address their own problems regarding teenage pregnancies at their schools. Below is a list of some of the steps to be taken as recommended by the participants:

- Organise workshops for stakeholders that address the problem and solutions;
- Present the MPLMP and explain all its rules and regulations;

- Make copies of the policy available to all stakeholders in the official languages;
- Invite parents to school meetings and workshops;
- Provide infrastructure and human resources that address the specific problems encountered in these schools if not on site, then the closest access to the relevant resources;
- Address the role of the parents in the lives of their children, particularly regarding supervision, education of life skills and the topic of sexual activity/contraception/pregnancy/consequences;
- Revisit the role of male and female teachers regarding teenage pregnancy and provide adequate training in first aid;
- Have spelled out clear rules regarding 'maternity leave/absence' as to the length of such absence prior to and after delivery;
- Reconsider gender equality issues among principals, teachers and parents and their roles regarding learners and particularly pregnant learners.

5.5 Responding to Research Questions

Research Question 1

5.5.1 What are the views of the role-players regarding the learner pregnancy policy?

Most participants, in fact 22 of them indicated that they do not know the teenage pregnancy policy, which was promulgated by the DoE in 2007. They argued that this policy was drafted without their inputs and there was no advocacy about this policy, especially in the rural provinces such as Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, where the rate of teenage pregnancies is very high.

Only two school principals knew of the policy, but they were unsure as to

- The length of time that pregnant learners will spend at home after giving birth;
- The logistics of the formal tasks that must be given to learners while at home;

- How their school should actually manage pregnant learners while at school, if they were nauseous, had early contractions or experienced complications during pregnancy;
- How to overcome the infrastructural incapacity to accommodate these pregnant learners, without having access to school nurses, social workers, clinics, or similar medical/health services.

Furthermore, there were also sentiments that such a policy could encourage more teenage pregnancies among learners, ill-discipline of learners and moral decay as there were no consequences in the event they fell pregnant. The policy also seems to focus on the pregnant girl child and exonerates the boy child who is allowed to continue with his studies.

While all participants acknowledged that pregnant learners have the right to education, there is a consensus that teachers are not trained to take care of pregnant learners and this put a lot of pressure and burden on the teachers who are sometimes expected to assist in case of emergency in class or the school.

Research Question 2

5.5.2 What are the views of the role-players in terms of the extent to which the policy has been successfully implemented?

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented the finding that only two school principals knew the policy, which translates into less than 10% of all interviewed school principals. They confirmed that the MPMLP is implemented in their schools. The researcher recognised that the rate of learner pregnancy in these two schools is lower; teachers know their role in terms of the extent to which they can assist pregnant learners. However, the policy is only partially implemented as there are certain aspects that are not implemented according to the letter of the policy and they compromise certain rules such as the length of time the learner must spend at home after giving birth.

Research Question 3

5.5.3 What are the factors that enable or hinder the implementation of the policy?

When responding to question 3, participants focused on the factors that hinder the implementation of this policy. The major impediment to the policy's implementation was that it was practically unknown. No policy can be implemented if it is not known. Some participants claimed to know (of) the policy, but they confused the MPMLP with a school-based policy drafted by the SGBs, SASA and the Constitution of South Africa, 1996.

Teachers and principals are not trained to handle pregnant learners at schools and claim that they are not allowed to assist pregnant learners in case of an emergency. This attitude stems from a circular communicated by the Circuit Managers in the Limpopo cluster that states if any 'mishap can happen during the time the pregnant learner is assisted then that teacher is accountable'. Schools are not provided with nurses, social workers and psychologist who are trained to handle the pregnant learners. In essence, teachers and principals do not have the infrastructural capacity to accommodate pregnant learners; there are no sick rooms, rest rooms or mobile clinics, which could have made these situations more workable. If learners are to be allowed to continue with their education while pregnant, then there must also be the provision of adequate support to alleviate the burden on teachers.

Parents play a fundamental role in the implementation of the policy. Without these important stakeholders all the attempts at ensuring that the policy succeeds will be futile. When parents are involved from the beginning in the formulation of this policy, they could have a better understanding and full knowledge of this policy. Stakeholders need one another to ensure that the support system is fully maintained and learners get the optimal learning experience.

Communication within the Department of Education is not very effective, and the sending out of messages from the higher authorities to the lower levels of governance leaves much to be desired. The bureaucracy itself is dysfunctional,

unmanaged to the extent that protocol is not observed in some instances. The researcher established that 22 of these stakeholders had never seen the policy document; they had never been workshopped and had never received a word or communicate from the higher authorities relating to the MPMLP. Policy implementation happens as a result of clear policy guidelines that have been communicated between the provincial office and the district office, between the circuit office and the schools. However, regarding the MPMLP, that line function seems to be non-existent.

Research Question 4

5.5.4 Why is the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy ineffective in some public schools?

The main reason why the implementation of this policy is ineffective is the fact that the policy is not known. In the few schools where principals have indicated their knowledge of this policy, they are selective in implementing the MPMLP and as such its desired goals are not realised. In addition, there is a lack of infrastructure stakeholders are not adequately capacitated.

Research Question 5

5.5.5 How is the learner pregnancy policy (MPMLP) implemented in some selected public schools?

The policy is only partially implemented in some schools and not in any of the others because the environment in which the participants are working is not conducive to its full implementation. There are clear signs of ignorance of the policy itself and no desire or willingness of wanting to know this policy since most participants are operating within their personal comfort zones. The implementation of this policy requires all stakeholders and participants to face up to a new reality where old society norms such as morals, abstinence until marriage or seeing parents as positive role-models no longer play a major role in teenagers' lives.

