CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

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

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

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

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

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

Currently, indications are that no study has been hosted in both countries to assess the effectiveness with which the continued enrolment of pregnant and former pregnant learners has been implemented at formal schools. Furthermore, although studies on gender inequalities in education have been undertaken in both countries, most of these studies have tended to generally focus on the nature and causes of female underrepresentation and under-achievement in education, especially in mathematics, science and technology (Gordon, 1995; Tsanga, et al., 2004; Gordon, Nkwe & Graven, 1998), without adequate reference to the day to day challenges faced by pregnant and parenting
schoolgirls in formal education. Studies by Grant and Hallman (2006), Manzini (2001), Mokgalabone (1999), Gordon (2002) and Chigona and Chetty (2008), which also focused on teenage pregnancy and schooling, used school leavers as their samples to investigate how pregnancy and teen motherhood contributed to school dropout, poor performance and grade repetition. With reference to Botswana and Namibian education policies, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996), Meekers and Ahmed (1999), Hubbard et al (2008) only analysed the utility and applicability of the policies to the realisation of the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ equal right to education. My study, therefore, should add value to existing knowledge boundaries by exploring the daily experiences of some of the pregnant girls who choose to remain in formal school, during and after pregnancy.

1.2 Rationale and significance of the study

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

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

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

A disturbing observation on gender inequality in Zimbabwe is that “women do not exercise the rights that laws specifically guarantee them, among other factors; this is due to ignorance of the law and its administration” (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender
and Employment Creation, 2004, p.1). Both the Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25:04 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act Number 84 of 1996, clearly stipulate that no child shall be refused admission to any school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1996; Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 1996). Furthermore, both countries have specific policy directives, which in line with CEDAW, CRC and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, stipulate that girls who may become pregnant in the course of their schooling should be allowed to continue with their education (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation 2004; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; DoE, 2007; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hubbard, et al., 2008; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001).

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

Although in principle girls who fall pregnant while at school are not denied access to education, the intervention strategy for achieving this in most developing has been the non-formal education system (Stromquist, 1998; Hyde, 1999; Diven, 1998; Gordon,
Nkwe & Graven, 1998). Even in developed countries where mainstreaming of pregnant and teenage mothers in formal education has been in place for some time, the debate on whether mainstreaming them in formal schools is the ideal continues to rage on (Weiner, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001). In developing nations like Zimbabwe and South Africa, where the phenomenon is fairly new, there is need to explore workable options that consider the socio-cultural contexts of the local communities. Jansen (2001), and Fink and Stoll (1998) however warn that no one educational policy can be transferable to other situations, no matter how useful it might have proved elsewhere. What might have worked in developed countries or even the internationally pronounced principles may not necessarily apply to some other situations in wholesale manner. Jansen (2001) further warns that,

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

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

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

> The national Department of Education should undertake a case study of programmes which encourage and support successfully the re-entry of
young women who have dropped out because of pregnancy, with the view to benchmarking and disseminating good practice (p.116).

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

Policies and intervention strategies in education that ignore the meanings and cultures of the local community are doomed to fail (Fink & Stoll, 1998; Blackmore, 1998, Jansen, 2001). In the area of gender equity, feminist scholars and theorists have been criticised for their assumption that all their pro-female ideas and recommendations can be readily applicable and acceptable to all women the world over (Mbilinyi, 1998; Phendla, 2004, 2008). Equally so, the notion that the policies that mandate formal schools to mainstream teenage pregnant girls are for the good of all the intended beneficiaries should be empirically proved. This study, by gathering the views of policy beneficiaries and implementers, is intended to make a valid statement in this regard. It should, therefore, add value to the existing theoretical propositions and policy review process, by making recommendations that are informed, not only by theory, but also by related research findings and the actual views of people who are affected by the policy. These people are either policy duty bearers (parents and teachers) or policy rights bearers¹ (pregnant and former pregnant teenagers).

¹ Policy duty bearers are people with the responsibility to formulate and implement policy for the benefit of society. Policy rights bearers are the intended beneficiaries of policy (UNICEF, 2003a).
In short, the value of this study is that it extends the opportunity for schools and their communities, in their different social and cultural existence, to respond to the practicability of including pregnant and former pregnant learners in formal schools.

1.3 Research context

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

In line with international statutes on gender equality and the principle of education as a basic human right for every child, both Zimbabwe and South Africa have policy guidelines that allow pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education at formal schools (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P35, 1999; Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hall, 2006; Hubbard, 2008; Pandor, 2007). In addition, both countries have instituted bodies that monitor gender equity in all sectors of society, namely the Gender Equity Commission in South Africa and the Department of Gender Equality in Zimbabwe (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinzen, 1997). Furthermore, Life Orientation or Guidance and Counselling and HIV and AIDS are substantive subjects that are meant to deal with issues surrounding teenage sexuality, pregnancy and HIV and AIDS in both countries (DoE, 1997; MoESC Permanent Secretary’s Policy Circular Number 3 of 2001;
Gordon, 2002). For this reason educators of these subjects at the two schools were selected to participate in the study.

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

1.4 Problem statement

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

One of the interventions that is gaining international support to bridge the gap between male and female educational access and participation is the re-enrolment and continued enrolment of learners, who could fall pregnant while at school (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chilisa, 2001; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2008; Key, Barbosa & Owen, 2002; Coulter, 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Stromquist, 1999; Burdell, 1996). As a result, most UN member states are signatories to international conventions that seek to safeguard the right of every child to education, including girls who might fall pregnant before completing their education. Apart from being signatories to such conventions,
South Africa and Zimbabwe have gone further to design policy guidelines that direct schools to allow pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education (DoE, 2007; MoESC, Minute Policy Circular P35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Pandor, 2007; Manzini, 2001; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Hubbard et al., 2008). However, while formal policy measures might be in place, the extent to which they are being effectively implemented for the benefit of the affected learners could still be subject to speculation in both countries. It seems there is inadequate research on the responses by both policy duty bearers and the intended rights beneficiaries. It is not uncommon for policies to be in place while implementers and beneficiaries are inadequately informed and empowered to effect the desired change (Jansen, 2002; Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999). The emergence of democratic education policies for the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers also implies that the population of pregnant and former pregnant learners in schools is higher than before (Pandor, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2008, 2009; Panday et al., 2009; Makwabe, 2007; Blaine, 2007). Consequently, the capacity of schools to effectively identify and cater for the educational needs of this category of learners should become an area of concern for education policy makers and service providers.

1.5 Statement of purpose

South Africa and Zimbabwe are signatories to international conventions and declarations like the CRC, CADEW, EFA and MDG which all seek to extend and protect every child’s right to education to make the goal of universal basic education a reality by 2015 (Sadie, 2001; Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; Leach, 2000; Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004; UNICEF, 2003a; UNESCO, 2004). EFA and MDG declarations have articles that call upon all UN member states to eliminate all gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2004; GoZ, 2004; UNESCO, 2005; Millennium Development Goals: (MDG) South Africa Country Report, 2005; MDG: SA Mid-Term Country Report, 2007; Subrahmanian, 2005; Stromquist 2005; Daniel, 2003; Stromquist, 1998). For this to be an achievable goal, most UN member states, and the Southern
African Development Community (SADC) regional grouping, which include South Africa and Zimbabwe, agreed to adopt the principle that girls who fall pregnant while at school should be allowed and assisted to continue with their education (Sadie, 2001). Subsequently, both countries formulated relevant policy circulars and guidelines that direct education stakeholders on how to manage cases of schoolgirl pregnancy (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular P35, 1999). The presence of these policy measures implies that the population of, and demand for formal school enrolment by pregnant and former pregnant learners are on the increase (Pandor, 2007; Makwabe, 2007; Blaine, 2007).