5.6 Conclusion about the Working Assumption

In Chapter 1, the researcher stated his working assumption for the outcome of the research as follows: Role-players are not familiar with the policy MPMLP even though they may indicate different views about what can cause teenage pregnancy. After analysing the data, the researcher came to the conclusion that the collected information proves that the working assumption has been correct to a large extent.

The study suggests that most participants do not know the teenage pregnancy policy and even those who claim to know it have inadequate knowledge of it. The awareness of this policy among stakeholders is lacking and this implies that this policy cannot be implemented until it is known and advocated to all stakeholders.

Pregnant girl learners are given leave of absence inconsistently by different schools because there is no adherence to the policy guidelines. They are given between two weeks to four months of leave of absence by some principals who claim that these learners are entitled to four months' leave like female educators.

Policy formulation should ideally be a process, in which all stakeholders and communities take part. The researcher observed that the line of communication and engagement by the Department of Basic Education leaves much to be desired. The Department of Basic Education uses emails and circulars to communicate with schools and other entities. The Department is aware of the fact that most people (including the parents of pregnant learners) do not have access to the internet and circulars, which in most cases are directed to schools. It is probably assumed that schools will convey the information to parents, but there is no evidence that this happens on a regular basis, if at all.

The government, through the Department of Basic Education, has a responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders are informed workshopped and thoroughly taken on board about the policy and all its details in order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding. In all the visited schools and where the researcher conducted interviews, learners did not know the pregnancy policy and its implications for their studies and future endeavours.

While the policy arena is broadly supportive of enabling teenage girls to remain in school while pregnant and return as mothers, implementation of the policy seems to have significant barriers (Morrell, Bhana, & Shefer, 2012:19). The focus is exclusively on the girl learner who carries the whole burden of the pregnancy, its consequences and is sometimes forced to drop out from school, while the boy learner does not carry any responsibility. The girl learner is also denied the opportunity to study further as she is to stay at home for a period of two years, taking care of the baby and that derails her from realising her future dreams and plans. It is also interesting to note that while a girl-child can only fall pregnant once in so many months, the boy could theoretically father many more children in that time, particularly if he does not have to carry any of the consequences.

Interestingly, the researcher also observed that there seemed to be a correlation between the competence of principals in leading the schools and the incidence of learner pregnancy in schools. This suggests that attention needs to be given to the training of principals for effective implementation of policies.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

As the researcher used individualised interviews in which participants from different stakeholder groups had to respond to questions asked about learner pregnancy policy, it became obvious that many participants did not want to tell the actual truth but instead just wanted to tell what they thought would be good stories for the purpose of the interview. Some participants were reserved; they protected their own image and integrity, the leadership of the school and the community at large. This topic is very sensitive. It was therefore difficult to get to the truth because sexual matters are taboo within most of the black communities.

The topic has a direct bearing on communities' belief systems in the sense that issues relating to sex should not be discussed with children as this would bring shame to both the parents and children. This topic speaks to the underlying morality, behaviour and cultural beliefs of certain communities. It was not easy to get some stakeholders to participate in these interviews because most of them wanted to hide their true convictions. The researcher struggled for about four months to find willing

participants, even though he had made prior arrangements with them. In many cases, there were a host of excuses why they could no longer participate and that impacted negatively on the research timeline and the travelling expenses.

However, the researcher used the opportunity to assure every participant that the interview was private, anonymous and the content of the interview would be kept confidential. The letter of invitation to individual participants outlined the confidentiality of the interview in detail. Researcher and participants co-signed the confidentiality letter in order to ascertain that what is contained in the letter would be kept true. The identity of the participants would never be revealed to anyone. The researcher also made sure that interviewees' belief systems, culture and morals were treated with respect. After several appointments did not materialise, the researcher decided to visit schools at the times when principals and teachers seemed busy, but they then made time available for him, while they sometimes did not respect prior appointments.

The researcher was able to visit parents and some learners in the comfort of their homes, where disturbance was minimal, after working hours. Individual parents were given individual attention, some were persuaded to express themselves in their own vernacular and that made them more confident, relaxed and able to share the information they had. Because of the environment in which they were approached, some learners shared their personal and more confidential issues quite freely, knowing that information was safe.

5.8 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research study implies the justification, importance or contribution of the study (de Vos, 2011). The study revealed that most stakeholders and participants are unaware of the pregnancy policy and therefore have no knowledge of its contents. The fact that most participants lack knowledge about pregnant policy demonstrates the need for policy advocacy and dissemination within the school environment. This could help stakeholders to identify important information, capacitate them, empower and enlighten everyone responsible within the confines of the policy concerning teenage pregnancy.

The process of policy formulation was flawed and there seemed to be a lack of coordination among the stakeholders and participants. Parents in particular, are very important stakeholders within the community without whom policy will not be communicated to learners and thus, the policy cannot be adequately implemented. Due to the fact that this policy is not known, understood and properly implemented, teenage girls are negatively affected, while boy learners are not accountable for their role. Some girl learners' drop out of school, while others spend a lot of time away from school due to leave of absence and that affects how they perform at the end of the year. The Limpopo Province and South Africa are potentially robbed of potentially successful sections of their generation, impacting negatively also on future generations, that could otherwise have contributed toward positive economic growth and development. Instead, these young mothers have to rely on social grants.

The researcher found direct links between the competence of some school principals and the degree to which their schools were able to provide proper support for female teenagers. It suggests that there is a need for change in preparation of principals and in the requirements for the appointment of principals.

5.9 Recommendations

5.9.1 Recommendations for improvement of practice

5.9.1.1 Implementation impediments

Educators, principals, parents and learners need more input and support regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. The support should address barriers to effective implementation such as the lack of knowledge or confusion about the policies and how to support young girls to realise their rights in this regard. It should also consider the moral beliefs of 'implementers' that prevent them from objectively implementing a pregnancy policy. As such, there is an urgent need for the training and re-orientation of all stakeholders including parents, learners, teachers and principals to create spaces, where this policy can be understood, accepted and implemented, free from moral judgements.

Attention needs to be given to the treatment received by parents who make themselves available to assist the child should a problem crop up in school. It seems that they are required to wait outside the school in case they are needed. This suggests an infringement of their dignity. It is also discriminatory regarding the equal treatment of mothers and fathers, it ignores the role of the boy who caused the girl to fall pregnant and his parents, it assumes that mothers do not work or have other family obligations and it merely shifts the teenage pregnancy problem back to the parent, instead of finding ways of educating the youth on how to avoid falling pregnant when they are still at school. With so many dysfunctional families found in South Africa, child-headed households, families living in sub-optimal conditions, it will be difficult to establish hard and fast rules. However, child grants could be linked to clinic visits with the child, availability of state-run day-care centres for babies to enable teenagers to go back to school as soon as possible. A system will also have to be found to involve the boy who fathered the child. It will probably take decades to change the mind set of traditional families regarding accountability of the male.

5.9.1.2 Policy reform

There are a number of policy areas, where reform is required, especially with regard to gender inequality treatment pertaining to leave of absence from school. The policy supports the teenage mother's right to study but fails to recognise the importance of the school as a space that needs to support her in her dual role as a learner and a parent. Principals and teachers must be clearly mandated to recognise the dual role and the additional strain on the girl learner's studies and must provide academic support when she has to take time off for clinic visits or attend to a sick child.

In addition, the MPMLP should be reviewed in light of whether it is serving the best interests of the girl learner and ensuring her right to education. It needs to be amended to ensure a balance between the child's rights and those of the child mother. The issue of a girl learner not returning to school in the year she gave birth, and that she should take two years away from school is in conflict with evidence that early return following childbirth benefits the girl learner academically. Panday *et al.* (2009) noted that the suggestion of a two-year waiting period before returning to school in the Department of Education learner pregnancy guidelines (MPMLP) may

be counterproductive to both the mother's and child's outcomes. If this were to be enforced, then the boy who fathered the child should also have to stay out of school for two years, helping to look after the baby. A much better option would be for both to fall into a maternity leave category, two months prior to birth and two months thereafter. If the boy is not able to physically assist with caring for the baby, he should then be responsible to bring school work to the teenage mother every day, be there for her homework and return that to school for her. That way, he would also be able to bond with the child and assist the mother. It would be the role of the parents to make sure that both new young parents adhere to the rules and care for the baby as well as keep in touch with school work.

5.9.1.3 Early return following childbirth

The MPMLP does not seem to support female teenage learners returning to school and realising their right to education. It states that a girl may not return to school in the same year she gives birth and recommends that a mother should take a two-year break from school. This clause does not support the teenage mother from completing and attaining her educational goals in the shortest possible time. The researcher established from various stakeholders that in most schools, learners return to school immediately after giving birth, whether it is a week or a month and that seems to allow the teenage mother to finish her studies on time. This contradicts the policy and may also reduce the time the mother spends with the young baby.

The researcher recommends that teenage mothers should be allowed to come back to school immediately after giving birth in order to promote continuity of the studies and also ensure that what the learner has acquired over the months is not forgotten but instead utilised in educational (including examination) sessions. Morrell, Bhana, and Shefer (2012) note that a delay in returning to school can reduce the likelihood of the girl ever pursuing further education and reduce school performance. Although the teenage mother is encouraged to return to school soon after giving birth, the likelihood of having this girl learner performing less well are high due to the additional responsibilities she incurs. Shefer and Bhana (2012) concur with the idea that when teenage mothers did return to school, their performance was often

affected, and many moved from doing well academically to becoming average or 'underachievers' once they were balancing motherhood and schooling.

5.9.1.4 Reducing gender inequalities and empowering girl learners

The MPMLP puts more emphasis on the pregnant girl learner and says very little about the boy learner who is the father of the child. The treatment of the girl learner is very different to that of the boy learner in the sense that, in most schools, the girl learner is the one who must be absent and forgo educational opportunities, take care of the baby and ensure that she copes with her school work.

The Namibian policy on teenage pregnancy (2008) stipulates that the schoolboy who is responsible for the pregnancy must stay out of school for a year, just like the girl. As in the case of girls, this compulsory non-attendance may also discourage such boys from continuing with their schooling thereafter. Although the researcher does not recommend such leave of absence amounting to one year, he agrees with the fact that both the boy learner and girl learner share equal responsibility. Both the girl learner and the boy learner must take full and equal responsibility in terms of the pregnancy, take leave of absence together and equally take care of the new baby.