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

In view of this, the main purpose of my study was to explore and compare the effectiveness of the South African and Zimbabwean education policies, implementation strategies and institutional support systems that are designed to assist pregnant school girls cope with formal schooling. Further, the study sought to examine the factors that could influence the conceptualisation and perceptions of education stakeholders in the mainstreaming of pregnant learners at conventional schools. The study also examined the perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners within the school, the home and the community at large. Therefore, the study sought to provide more insight into how
pregnant learners in South Africa and Zimbabwe are coping with formal schooling and how schoolgirl pregnancy policy guidelines could best be utilised to empower both the affected learners and the various duty bearers, who are charged with the responsibility of policy implementation at the school level.

1.6 Study objectives

The following were the objectives for conducting this study:

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

1.7 Research questions

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

Sub-questions:

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

1.8 Research design and methodology

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a “Research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance” (p. 221). The design is, therefore, all that the researcher does, from writing the research problem and questions, sampling participants, data gathering to analysis and interpretation of gathered data. I chose the qualitative case study research strategy to conduct an in-depth study of the attitudes of education stakeholders towards pregnant learners in the school, the home and the community (Creswell, 2007; Berg, 2001; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Hanock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 1994). Figure 1.1 summarises the research methodology, data gathering and data presentation and analysis for of study.
Figure 1.1: Outline of the research methodology and process

**EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL PARADIGMS**
- Phenomenological
- Social constructivist
- Interpretivist

**METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGMS**
- Qualitative design
- Case study

**RESEARCH PROCESS**
- Convenience
- Purposeful
- Snowball

**SAMPLING**
- Documentary study
- Focus groups
- Key-participant interview
- Reflective Journal

**INSTRUMENT TRIANGULATION**
- Trustworthiness
- Credibility
- Dependability
- Confirmability

**QUALITY CONTROL**
- Informed consent
- Voluntary participation
- Confidentiality
- Anonymity
- Homogeneity

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**
- Content analysis: Transcription, Coding, Memoing, Frequency Count
- Interpretation: Inductive, discourse, Hermeneutic

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

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

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

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

1.8.2 Methodological assumptions

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

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

\(^2\) Appendix 7.3: Participant consent forms
representatives in school administration to gather views on the policy as well as the practice of mainstreaming pregnant learners in formal education.

1.9 Theoretical framework

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

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

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

1.10 Research assumptions

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

Research assumption 1
Most pregnant teenagers drop out of school because of an unfriendly school environment (Mensch et al., 2001; Weigand, 2005).
Research assumption 2
Negative attitudes to teenage pregnancy in society can result in poor educational access and participation by pregnant learners (Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

Research assumption 3
Educators are not adequately equipped to implement new education policies at the school level (Jansen, 2001; Hess, 1999).

Research assumption 4
Pregnant teenagers lack motivation to learn (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hof & Richters, 1999)

1.11 Quality assurance measures

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

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

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

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

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

1.12 Ethical considerations

Because the subject of schoolgirl pregnancy is viewed as a sensitive issue in schools (Kutame, 2004; Kutame & Mulaudzi, 2010), there was need for measures to ensure the de-construction of any negative perceptions to the study before voluntary participation in focus group interviews was sourced from the targeted population. I therefore, first explained how the ethical requirements of informed consent, confidentiality, right to individual privacy and anonymity of the participants would be adhered to during data gathering and reporting of the findings of the study. In order to uphold confidentiality, the composition of each focus group was made homogenous in terms of category, gender, age and power differences.

Just like any research that involves human behaviour, measures were taken to ensure that all ethical concerns with regard to voluntary participation, informed consent and
confidentially were adhered to (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2006; Albertse, 2006; Best & Kahn, 1993). Teenagers who fall pregnant were reported to be negatively perceived, especially if they failed to get married (Chilisa, 2002; Weiner, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Burdell, 1998). In cases that are similar to the key participants of this study, Cohen & Manion (1994) warn that:

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

Consideration was, therefore, taken to protect the personal dignity and confidentiality of the pregnant and former pregnant learners, who were the key participants in the study. This was achieved by first explaining the objectives and nature of the study, how results would be released and used, allowing them to check and confirm their views before and after they were compiled into the report of the study (Albertse, 2006; Moss, 2004; Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004). Furthermore, names of participants were not indicated when their ideas were compiled into a report.

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

1.13 Delimitations and limitations

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

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

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

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

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

_Formal education:_ According to Barakett and Cleghorn (2000) formal education refers to the set of organised activities that are intended to transmit skills, knowledge, and values as well as to develop mental abilities.
School community: A community is a geographically and socially related group (Jary & Jary, 1995). In the context of this study, the school community refers to the neighbourhood or catchment area of the school, and whose parents share common concerns and responsibilities on the objectives and operations of the school.

1.15 Structure and outline of chapters

Chapter One: Orientation to the study
The background, rationale, statement of purpose, research questions, delimitation and limitations of the study are explained.

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

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

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

Chapter Five: Data presentation and analysis
The chapter presents data gathered through focus group and key participant interviews that were conducted at the two schools selected as cases for this study.
Chapter Six: Literature control on emerging themes
The chapter identifies and discusses data from the study in relation to the theoretical framework and findings from other studies.

Chapter Seven: Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion
The last chapter of the study presents a summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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

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

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST AND RELATED STUDIES

2.1 Introduction

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

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

As a background to the emergence of international and national policy frameworks and programmes that seek to extend formal education to pregnant teenagers, this chapter opens with a brief overview of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in developed and developing states, including South Africa and Zimbabwe where I conducted my study.
The greater part of the chapter is therefore a review of research studies on the rationale and nature of policy frameworks and programmes for the education of pregnant and former pregnant teenage students, and how they have been responded to by different societies.

2.2 The policy landscape

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

2.2.1 Prevalence and effects of teenage pregnancy on women education

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

Research studies have indicated that even developed countries have continued to face the problem of teenage pregnancy, especially among the low income social groups. Darrick, Singh and Frost (2001) conducted a quantitative comparative study on the differences in teenage pregnancy rates among five developed countries, namely the USA, the UK, Canada and Sweden. The results indicated that the USA had the highest teenage pregnancy rate of 22%, followed by the UK with 15%, Canada with 11% and Sweden
with the lowest rate of 4%. Further findings by Arai (2003), Seamark and Lings (2004) and Hawkes (2004) corroborated that Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands had lower teenage pregnancy rates compared to Britain, Canada and USA. The reason given for the low pregnancy rates is that these countries were more open and liberal on sexuality and reproductive health issues like access to contraception, pregnancy termination and abortion services by teenagers. Societies that kept to traditional values on marriage, sex and did not give adequate information on these issues to their teenagers were found to have a higher rate of unwanted teen pregnancies (Arai, 2003).