Most policies are still based on gendered notions of the girl being the primary caregiver for the child and do not engage with the teenage father and his responsibilities at all, which perpetuates gender inequalities and the mother carrying the sole or primary burden of childcare.

5.9.1.5 Relevant educational structures and health personnel

Government's policy allowing pregnant and parenting learners to remain in school should be augmented by establishing educational infrastructure accommodating the needs of these learners, as well as providing nurses, social workers and psychologist to assist in caring for them. Teachers and principals are not trained nor allowed to assist pregnant learners in terms of a medical emergency. Schools need sick rooms, clinics or social worker offices to assist the pregnant learners in terms of

their needs, even if this may demand a lot of resources from government and may take considerable time to be realised.

In villages, where health facilities are scarce, it is vital for principals to engage the neighbouring clinics, social workers and psychologist to avail themselves and their expertise in ensuring that girl learners are assisted and encouraged to attain their academic ambitions. It is on this basis that a relationship should be entered into in order to encourage health professionals to visit schools on a regular basis. The medical care and advice given to pregnant girls could also be extended to include STDs, HIV and general health issues.

The implementation of the MPMLP, together with the combination of factors such as a sound moral and values base, knowledge of the value of abstinence and the support or involvement of parents or the community can reduce the high level of teenage pregnancy considerably.

5.9.2 Recommendations for further research

The following could be addressed in future research studies:

- How social media can be used to inform stakeholders of and about the MPMLP;
- How education departments can communicate more proactively and effectively with parents and other stakeholders;
- Improving parental involvement in education to address social problems such as teenage pregnancy;
- The child support grant and its relationship with learner pregnancies;
- Responsibilities of school principals, teachers and the SGB regarding the implementation of the pregnancy policy.

5.10 Conclusion

The study focused on the various role-players' views of the implementation of the MPMLP in public schools. It is evident that learners should not be discriminated against on the basis of their pregnancy because they have the right to education according to South Africa's Constitution. The study revealed that girl learners and boy learners are not treated the same in terms of a teenage pregnancy, and the MPMLP places a major emphasis on the girl learner and says little about the boy learner.

The study also found that stakeholders have a lack of knowledge of the learner pregnancy policy, whereas they are vital in the implementation of this policy. School principals use their own discretion in addressing the challenges related to learner pregnancy because there is no common reference to the policy. Due to a lack of knowledge of the learner pregnancy policy, parents/mothers are told by school principals to report to school on daily basis in order to take care of the pregnant learner and this causes an inconvenience, embarrassment and humiliation to parents. It also discriminates again against the female as it is the girl's mother who is expected 'to sit at the gate of the school the whole day, waiting for her daughter'.

The researcher observed that pregnant learners are treated and accepted in the same way as all other learners who are not pregnant. However, according to a strict moral code in many black communities, this could send a message to the school community that teenage pregnancy is an accepted normal occurrence to be encouraged. The morals and values that learners grow up with are then not held in high esteem. The right to education is a basic right that must be respected by all. However, ideally, these pregnant learners need to be accommodated in schools that are well resourced with access to clinics, sick rooms, nurses, social workers, psychologists and counsellors.

The study proposes an intensive training workshop, where all stakeholders are capacitated on the MPMLP and other related legislation. The workshop should firstly target newly appointed teachers, HODs and principals so that they can confront challenges pertaining to learner learners' pregnancy. The SGB and parents must be

invited to a special sitting, wherein this policy is unpacked and its implications are thoroughly explained. Learners should also be given an opportunity during induction sessions, especially in the lower grades and the beginning of the year, to be informed about the implications of the policy, together with expanded life skills / orientation sessions.

Learners should be led to understand that teenage sexual activity often leads to pregnancy and teenage pregnancy could mean losing out on becoming successful in life. Having a baby at a young age means losing out on all the fun other teenagers are having as one has to care for the baby. Child grants are not spending money – they are there to buy baby food, nappies and baby clothes. Having sexual encounters does not always buy love or result in teenage marriage. Training workshops for the stakeholders should seek to improve knowledge, understanding and transfer skills needed to create proper lines of communication that will enable and empower good governance, which translates into excellent results.

In a number of schools visited the researcher realised that there is no decisive leadership and this lack of decisiveness culminates in no-one taking responsibility for dealing with teenage learner pregnancies. Some principals do not even photocopy and distribute the policy document to all staff members and the SGB. This lack of decisiveness extends to the Circuit Managers and District Director. The picture painted about the South African education system's response to teenage learner pregnancy is bleak, pessimistic and compromised.

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APPENDIX: A

Ethics Committee

5 May 2017

Mr J Morifi

Dear Mr Morifi

REFERENCE: EM 16/08/01

This letter serves to confirm that your application was carefully considered by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The final decision of the Ethics Committee is that your application has been approved. The decision covers the entire research process, until completion of the study report, and not only the days that data will be collected. However, you may only start with your data collection once the application has been approved by the Health Sciences Committee.

The approval by the Ethics Committee is subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The research will be conducted as stipulated on the application form submitted to the Ethics Committee with the supporting documents.
2. Proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research must be submitted.
3. In the event that the research protocol changed for whatever reason the Ethics Committee must be notified thereof by submitting an amendment to the application (Section E), together with all the supporting documentation that will be used for data collection namely; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules, for further approval before data can be collected. **Non-compliance implies that the Committee's approval is null and void.** The changes may include the following but are not limited to:
 - Change of investigator,
 - Research methods any other aspect therefore and,
 - Participants.

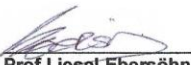
The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Upon completion of your research you will need to submit the following documentations to the Ethics Committee for your Clearance Certificate:

- Integrated Declaration Form (Form D08),
- Initial Ethics Approval letter and,
- Approval of Title.

Please quote the reference number **EM 16/08/01** in any communication with the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes



Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

APPENDIX: B



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: EM 16/08/01
DEGREE AND PROJECT	Phd The views of role-players on Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools
INVESTIGATOR	Mr TJ Morifi
DEPARTMENT	Education Management and Policy Studies
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	05 May 2017
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	27 June 2018

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof L Ebersöhn

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Ebersöhn', written over a horizontal line.

CC Ms B Swarts
Prof J Beckmann

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

APPENDIX: C



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

2016-06-02

The District Director
Capricorn District
Limpopo Department of Education
Private Bag X9711
POLOKWANE
0700

Dear District Director

**MR MORIFI, TSHEBEDI JOHANNES (UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA STUDENT
NUMBER 14374995)**

This is to certify that Mr Morifi, Tshebedi Johannes (student number 14374995) is a registered PhD candidate (PhD in Education Management, Law and Policy) in the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. I am his supervisor and his research topic is as approved is: "Role-players' views on MPMLP and its implementation in public schools".

Mr Morifi will comply with all the University's ethical requirements regarding research with human subjects.

I respectfully request that he be given permission to conduct research in your district.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beckmann'.

PROF J.L. BECKMANN
Supervisor

Building and office no: T09
Groenkloof Campus, University of Pretoria
PRETORIA 0002
Republic of South Africa

Tel number: 012 420 5721
Fax number: 012 420 4215

E-mail address: irma.elfoff@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za/education

APPENDIX: D



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Private Bag X 9711
POLOKWANE
0700
Tel: 015 285 7300
Fax: 015 285 7499

CAPRICORN POLOKWANE DISTRICT

Enq : 2/1/R
Enq : Mphaphuli AJ
Tel No.: 015 285 7410
Email : MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za

To : Morifi TJ
PO Box 3306
POLOKWANE
0700

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SOME SCHOOLS IN
POLOKWANE DISTRICT: PIETERSBURG AND SESHEGO CIRCUITS**


1. The above matter refers.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved.
3. The following conditions should be considered.
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implication for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and schools concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the Academic Programs at Schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the examinations especially the fourth term.
 - 3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"

-
-
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with Department.
4. Furthermore you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
5. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wish you success in your research.

Best wishes



MR MOTHEMANE KD
ACTING DISTRICT DIRECTOR

06/06/2016
DATE

Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"

APPENDIX: E



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

6 April 2017

INVITATION AND INFORMED ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Learner

The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools.

I am a registered doctoral student in the department of Education management and policy studies of the faculty of education of the University of Pretoria. I am doing research on people's views about, and their experiences of the implementation of the pregnancy policy at different public schools.

The goal of my research is to collect information on amongst other things parents and other stakeholders' personal perspectives on the policy and the effectiveness of its implementation to combat the high teenage pregnancy rates in our schools.

The study will reflect participants' knowledge and understanding of the policy and its implementation in public schools. It could further be used to make sure that pregnant learners are treated fairly. The study will enable role players other than the pregnant girls to respond positively and effectively in helping pregnant learners deal with the challenges they face.

I trust that this research will help us understand better what the experiences of people who are affected by incidents of teenage pregnancy are. This research should also indicate how familiar school communities in general are with Policy and what implementation problems might be there. The findings of the research will also be used to examine the effect that teenage pregnancy might have on the realisation of the universal right to basic education. Hopefully it will also enable the researcher to make recommendations to improve the policy, to improve its implementation and to equip all affected by a teenage pregnancy to handle the situation correctly and to offer the best assistance possible to all concerned so that no education opportunity may be lost.

I have received permission from department of education and the school to do the research. They have also allowed me to do interviews after hours at your school so that there will be no disruption of teaching time. Your parent(s) or guardian(s) and the teacher at your school after pregnant learners have agreed that I may ask you to participate in the research.

APPENDIX: E

I am writing to ask you to participate in an interview that will take place in an office allocated by the principal at the school after your classes have ended. It should also be done at another place where you feel you may be more comfortable and secure. The interview will be done at an agreed time and should take approximately two hours. I will tape the interview on a recorder and take notes of what you say. The interview will be only with you unless you would like your parent or your teacher or your guardian or another adult such as a social worker to be part of the interview session. After all the interviews have been done I will meet with you again to confirm my understanding of your experiences.

I want to stress that your participation in this research is more important to me than that of parents or guardians, teachers and principals.