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

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

Most of the data on teenage pregnancy in Africa are drawn from either school drop-out rates or studies on sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Meekers and Ahmed (1999) observed that “in some African regions up to ten percent of schoolgirls drop out of school
because of pregnancy” (p. 195). With specific reference to sub-Saharan Africa, statistical data from a study by the Forum for the African Women Educators (FAWE) indicated that an average of only 34% and 10% of the girls in sub-Saharan Africa uninterruptedly completed primary and secondary schooling respectively (Chilisa, 2002).

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

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

The right to education is one of the core human rights specified in almost every international declaration and convention like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, Education for All (EFA) of 1990 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000. These international declarations all define education as a fundamental human right for every member of society (Taylor, Smith & Nairin, 2001; Dandet & Singh, 2001; Detrick, 1999; Ochalita & Espinasa, 2001). Because of the realisation that equal rights to, within and through education for girls is one unfulfilled fundamental human right, the provisions of CEDAW, CRC, EFA and MDG all have a provision on the principle of gender equity and measures to enhance equal access to and completion of education by girls and women at all levels by 2015 (Submaranian, 2005; UNICEF, 2003; UNESCO, 2001; Tsanga et al.,
Consequently, to show their commitment to the elimination of gender inequalities in education, both South Africa and Zimbabwe unreservedly ratified all these international declarations that seek to redress all gender inequalities in education (Tsanga et al., 2004; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Prinsloo, 2005; Daniel, 2003; MDG: South Africa Country Report, 2005; MDG: SA Mid-Term Country Report, 2007; UNICEF, 2004).

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

2.2.3 International conventions and pregnant teenagers’ right to education

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

• Promotion of girls and women access to and achievement in mathematics, sciences and technology areas of study;

• Elimination of all forms of harassment against women in education and appointment of women into positions of educational leadership, to act as role models for schoolgirls; and

• Review and re-evaluation of traditional customs and perceptions that could be harmful to equality of access to education and career development for men and women.

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

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

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

Stromquist (1997) observes that it was the UN decade on women (1976 – 1985) which gave impetus to the inclusion of gender sensitive clauses into international conventions that seek to redress policy level disparities in educational access and completion between men and women (see Table 2.2). The common principle on gender equality cuts across all international conventions and declarations, and is the foundation upon which the expulsion policies for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from formal schooling began to be challenged. It is in this regard that some of the UN member states that ratified gender-equity international conventions on education have come up with national policies that incorporate some of the provisions. In the case of South Africa and Zimbabwe, where this study was conducted, there are policy guidelines that prohibit the expulsion of
pregnant learners from school (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P. 35, 1999). Therefore, in line with both international and national statutes, pregnant teenagers in South Africa and Zimbabwe are legally guaranteed the right to education just like any other child. The enactment of re-entry and continuation policies for girls who fall pregnant while at school could contribute to the achievement of both the 2005 and 2015 EFA and MDG goals of gender equality in education in the two countries. However, for the purpose of this study, the mere ratification and domestication of international conventions should not be viewed as an end in itself.

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

2.2.4 Schoolgirl pregnancy policies in developed nations

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

Britain was among the first countries to enact laws that prohibit any form of discrimination against women in education after the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, which states that education is a fundamental human right (Ladner, 1987; Weiner, 1987; Truscott, 1994; Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997; Coulter, 1999; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Even before 1948, the British Education Act of 1944 had enshrined the principle of equal access to education (Stromquist, 1999; Coulter, 19999; Truscott, 1994). By making basic education free and compulsory for every child, the Act made it legally possible for pregnant teenagers to attend school.
In the USA, the right of pregnant learners to continued education is based on two Acts of parliament, which all American states and districts are compelled to adopt and implement in their schools. Through the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, referred to as Title IX and the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975, any discrimination against pregnant teens in schools is prohibited (Ladner, 1987; Kay, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Weimer, 1987; McGaha-Garnett, 2007:15). Because of this legal obligation in the USA, “Teen parents are mandated to attend school (despite circumstances) and are prosecuted/fined when unexpected absence becomes problematic” (McGaha-Garnett, 2007, p.15). Additional features to the statutory instruments include flexible timetables to help pregnant learners adopt self-pace learning, on-site day care and health facilities, counselling and parenting laboratories for all schools with pregnant and former pregnant learners (McGaha-Garnett, 2007: Kay, Barbosa & Owens, 2001; Weimer, 1987; Adler, Bates & Merginger 1985).

Out of the realisation that the girl child was more disadvantaged in terms of access to education and career development, feminist activists in the USA used the provisions of the 1972 Educational Amendments Act (Title IX) and the 1975 Women Educational Equity Act (WEEA) to call for school and college campus-based educational programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (McGee & Blank 1989; Burdell, 1996; Stromguist, 1999). Stromguist (1999) adds that in order to enforce the legal provision, each school had a voluntary Title IX co-coordinating committee that played the role of facilitating communication between schools and communities. Issues handled by the committee included gender equity, explaining the provisions and implications of Title IX to students, handling grievances on sex discrimination, adjusting facilities to comply with non-discrimination of pregnant and former pregnant learners, and making recommendations on affirmative action school policies and procedures on gender equity. Title IX was, therefore, influential in the democratisation of education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from the USA, to Canada, England and other Western European countries.
According to Zellman (1982), Adler, Bates and Merdinger (1985), Weiner, 1987, McGee and Blank (1989), Montessori and Blixen (1996) and Burdell (1996) the main provisions of Title IX, which extend the right to equal educational access and treatment to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are that:

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

Montessori and Blixen (1996) further observe that Title 1X has a provision that stipulates that, where special programmes for pregnant and former pregnant adolescents were offered outside the formal school system, these were to be comparable in quality to those for non-pregnant students. A pregnant student is allowed to remain in school as long as she desires, or until the eighth month of pregnancy or when she is unable to remain in school for any medically proven reasons. While she is away to deliver, she is entitled to relevant and consistent homebound tuition (Adler, Bates & Merdinger, 1985). Adler, Bates and Merdinger (1985) outline a section of Title 1X, which directly caters for the educational right of American pregnant teenagers:

Legally, Title 1X of the 1972 Educational Amendments is the one provision which gives pregnant adolescents and teenage parents the same rights as other students. Based on Title 1X (Part 86.40) a school may not discriminate against any student in its educational program because of the student’s pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, or termination of pregnancy unless the student requests participation in a different, but comparable program (p. 185).
2.2.5 Impact of Title IX on education of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers

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

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

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

Stromquist (1999) observes that the prevention of sexual discrimination in education through Title IX or Educational Amendments Act of 1972 contain rules and regulations that prohibit all forms of sex discrimination in education policies, programmes and activities. Specifically, the Act stipulates that sex and gender discrimination with respect to admission; recruitment and selection of students and staff, subject and career education, access to sporting activities, education facilities and accommodation are to be guarded against. There are Title 1X inspectors and coordinators that work through the Equal Opportunities Commission at district and school levels, to monitor the implementation of the Act. In order to enforce the implementation of Title IX, the USA government passed and invoked the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975. This Act stipulates that, all educational institutions be provided with financial and technical assistance to design, adopt and implement new policies, programmes and
practices that promote gender-egalitarian settings, specifically targeted to benefit pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Stromquist, 1999; Truscott, 1994). Education institutions that fail to comply with these regulations could, therefore, face cuts in federal government funding. However, the disadvantage of this obligatory condition is that schools and colleges that do not depend on federal funding are not affected by the penalty, and therefore, may continue to discriminate against pregnant and former pregnant teenagers.

With time, the positive results of Title IX began to gradually take effect in the USA. Before the passing of the Prevention of Sexual Discrimination in Education Act, Burdell (1996) observed that only 18.6% of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers graduated from high school. However, this increased to 29.2% in 1975 and by 1985 the figure had risen to 55%. This rapid increase within the first decade of the Title IX Amendment Act could be attributed to the implementation of the Act in school, in such a way that most teens who fell pregnant or got married while at school were most unlikely to drop out. Due to the social justice which society began to realise in the Title IX, the campaign against child sexual abuse and teen pregnancy received similar attention as that given to child labour in the USA and other developed countries (Testa, 1992; Burdell, 1996).

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

2.2.6 Schoolgirl pregnancy policies in African nations

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

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

- A pregnant girl is to be withdrawn from school and re-admitted at another school at least after 12 months;
- A former pregnant girl is only allowed to write examinations after 6 months from date of delivery; and
• If a male student is responsible for the pregnancy, the boy is also withdrawn from school and returns or writes examination with the approval of the Minister of Education. The provisions are both punitive and discriminatory to the girl child, while lenient to the boy child who can seek the Minister’s approval to return to school or write examinations within any given time after suspension. The requirement for re-admission at another school and the long break from school has been found to de-motivate former pregnant teens’ educational aspirations (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Chilisa, 2002).

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

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

Table 2.3 below, summarises the main policy provisions that have been formulated to manage teenage pregnancy in some of the African countries.
### Table 2.3: Types of school girl pregnancy policies in African countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Main Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Botswana  | Re-entry | 1. Former pregnant to be re-admitted in same grade after at least one year absence from school.  
2. Date of application for re-admission calculated from date of delivery (evidence required).  
3. Application for re-admission to comply with age of school entry (evidence required). |
| Malawi    | Re-entry | 1. A former pregnant learner can apply to be re-admitted after at least one year from date of giving birth.  
2. Application for re-admission to have proof of safe custody for the baby while at school.  
3. Re-admission after pregnancy only allowed once in one’s school life. |
| Zambia    | Re-entry | 1. Re-admission allowed at least after one year from date of delivery.  
2. Re-admission after pregnancy only allowed once in one’s school life. |
| Cameroon  | Continuous | 1. Period of absence to give birth is negotiable.  
2. Extra-tuition given during period of absence from school. |
| Madagascar| Continuous | 1. Pregnant learner allowed to return to school immediately after delivery.  
2. No stipulated period of absence from school to deliver. |
| Swaziland | Re-entry | 1. Former pregnant learner can be allowed to continue with schooling at another school after a period of nursing the baby. |

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

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

A review of most international conventions and declarations revealed that signatory states parties are required to take appropriate measures to incorporate and implement the international provisions of the ratified global principles (Zimbabwe Human Rights Non-
government Organisations (NGO) Forum, 2001). For this reason, an examination of South African and Zimbabwean national policy frameworks that have implications on the pregnant and former pregnant learners’ right to, within and through education (Subrahmanian, 2005) is relevant for my study. The major purpose of the examination is to establish any correlation between international and national principles on gender equity, especially those with a bearing on the educability of pregnant and former pregnant learners.

According to Bray (1996) and Prinsloo (2005) the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Number 108 of 1996 includes a Bill of Rights which protects every person from unfair discrimination and unequal treatment. In fact the first chapter of the South African constitution indicates that non-racialism, non-sexism and equality are the principles upon which the constitution is founded (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). That the constitution points to non-sexism and equality is important in that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ rights are guaranteed just like those of every other person. Section 9 of Chapter 2, (Bill of Rights) has relevant clauses that protect pregnant and former pregnant teenage learners from any form of discrimination in education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; Mothata, 2000; Prinsloo, 2005). Sub-sections 9(1) indicates that “Everyone is equal before the law and has right to equal protection and benefit of the law” and sub-section 9(3) instructs that “The State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status” (Wolpe, Quinlin & Martinez, 1997, p.26; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.1247). Furthermore, the state is required by sub-section 9(4) to make national legislation that prevents unfair discrimination against anyone, and that includes pregnant/former pregnant teen learners. The direct reference to gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status in this section legally protects pregnant teenagers over and above the protection granted by equality of treatment and unfair discrimination. Thus, the provision for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy is legitimated by the country’s supreme law.
After the ratification of both the CRC and ACRWC, it can be observed that the South African constitution committed Section 28 exclusively to Children’s Rights (Prinsloo, 2005). Of relevance to this study is sub-section 28(f) (ii) which seeks to protect children from any work or services that could risk their right to education and social development (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This clause is particularly protective to former pregnant learners, who could risk dropping out from school due to the pressure of looking after the baby. In this regard, parents, who are required by law to ensure that their children must attend school, should assist with child care, while the former pregnant teenagers attend school (DoE, 2007; SASA, 1996).

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

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

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

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

Again, in comparison with the South African Bill of Rights, the Zimbabwean Declaration of Rights has two important omissions. First, there is no explicit declaration on every person’s right to education, which according to international conventions is defined as a
fundamental human right. Second, the constitution is silent on the rights of children. This is inconsistent with the CRC which Zimbabwe ratified in 1991 (Tsanga et al., 2004). A further criticism of the constitution of Zimbabwe is that it has a provision that international agreements ratified by the government are not legally binding unless they are formally incorporated into law as Acts of parliament (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2001; The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). This leaves marginalised people such as pregnant and former pregnant teenagers exposed because, where national policies are silent, one cannot refer to international law to challenge discriminatory practices.

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

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

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

These legal provisions implicitly indicate that with regard to educational access and participation, pregnant and former pregnant learners can also claim the same educational rights. However, public schools, mostly in rural and urban townships are generally
defined as state established and maintained, (Mncube, 2007). In this regard, private, independent or former group C schools, which usually serve middle and upper class children (West & Currie, 2008; Mncube, 2007) could claim that they are not legally obliged to admit every learner who applies to attend at such schools. On the same grounds, West and Currie (2008) observe that independent schools had highly selective admission policies that ranged from class, religion, IQ tests to language proficiency. Nevertheless, although not specifically pointing to discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, the SASA is satisfactorily consistent with the global principle of non-discrimination and every child’s right to education.

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

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

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

Although this is extended to every child (pregnant and former pregnant learners included), the provision is only legally obligatory to Government schools and not other types of schools like faith, and elitist private schools. This is a weakness also similar to
one found in SASA (1996), which requires only public schools to desist from discriminatory admission practices.