You will not need to prepare anything for the interview but just answer my questions as well as you can. The interview will be done in English; however, you may answer questions in your mother tongue language if this will be easier for you. The answers you will give me will remain confidential and will only be used for my research. Your name and all information that can identify you or your school will not be made know to anybody else.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the interview or don't want your interview to be included in my research. I hope not to cause any discomfort during the interview but should you find the interview emotionally difficult I can arrange a social worker to come talk to you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this letter you are confirming that you:

- Have understood the letter
- May withdraw from this research project at any time
- Agree to the interviews being tape recorded

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Mr TJ Morifi, on 072 224 4400 or you can email me at morifijoase@yahoo.com . My supervisor, Prof. Beckmann, can be contacted on 012 420 2571 or by email at johann.beckmann@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours faithfully

Morifi TJ
University of Pretoria
Student number (14374995)

Professor Johan Beckmann
University Pretoria

APPENDIX: E

Assent:

I(learner's name and surname) have read the information and agree to participate in an interview. I have noted that my parent(s) or guardian(s) have agreed to my participation in this research.

I want to be interviewed at the school:	yes/no
I want to be interviewed at home or another place:	yes/no
I want my parent(s)/ guardian(s)/ another adult to be present during the interview	yes/no

Address: _____

Telephone no: _____

Signature

Date

Name of the school

APPENDIX: E



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

06 April 2017

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN, AND GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT.

Dear Parent

The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools.

I am a registered doctoral student in the department of Education management and Policy Studies of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria. I am a student doing research on people's views about, and their experiences of the implementation of the pregnancy policy at different public schools.

The school (.....) your child attends gave me your details to contact you for an interview.

The goal of my research is to collect information on amongst other things parents and other stakeholders' personal perspectives on the Policy and effectiveness of its implementation to combat the high teenage pregnancy rates in our schools.

The study will reflect participants' knowledge and understanding of the Policy and its implementation in public schools. It could further be used to make sure that pregnant learners are treated fairly. The study will enable role players other than the pregnant girls to respond positively and effectively in helping pregnant learners deal with the challenges they face.

I have received consent from the Department of Education and the school to do the research. They have also allowed me to do interviews after hours at your school so that there will be no disruption of teaching time.

I trust that this research will help us understand better what the experiences of people who are affected by incidents of teenage pregnancy are. This research should also indicate how familiar school communities in general are with Policy and what implementation problems

APPENDIX: E

might be there. The findings of the research will also be used to examine the effect that teenage pregnancy might have on the realisation of the universal right to basic education. Hopefully it will also enable the researcher to make recommendations to improve the policy, to improve its implementation and to equip all affected by a teenage pregnancy to handle the situation correctly and to offer the best assistance possible to all concerned so that no education opportunity may be lost.

The interview will take place in an office allocated by the principal at the school or can be done at your home or place that you suggest and where your privacy can be guaranteed. The interview will be done at time on which we agree and should take approximately two hours. I will tape the interview on an audio recorder and take notes of what you say. The interview will be only with you unless you would like to be part of the interview with your child or spouse if they agree. After all the interviews have been done I will meet with you again to make sure that I have understood correctly what you wanted to tell me.

You will not need to prepare anything for the interview but just answer my questions as well as you can. The interviews will be done in English. However, you may answer questions in your mother tongue language if this will be easier for and I also asks questions in your mother tongue if you prefer that. The answers you will give me will remain confidential and only be used for my research. Neither your identity nor those of your child and the school will be made known.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the interview or don't want your interview to be included in my research. I hope not to cause any discomfort during the interview but should you find the interview emotionally difficult I can arrange a social worker to come talk to you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this letter you are confirming that you:

- Have understood the letter
- May withdraw from this research project at any time
- Agree to the interviews being tape recorded

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Mr TJ Morifi, on 072 224 4400 or you can email me at morifijoase@yahoo.com . My supervisor, Prof Beckmann, can be contacted on 012 420 2571 or by email at johann.beckmann@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours faithfully

Morifi TJ
University of Pretoria
Student number (14374995)

Professor Johan Beckmann
University Pretoria

APPENDIX: E

CONSENT:

I(Parent's name and surname) have read the information and agree to participate in an interview.

My spouse can sit in the interview with me: Yes/No

My child can sit in the interview with me: Yes/No

I want to be interviewed at the school Yes/No

I want to be interviewed at home or another place Yes/No

Address: _____

Telephone no: _____

Signature

Date

APPENDIX: E



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

06 April 2017

INVITATION AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Principal

The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools.

I am a registered doctoral student in the department of Education management and Policy Studies of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria. I am a student doing research on people's views about, and their experiences of the implementation of the pregnancy policy at different public schools in the Limpopo Province.

The goal of my research is to collect information on amongst other things parents and other stakeholders' personal perspectives on the Policy and effectiveness of its implementation to combat the high teenage pregnancy rates in our schools.

The study will reflect participants' knowledge and understanding of the Policy and its implementation in public schools. It could further be used to make sure that pregnant learners are treated fairly. The study will enable role players other than the pregnant girls to respond positively and effectively in helping pregnant learners deal with the challenges they face.

I have received consent from the Department of Education and from you to do the research. I intend to do the interview after hours at your school so that there will be no disruption of teaching time. I will tape the interview on a recorder and take notes of what you say. After all the interviews have been done I will meet with you again to confirm my understanding of your experiences in dealing with pregnant learners at your schools.

I trust that this research will help us understand better what the experiences of people who are affected by incidents of teenage pregnancy are. This research should also indicate how familiar school communities in general are with Policy and what implementation problems might be there. The findings of the research will also be used to examine the effect that teenage pregnancy might have on the realisation of the universal right to basic education. Hopefully it will also enable the researcher to make recommendations to improve the

APPENDIX: E

policy, to improve its implementation and to equip all affected by a teenage pregnancy to handle the situation correctly and to offer the best assistance possible to all concerned so that no education opportunity may be lost.