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

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

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

Although the South African Department of Education produced formal and detailed measures to help schools manage learner pregnancy in 2007, the policy that allows pregnant and former pregnant learners to continue with their education has been in place since the achievement of democracy in South Africa. For example, Grant and Hallman (2006) note that, “a policy formalised in South Africa in 1996 … allows pregnant girls to
stay in school and also allows young mothers to do so if they can manage logistically and financially” (p. 3). They further observe that while the policy resulted in closing the gender difference in educational access between males and females, it also implied there could be delayed completion rates for girls due to grade repetition by former pregnant teenagers, who could suspend schooling due to child care responsibilities. To avoid grade repetition, Manzini (2001, p.48) indicates that, “The existing schools policy allows pregnant girls to continue with schooling both during the pregnancy and after the birth”. Such a provision facilitates continuous school attendance, unlike in Botswana, Namibia and Malawi, where there is a requirement for the pregnant learner to be excluded from school for a stipulated period of time ranging from one to two years (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2008; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

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

- To strongly encourage learners to continue with their education prior to and after delivery;
- To avoid any action that may constitute unfair discrimination against a pregnant or former pregnant learner;
- To take measures against any discrimination, hate speech, harassment, and name-calling, and jokes that might destroy the self-esteem or break confidentiality of pregnant or former pregnant learners;
- To provide counselling and guidance services to pregnant learners and their parents in the best interest of the learner and the baby; and
- To extend academic support by giving and monitoring the learner’s school work during the period she has broken away from school to deliver or care for the baby.
The DoE (2007), however states in its policy that pregnant learners should be prepared that the community might not readily accept and support their situation because of society’s values. The inclusion of this comment by the Department is pre-judgmental and could have a negative influence on pregnant learners’ duty bearers who could claim that the negative perceptions and treatment of pregnant teens is a normal phenomenon in society. Although inclusion is the basis upon which the management of schoolgirl pregnancy measures are instituted, pregnant stakeholders are reminded that schools have no medical staff and child care facilities. For this reason, pregnant learners and the father-to-be (if also a learner) may take absence from school to look after the baby for a period of up to two years, depending on personal circumstances of each case (DoE, 2007). During the period of absence from school, it is expected that the learner continues to get tuition from teachers and to do all school work that is assigned to her.

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

Through the MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35 (1999), the government of Zimbabwe outlines provisions that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education. This policy is in line with the country’s National Gender Policy which directs education and training sectors to “Provide facilities and a policy framework to enable girls who fall pregnant to continue with their education” (Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, 2004, p.8). According to subsection 5.2 of the policy circular, pregnant girls should be assisted to stay in school as long as possible. However, it is permissible for the girl and the boy (if the pregnancy is a result of a relationship between
two learners) to take up to three months absence from school in order to look after the new baby (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). Like the South African policy measures (DoE, 2007), the period of absence from school is not rigidly enforced because the situations of affected learners differ. What is, however, more positive about the Zimbabwean policy is that the period of absence is short and also in line with legal conditions on maternity leave. This affords more continuity to learning by pregnant learners and therefore the requirement that former pregnant learners resume classes in the same grade they were when they left school to deliver is logical (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Zimbabwe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Number 108</td>
<td>9(a) Equality before the law. 9(3) No unfair discrimination on any grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status. 28(f) (ii) Protection of children’s right to education and social development. 29(i) (a) (b) Right to basic education and equal access to further education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Schools Act 1996, Number 84</td>
<td>3(3) Provincial MEC to ensure enough schooling for all. 5(1) Public school to admit without unfair discrimination. 5(9) Right to appeal to MEC. for unfair enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE (2007) Prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools</td>
<td>School responsibilities: • To encourage pregnant learners to continue with schooling. • To prevent discrimination against pregnant learners. • Take measures against any hate speech. • To provide counselling services and academic support during period of break from school for delivery. Learners and parents responsibilities: • Both pregnant learner and father-to-be can take up to two years absence from school. • Learners submit all school assignments for marking during absence. • Parents to assist with child care.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Translating policy into practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the same vein, Roosa (1986) also identified three types of non-academic special programmes that differed in terms of their location and objectives. These are hospital-based, community-based and school-based Teen-Age Parenting Programmes (TAPPs).
An analysis of the objectives of TAPPs made Roosa, (1989) to conclude that:

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

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

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

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

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

They are termed inclusive because they offer a wide range of accredited courses and special services for pregnant and former pregnant learners only, and, therefore, are in a sense isolationist in nature. This means that when the student gets pregnant, she can choose to transfer to the inclusive programme where she can remain for the rest of her schooling. The main reason inclusive programmes are more popular among educators and
school management is that, the problems of pregnancy disappear from them once the pregnant students transfer from the regular school to the inclusive programme (Zellman, 1981; Burdell, 1996). This was observed by Burdell (1996) who said that, “principals, often seek to exclude pregnant students and are pleased to be able to send them to separate programmes” (p. 184). Added to that, most inclusive programmes have been found to offer lip-service to the provision of equal educational opportunity to pregnant and former pregnant learners because most of them concentrate on parental and child development education at the expense of academic and career focused offerings (Weatherly, Perlman, Levine, & Klerman, 1985; Burdell, 1996; Zellman, 1981). Administrators and staff in such programmes think that because their clients are exclusively pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers, what they need most are parental life skills. As a result, it has been found that most of the students who attended inclusive programmes failed to graduate from high school to colleges (Weatherly et al., 1985; Burdell, 1996). This could indicate a discriminatory motive for establishing inclusive programmes that are meant exclusively for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, which are set up under the pretext of extending equal educational opportunities to such students.

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

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

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

Due to the complexity and interrelated nature of factors that could influence the educational experiences of pregnant and former pregnant learners, it may not be the existence of policy or type of programme that are of uttermost importance to achieve the
desired goals. Rather, I believe that positive attitudes and treatment of the pregnant learners should be the major avenue for successful integration. This is why I chose to explore the perceptions of different education stakeholders within a formal school system, which integrates learners who choose to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy.

2.3.2 Effects of TAPPs on pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ educational opportunity

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

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

To assess the impact of special programmes on repeat pregnancy, Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001) conducted a comparative evaluation of SCCs participants and non-participants, to determine if there was any difference in their rate of repeat pregnancy over a period of three years. They used a comparative and longitudinal experimental
research strategy with SCC participants as an experimental group and non-participants as the control group. Results indicated that SCC participants recorded only 6% repeat pregnancy compared to 37% of their non-participant counterparts. The study seemed to indicate that SCC programmes are valuable. Before that, a documentary survey by Brindis and Philliber (1998) had reported high rates of teenage repeat pregnancy. The evaluation by Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001), therefore, revealed the positive effect of SCCs in changing the lives of teenage mothers.