You will not need to prepare anything for the interview but just answer my questions as well as you can. The interviews will be done in English. However, you may answer questions in your mother tongue language if this will be easier for and I also asks questions in your mother tongue if you prefer that. The answers you will give me will remain confidential and only be used for my research. Neither your identity nor those of anybody in your school community nor that of the school will be known.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the interview or don't want your interview to be included in my research. I hope not to cause any discomfort during the interview but should you find the interview emotionally difficult I can arrange a social worker to come talk to you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this letter you are confirming that you:

- Have understood the letter
- May withdraw from this research project at any time
- Agree to the interviews being tape recorded

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Mr TJ Morifi, on 072 224 4400 or you can email me at morifijoase@yahoo.com . My supervisor, Prof Beckmann, can be contacted on 012 420 2571 or by email at johann.beckmann@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours faithfully

Morifi TJ
University of Pretoria
Student number (14374995)

Professor Johan Beckmann
University Pretoria

APPENDIX: E

Permission:

I..... (Principal's name and surname) have read the information and agree to participate in an interview.

I want to be interviewed at school: Yes/No

I want to be interviewed at home or another place: Yes/No

Address: _____

Telephone no: _____

Signature

Date

Name of the school

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

06 April 2017

INVITATION AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Teacher

The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools.

I am a registered doctoral student in the department of Education management and Policy Studies of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria. I am a student doing research on people's views about, and their experiences of the implementation of the pregnancy policy at different public schools in the Limpopo Province.

The goal of my research is to collect information on amongst other things parents and other stakeholders' personal perspectives on the Policy and effectiveness of its implementation to combat the high teenage pregnancy rates in our schools.

The study will reflect participants' knowledge and understanding of the Policy and its implementation in public schools. It could further be used to make sure that pregnant learners are treated fairly. The study will enable role players other than the pregnant girls to respond positively and effectively in helping pregnant learners deal with the challenges they face.

I have received consent from the Department of Education and from you to do the research. I intend to do the interview after hours at your school so that there will be no disruption of teaching time. I will tape the interview on a recorder and take notes of what you say. After all the interviews have been done I will meet with you again to confirm my understanding of your experiences in dealing with pregnant learners at your schools.

I trust that this research will help us understand better what the experiences of people who are affected by incidents of teenage pregnancy are. This research should also indicate how familiar school communities in general are with Policy and what implementation problems might be there. The findings of the research will also be used to examine the effect that teenage pregnancy might have on the realisation of the universal right to basic education.

APPENDIX: E

Hopefully it will also enable the researcher to make recommendations to improve the policy, to improve its implementation and to equip all affected by a teenage pregnancy to handle the situation correctly and to offer the best assistance possible to all concerned so that no education opportunity may be lost.

You will not need to prepare anything for the interview but just answer my questions as well as you can. The interviews will be done in English. However, you may answer questions in your mother tongue language if this will be easier for you and I also asks questions in your mother tongue if you prefer that. The answers you will give me will remain confidential and only be used for my research. Neither your identity nor those of anybody in your school community nor that of the school will be known.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the interview or don't want your interview to be included in my research. I hope not to cause any discomfort during the interview but should you find the interview emotionally difficult I can arrange a social worker to come talk to you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this letter you are confirming that you:

- Have understood the letter
- May withdraw from this research project at any time
- Agree to the interviews being tape recorded

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Mr TJ Morifi, on 072 224 4400 or you can email me at morifijoase@yahoo.com . My supervisor, Prof Beckmann, can be contacted on 012 420 2571 or by email at johann.beckmann@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours faithfully

Morifi TJ
University of Pretoria
Student number (14374995)

Professor Johan Beckmann
University Pretoria

APPENDIX: E

Permission:

I..... (Teacher's name and surname) have read the information and agree to participate in an interview.

I want to be interviewed at school: Yes/No

I want to be interviewed at home or another place: Yes/No

Address: _____

Telephone no: _____

Signature

Date

Name of the school.

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Department of Education Management and
Policy Studies

06 April 2017

The Principal

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

I, Morifi T J, am currently registered with the University of Pretoria for PhD degree in Education Management Policy studies (student number: 14374995). My supervisor is Prof JL Beckmann.

The title of my research study is: **The views of role-players on the Learner Pregnancy Policy and its implementation in public schools.**

The study will use qualitative design and an interpretive paradigm to collect data from selected learners, teachers, principals and parents through semi-structured interviews. The data collected will be treated confidentially and the result of the research will be made available to the Limpopo Department of Education.

I have received permission from the Limpopo Department of Education to conduct research in this district. I hereby request to conduct interviews with members of your school community at your school and would like to interview you, the educator who deals with pregnant learners, learners who have been pregnant and their parents.

I also request permission to make use of an office where the interviews can be done. These interviews will be done after school hours so that they do not disrupt the teaching and management of the school. The times and dates will be confirmed with you before interviews takes place.

The research will focus on people's experience of the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy at school. At each school, the principal, educator, learner and learner's parent will be interviewed for approximately two hours and the interviews should take approximately two hours. The anonymity of all participants will be guaranteed and participants can withdraw from the research at any stage.