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

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

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

As can be seen from Table 2.3, most countries’ policies cater for the re-entry of former pregnant teens after giving birth and so serve teen mothers more than pregnant teenagers. Zimbabwe, South Africa, Madagascar and Cameroon are the only few countries whose policies do not limit attendance to the period after giving birth. An analysis of the provisions of the available policies (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1997; DoE, 2007; Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Hubbard et al., 2008) indicates that there is lack of detail on specific implementation strategies or methodological approaches at school level. The most common feature is that the re-enrolled teen mothers or pregnant learners should be fully included in all the learning activities in the school. To this end, only the principle of non-discrimination is addressed without going any further to provide extra assistance or interventions to the conditions of pregnancy and parenting which can present challenges to learning.
In the case of South Africa, it is clear that child care is the responsibility of the girl child and her parents, while by implication, the Zimbabwean policy circular sends the same message since the decision to continue or withdrew from school is to be arrived at by the pregnant learner with the full concurrence of her parents (DoE, 2007; MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). That being the case, there are no campus-based child care services or pre- and post-natal health care facilities for the pregnant and former pregnant learners similar to those provided for, by SCCs, NFS and the inclusive programmes in the USA. The DoE (2007) specifies that no medical assistance will be rendered by the school to both the mother-to-be and the new born child. It is, however, worth noting that counselling to both the pregnant and former pregnant teenagers and their parents can be undertaken by the school through life orientation in the case of South Africa, Guidance and Counselling in the case of Zimbabwe and Family Life Education in the case of Namibia (MoESC Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999; Gordon, 2002; MBEC, 1997).

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

The programmes in most of the African countries do not specify the extra-tuition assistance that should be provided to the pregnant learner during the period of absence from school, in order to give birth or care for the baby. However, the South African measures on learner pregnancy do clearly cater for this. In this regard the DoE (2007) instructs that educators should continue offering academic support to pregnant learners and assess all submitted tasks and assignments by the learners during the period of absence from school.
In Cameron the period of absence from school is negotiable and extra-lessons during this period are compulsory (Hubbard et al., 2008). This type of home bound support clearly requires a school-family partnership. This is also clearly indicated in the Zimbabwean system as parents are highly involved once a schoolgirl becomes pregnant (MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). In this study, since parents are important stakeholders in monitoring both the behaviour and academic work of their child, I therefore, decided to include parents or guardians of pregnant learners as key informants in my study.

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

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

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

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

With regard to benefits of the policy implementation to former pregnant teenagers’ access to education, results from Botswana and Namibia indicate that in both countries, there are more challenges than opportunities. In Botswana, for example, Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) concluded that the policy has not benefited the former pregnant girls because of opposition from the community and lack of political will from education administrators. They observed that some heads of schools would take these girls unconditionally while others would apply restrictions and excuses to refuse entry into their schools by former pregnant girls. They also noted that community members felt that the act of allowing former pregnant school girls back into schools does not help in
building responsible sex-attitudes and practices. Similar sentiments were expressed by Meekers and Ahmed (1999) and Chilisa (2002) on the same policy. Hubbard et al. (2008) also concluded that the Namibian policy that allows teen mothers back into school has met with positive criticism from human right activists and legal experts, but was surprisingly opposed by local communities that hold traditional views on pre-marital and teenage sexuality.

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

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

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

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

In Zimbabwe, earlier studies by Gordon (1995), Dorsey (1998), and Hof and Richters (1999) largely focused on gender inequalities in primary, secondary and tertiary education, which they viewed as the cause of schoolgirl dropout and poor performance compared to boys. In all these studies pregnancy and sexual abuse are highlighted as major causes of girls and women’s poor access, completion and achievement at different levels of education. The studies did not investigate the experiences of pregnant learners, who were enrolled in a formal school set up. Like the South African study by Grant and Hallman (2006), Hof and Ritchers (1999) studied Zimbabwean teenage mothers who had left school due to pregnancy and also concluded that there seemed to be a correlation between poor school performance and schoolgirl pregnancy.
Gordon (2002) explored the different causes of school girl pregnancy in Zimbabwe and why some girls who fell pregnant while at school had dropped out in spite of the existence of the policy that allows them to continue with their education (Gordon, 2002; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999). However, unlike the current study, available studies on schoolgirl pregnancy in Zimbabwe did not investigate the daily experiences and challenges of pregnant learners who were in school. Therefore with regard to Zimbabwe, my study is the first to investigate how formal school stakeholders respond to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who choose to continue with their education at formal schools. While Gordon (2002) studied pregnant teens that had dropped out of school, my study gathered the views of those who were still in school at the time the study was undertaken. This study is, therefore, the first to evaluate the extent to which pregnant and former pregnant learners who chose to continue with school could be benefiting from the policy that allows them to remain in school during and after pregnancy (Gordon, 2002; MoESC, Policy Circular Minute P.35, 1999).

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

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

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

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

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

...students who observe pregnant girls getting attention or teen mothers with “cute” babies receiving government subsidies (in the form of free day care) might be influenced to become teen parents (p. 229).
Such views, according to Burdell (1998), are the basis upon which the “curriculum of concealment” is founded (p.212). This is where pregnant and former pregnant teenagers are only accommodated as a policy obligation but without substantive benefit from school engagement.

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

In concurrence with the liberal discourse to teen pregnancy is what Kelly (1996) calls “critical or oppositional discourse”, which is critical of feminists for not directly highlighting the voices of pregnant teens and teen mothers in their discourses (p. 434). The oppositional paradigm proposes that family types should be diverse, and include single motherhood as a way of de-stigmatising single and teen parents. From the oppositional point of view, women should have the right to choose when, where, how and with whom to give birth, as well as access to free sexuality education. Societal myths about good motherhood as characterised by a woman who should be homebound, dependant and passive, are viewed as forms of stigmatisation which make women lose their self-esteem (Kelly, 1996). The critical or oppositional discourse strongly opposes both the bureaucratic experts’ notion that teen mothers are careless children who waste government resources, which should be reserved for more deserving cases like the elderly and physically handicapped. Kelly (1996) summarises the oppositional paradigm to teen
motherhood by observing that “Oppositional movements have created an alternative discourse that aims to reduce the stigma of teen pregnancy” (p. 434). In view of the observation that stigma could be one of the main challenges faced by pregnant and former pregnant learners (Kelly, 1996, 1998; Burdell, 1996; Brabin, et al., 1998; Miller, Cur, Shanok, & Weissman 2008), my study investigated and inferred into the perceptions and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers who chose to pursue their educational ambitions within the South African and Zimbabwean school contexts.

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

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

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

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

The above is similar to what Jansen (2002) terms political symbolism to define policies that are formulated without specific implementation strategies and the political will by policy duty bearers or implementers. Political symbolism to the policy of inclusion of pregnant and parenting in formal education is one area of investigation for my study. I
applied action science theory as the theoretical framework that explains the split between policy (espoused theory-of-action) and practice (theory-in-use), which is indicative of political symbolism to policy (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Jansen, 2001).

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

In line with this, I chose pregnant and former pregnant learners, and their parents or guardians, to be key informants for my study.
2.5 Implications of pregnancy on pregnant teenagers’ education

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

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

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

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

Rates of depression in pregnant adolescents have been reported between 26 – 44%, with the upper range found among urban minorities of low socio-economic status. Prevalence of depressive disorder in pregnant adolescents is over twice that of 10 – 12% found among pregnant adults … or that of 8 – 12% found in non-pregnant adolescents (p.733).
These are negative effects not only on the well-being and health of the baby, but also on the pregnant adolescents’ perceptions to life, and schooling in particular.

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

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

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

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

The importance of these findings for my study is that, although I did not investigate the pregnant and parenting participants’ personal lives, they provide broad perspectives of looking at what pregnant and former pregnant learners go through in their out-of-school lives. Furthermore, while abused in their private lives, some of the pregnant and former pregnant learners could encounter informal discrimination in school, even if they are protected by official legal instruments like Title IX, schoolgirl pregnancy management policies, now almost formulated and instituted in almost every African country (Manzini, 2001; Hubbard et al., 2008; Chilisa, 2002; Meekers & Ahmed, 1999; Weigand, 2005). This is why in my study, instead of just focusing on the official schoolgirl pregnancy white paper policy, I chose to investigate the experiences and perceptions of pregnant and former pregnant learners, their peers, parents and teachers within the school system, the home and the community.
A number of studies have revealed some of the barriers to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ education completion and achievement, which if redressed could change their life chances. These include inadequate child care and health services, displacement from home, inadequate transportation system between school and child care centres, inflexible school timetables and policies on absenteeism, social discomfort at school, spousal pressure to drop from school and seek full-time employment for the baby, insufficient financial and material resources for baby care and school fees, and negative societal and school attitudes (Weigand, 2005; Ahn, 1994; Miller et al., 2008; Ritchter & Mlambo, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hubbard, et al., 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). All these problems are in most cases compounded by the fact that pregnant and former pregnant teenagers have been found to be one of the marginalised groups that has not yet gained power for self-advocacy on their own concerns (Brindis & Philliber, 1998; Weigand, 2005). These challenges should be considered when coming up with both policy frameworks and implementation strategies on education programmes that seek to accommodate or mainstream the needs and concerns of pregnant and parent teens. My study, therefore, also investigated the manner and extent to which these concerns are addressed at the two schools where the case study was conducted.

2.6 Social factors to pregnant teenagers’ school participation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pregnancy takes place within a socio-cultural context, which McDade (1992) calls “social pregnancy” (p. 50). This is when society makes a distinction is made between a normal and a teen pregnant girl who has violated the social rituals by becoming pregnant. This could raise conflict between cultural values on pregnancy and the pregnant teenager’s educational needs (Emihovich & Fromme, 1998). According to this view teachers, other
learners and parents might hold certain culturally informed scripts about women sexuality and marriage, which could contradict the provision of formalised school services to pregnant and former pregnant teenagers. For example, a study in Botswana revealed that a breastfeeding mother is viewed as too ‘unclean’ to mix with the public and, therefore, should be excluded from schooling (Chilisa, 2002). This creates a limitation to young mothers’ rights to education. Burdell (1996) also posits that there are cultural and social discourses that construct in pregnant teens, limitations on their capacity for autonomous decision-making and participation in the public domain.

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

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

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

For example, in some more conservative cultural groups, parents can withdraw social and material support to a former pregnant daughter who is not married (Geronimus, 2004). The problems faced by teenage mothers need interventions that have broader social considerations. Emihovich and Fromme (1998) propose that:
...the problems teen parents present for school and society cannot be adequately addressed without an understanding of the cultural and social frames that have led to their prominence in society (p.140).

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

2.7 Considerations for intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers

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

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

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

Intended service delivery: Services to be provided should vary and be comprehensive to match individuals in the targeted population. The success of this relies on the appropriateness of staff skills, political will to give both home-based and centralised
services, and preparedness to develop good rapport with their clients. Brindis and Philliber (1998) emphasise that:

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

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

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

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

In support of the view that a broad approach which is sensitive to individual circumstances of each pregnant and former pregnant teenagers should be applied for service provision, Emihovich and Fromme (1998) add that teen pregnancy is more than a health issue and, that there is need for a multifaceted approach in responding to the various needs of pregnant and former pregnant learners.
**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for designing intervention programmes for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers (Brindis & Philliber, 1998).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th><strong>Client history</strong></th>
<th><strong>Social Status</strong></th>
<th><strong>Client Partner/Spouse</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Abused?</td>
<td>* Age</td>
<td>* Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Family violence</td>
<td>* Socioeconomic status</td>
<td>* Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Academic success</td>
<td>* Marital status</td>
<td>* Stability of relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Drug abusers?</td>
<td>* Family type</td>
<td>* Attitude to schooling of client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* School attendance record</td>
<td>* Family support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Living conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICES INTENDED</th>
<th><strong>Service types</strong></th>
<th><strong>Service incentives</strong></th>
<th><strong>Service delivery methods</strong></th>
<th><strong>Service personnel</strong></th>
<th><strong>Service delivery site</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Academic offering</td>
<td>* Financial support</td>
<td>* One to one counseling</td>
<td>* Qualifications</td>
<td>* Special school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Child and mother health care</td>
<td>* Transportation</td>
<td>* Group tutoring on family issues</td>
<td>* Experience</td>
<td>* Integrating school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Parental education</td>
<td>* Welfare grant</td>
<td>* Home visits</td>
<td>* Rapport with clients</td>
<td>* Non-academic school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Sex education</td>
<td>* Sanctions for absenteeism</td>
<td>* Referrals to specialists</td>
<td>* Attitudes and expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICES RECEIVED</th>
<th><strong>Target Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Responses to Service Delivery</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Pregnant teens only</td>
<td>* Voluntary enrolment</td>
<td>* Rate of absenteeism</td>
<td>* Reasons for absconding</td>
<td>* Interventions to low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Former pregnant teenagers only</td>
<td>* Reasons for absconding</td>
<td>* Interventions to low motivation</td>
<td>* Drop out and completion rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Pregnant and former pregnant teenagers</td>
<td>* Interventions to low motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Inclusion of family members, peers, relatives</td>
<td>* Drop out and completion rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE OUTCOMES</th>
<th><strong>Educational/Career Outputs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pregnancy Related Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Psycho-Social Outcomes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Completion rates</td>
<td>* Repeat pregnancy</td>
<td>* Attitude change of clients and publics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Participation in school programmes</td>
<td>* Child health</td>
<td>* De-stigmatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Entry into college/university</td>
<td>* Personal health</td>
<td>* Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Graduation and employment records</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Stress/Depression change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 An overview of findings from reviewed literature on teenage pregnancy and education

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

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

Due to agitation from feminist researchers and scholars at different UN forums, the right to education for pregnant and former pregnant teenagers began to filter into international conventions during the 1976 - 1985 UN decade on women (Stromquist, 1997, 2005; Submaharanian, 2005; Leach, 2000). To date, many UN member states, including South Africa and Zimbabwe where this study was conducted, have instituted specific policies that prohibit the expulsion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers from school (DoE, 2007; MoESC Minute Circular, P35, 1999; Kaufman, deWet & Stadler, 2001; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Mitchell, et al., 1999). However, studies conducted in Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Malawi revealed that there were inconsistencies in the manner in which education officials within the same country interpreted national education policies. Contrary to stated policy, some pregnant and former pregnant teenagers were denied school admission (Gordon, 2002; Chilisa, 2002; Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996; Hyde, 1999; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Manzini, 2001; Hubbard, et al., 2008).
Most recent research findings indicate that while pregnancy is one major cause of dropping out of school and low education completion rates among women, it is the pre-pregnancy conditions that were found the most common cause of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ decision to either continue or drop out of school (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Gordon, 2002; Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; McGaha-Garnnet, 2007; Seamark & Lings, 2004; Mensch et al., 2001; Zellman, 1982:15; Hof & Richters, 1999). In this regard, lack of interest in schooling, poor academic performance, poor school attendance, and poor girl-friendly school environment, were found to be some of the factors which pushed pregnant teenagers out of school.