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The first interview will be with the principal of the school. Then the educators will be interviewed, followed by the learners and parents. The learners can decide if the teacher or parent can sit in on the interview but will have to first give permission for this. Parents can choose to be interviewed alone or with their spouse. However, both parents, must agree to this first. The interviews will be done in English or in the vernacular, whichever they find easier to communicate in. In event that participants experience discomfort during or after the interviews I will arrange for a social worker to meet with them.

I trust that this research will help us understand better what the experiences of people who are affected by incidents of teenage pregnancy are. This research should also indicate how familiar school communities in general are with Policy and what implementation problems might be there. The findings of the research will also be used to examine the effect that teenage pregnancy might have on the realisation of the universal right to basic education. Hopefully it will also enable the researcher to make recommendation to improve the Policy, to improve its implementation and equip all affected by teenage pregnancy to handle the situation correctly and to offer the assistance possible to all concerned so that no education opportunity may be lost.

After all interviews have been done and I have gone through all the information, I will meet all the participants interviewed to confirm that I have understood their experiences and views.

A confidential summary of findings will be given to all the schools who participated.

If you need any clarification or further information, please feel free to contact me Morifi, TJ on 072 224 4400 or at morifijoase@yahoo.com . My supervisor, Prof Beckmann, can be contacted on 012 420 2571 or by email at johan.beckmann@up.ac.za.

Hoping for a positive response to my request.

Yours faithfully

Morifi T.J
012 420 2571
Morifijoase@yahoo.com

Prof Beckmann JL (Supervisor)
012 420 2571
johan.beckman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX: E

Permission

Dear Mr Morifi

I have read your request and herby give you permission to conduct research at my school as requested.

Name of the principal: _____

Name of the school: _____

Date: _____

Telephone no: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

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QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

PRINCIPAL

1. Could you please tell me about your experiences with teenage pregnancies in your school?
2. What procedures do you follow if you become aware of a teenage pregnancy?
3. In your opinion, what causes teenage pregnancies?
4. Are you aware of the national learner pregnancy policy in our schools?
 - a. If yes, what is your opinion of its implementability?
 - b. What is your opinion of the main pillars on which the policy rests?
5. If a teenage pregnancy occurs, with whom should the school engage?
 - a. And in what manner?
6. If a teenage pregnancy occurs, with whom should the school communicate?
 - a. And in what manner?
7. Do you have a record of pregnant learners in your record book since 2007 to date?
 - a. If yes, what do your records tell you about teenage pregnancies?
8. What recommendations can you offer to improve the Policy and its implementation?
9. How do you usually find out about a teenage pregnancy?

TEACHER

1. Could you please tell me about your experiences with teenage pregnancies?
2. How does teenage pregnancy affect the affected learner's or learners' education?
3. In your opinion, what causes teenage pregnancies?
4. With what people do you engage or communicate in case of teenage pregnancy?
5. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools?
 - a. If yes, do you think it is your responsibility to implement it?
 - b. If it is your responsibility in your opinion, what does the Policy expect you to do if a teenage pregnancy occurs?
6. What people do you support in case of a teenage pregnancy?

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- a. How do you do it?
7. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and
 - a. Its implementation?
8. How do you usually find out about a teenage pregnancy?

PARENT

1. How did you learn about your child's pregnancy?
2. How did you feel or react at first when you learned about this pregnancy?
3. What was your relationship with your child like before the pregnancy?
4. What was your relationship with your child like during the pregnancy?
5. What is your relationship with your child like after the pregnancy?
6. Prior to your child's pregnancy, did you talk to, and engage with your child about sex and sexuality?
 - a. If yes, please explain how you did it.
 - b. And why you did it.
7. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools?
 - a. If yes, what was your experience with its implementation regarding your child?
 - b. If no, why do you think you did not hear about it?
8. If you heard that your son was responsible for the pregnancy of a school girl, how did you respond to the news?
 - a. What did you expect your son to do before, during and after the pregnancy?
 - b. Have you interacted with the girl in any way? If yes, what did you do?
9. Do you think your child should attend school while she is pregnant?
 - a. If yes, why?
 - b. If no, why not?
10. In your opinion what should happen after the baby has been born?
11. What recommendations can you offer to improve the Policy and
 - a. Its implementation?

LEARNER

1. When and how did you find out that you were pregnant?

APPENDIX: E

2. What are your experiences of being a mother?
3. What kinds of thoughts went through your mind when you realised that you were pregnant?
4. Did you personally inform your parents about your pregnancy?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. If no, why not?
5. When at first informing the father of your child, how did he respond to the news?
6. What were your challenges after realising that you were pregnant?
 - a. What were your challenges during your pregnancy?
 - b. What were your challenges after your pregnancy?
7. How did your school teachers and peers respond to you when they found out about your pregnancy?
8. What did you learn from this experience namely teenage pregnancy or being a teenage mother?
9. What advice would give to teenagers to help them make good decisions?
10. What are your aspirations for the future?
 - a. Have they changed after your pregnancy?
 - b. If yes, how?
 - c. If no, how is it going to be possible for you to reach your aspirations even though you are a teenage mother?
11. Who supported you during and after the pregnancy?
 - a. Are there people that should have supported you but did not do so?
 - b. Explain why you believe that they should have supported you.
12. Are you aware of the learner pregnancy policy in our schools?
 - a. If yes, how did you find out about it?
 - b. If yes, was it of any help to you? Please explain.
 - c. If no, explain why you do not know about it?
13. What recommendations can you offer to improve the policy and its implementation?