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

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

2.9 Chapter summary

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

In chapter three, I present and discuss the theoretical framework that informed how I conceptualised and analysed the data obtained from the study. Since I sought to
investigate how the treatment of pregnant and former pregnant learners by different stakeholders could affect their educability, Argyris and Schon’s action science theory, which explains the relationship between human behaviour (theory-in-use) and policy (espoused theory-of-action) (Argyris & Schon, 1974) is outlined and discussed in the next chapter. The theory has particular relevance to my study since I investigated the social factors in the school, the home and the community that could influence attitudes towards and implementation of the official policy on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in formal education.
CHAPTER THREE

POSITIONING THE STUDY IN ACTION SCIENCE THEORY

3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

3.2 Choosing the theoretical framework

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

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

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

3.3 Positioning the study into Argyris and Schon’s theory-of-action

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

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

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

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

Therefore, guided by such empirical validation of Argyris and Schon’s action science theory or theory-of-action, I conducted my study being cognisant of the notion that formal schools’ implementation of policies on mainstreaming of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers could be affected by the stakeholders’ historical and socio-cultural
existence. My data gathering instruments were, therefore, structured to explore this phenomenon from the sampled respondents.

3.4 Argyris and Schon’s action science theory

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

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

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

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

Therefore, the theory-in-use is the overt behaviour, which is observed from how people act. Theories-in-use are socially constructed or learnt early in life from one’s immediate publics (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Fleming & Rutherford, 1986). To this end, people within the same cultural group are more likely to have similar theories-in-use. This is observed by Argyris and Schon (1974), that “versions of the same model of theories-in-use result from similar upbringing within a culture” (p.11).
This proposition has an important implication for my study because I sought to investigate how the study participants’ cultural contextualities influenced their perceptions of both the school girl pregnancy policy and the pregnant or teenage mothers who chose to continue with their education. This is in view of the premise that one’s theory-in-use determines and shapes one’s perceptions of the behavioural world and actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Furthermore, if theories-in-use are socially learnt, this implies that people have the capacity to de-construct poor theories-in-use and replace them with more acceptable theories-in-use. This means that if a person holds negative attitudes towards pregnant and former pregnant learners, there is room for positive change through a learning process. The implication of this for my study is that, the adoption and implementation of the policy guidelines on inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers in formal education should encompass a learning process that rationalises the policies, in order to replace any negative traditional practices and values on pregnant learners from education stakeholders. I therefore, argue that it is not enough to ratify international conventions on gender equity and design policy measures that aim to uphold pregnant and former pregnant teenagers’ right to education. The policies should be accompanied by a paradigm shift from any negative governing values, which social actors in schools might hold towards pregnant girls who choose to pursue their educational aspirations through the formal school system.

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

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

Therefore, it does not matter how rationally sound a policy may appear in addressing the problem at hand. It will only be practically relevant and applicable if it considers the lived experiences of the intended beneficiaries and people who could influence policy
implementation, that is, the policy duty bearers (UNICEF, 2003a). In this study, pregnant learners are the policy rights bearers, while educators, parents and school administration are the policy duty bearers.

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

The espoused theory-of-action is what a person believes in but does not implement in his/her actions. However, people justify their behaviour in given situations by referring to the espoused theory-of-action because it is more reasonable and acceptable to human standards. Anderson (1997) holds the view that the espoused theory and theory-in-use signify the split between policy and practice. Within an organisational setting, the major objective of action science theorists is to promote the implementation of professionals’ espoused theory because “it is desirable to hold an espoused theory and a theory-in-use that tend to become congruent over [sic] the long run” (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p.24). Implementing the espoused theory-of-action is like implementing the organisation’s policy, which Al-Kazemi and Zajac (1999) call the “organizational ethics code” or the “espoused moral theory of the organization” (p.353). This theoretical proposition was important for my study because one of my research questions sought to investigate factors that militated against the implementation of the policy regulations on the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers at the two schools where the study was conducted. From a study that tested the importance of congruence between an organisation’s espoused theory and its theory-in-use, Al-Kazemi and Zajac (1999) concluded that “the degree of congruence between an organization’s espoused moral theory and its theory-in-use does serve as one indication of its integrity and health” (p.354). For my study, therefore, participants’ attitudes towards the policy that direct
formal schools to mainstream learners who may fall pregnant while at school, was one of the research questions that I investigated. The reason I included this aspect in the research is that stakeholders’ attitudes towards policy has a bearing on their political will to implement policy change (Fink & Stoll, 1998). For without that political will and implementation strategies, change could remain an illusion or a form of political symbolism (Jansen, 2001, 2002; Hess, 1999).

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

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

The action scientist is an interventionist, seeking not only to describe the world but to change it … to help members of the client systems reflect on the world they create and learn to change it in ways more congruent with the values and theories they espouse (p. 98).
Theory-of-action scientists posit that people should reflect-on their actions, in order to learn new theories-of-action and modify or change their theories-of-action, particularly their theories-in-use. Schon (1982) uses the terms “reflection-in-action” and “knowing-in-action” to refer to how people re-examine their actions (p. 50). Argyris (1976) adds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Just as every individual has both theories-in-use and espoused theories-of-action, equally so, both single-loop learning and double-loop learning occurs within each individual. This means that all people have varying degrees of behavioural actions that reflect both Model I and Model II theories-in-use. However, research has indicated that most people generally operate at the Model I theories-in-use, which are learnt early in life and are characterised by inhibited reflection and critique of one’s actions and governing values. Such characteristics are consistent with and are a result of single-loop learning. Argyris (1990) observes that “Human beings cannot learn Model II without a lot of support from the society in which they live. The support comes from the social virtues” (p.19). Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) add that “people have been socialized to produce Model I because the world continues to operate largely according to Model I” (p.102).
This being the case, therefore, the main objective of theory-of-action practitioners is to stimulate reflective processes in human actions, which can encourage double-loop learning and Model II theories-in-use. This objective is also stated by Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) who propose that, “The action scientist intends to produce action consistent with Model II” (p.98). In my study, I took this to mean that schools should help educators, mainstream learners and the community to critically reflect on, re-examine and critique their interaction with and treatment of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers, who choose to continue with their education at formal schools in line with their legitimate right to education. Figure 3.2 summarises the two models of theories-in-use, which can both exist within one individual.
Figure 3.2: Congruence between Model I theories-in-use and single-loop learning, and Model II theories-in-use and double loop learning

Adapted from Argyris (1990).
It is important to distinguish between the characteristics of Model I and Model II theories-in-use so as to realise the benefits of Model II mode of behaviour. The main differences between the two are summarised in Table 3.1.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model I theories-in-use/social virtues</th>
<th>Model II theories-in-use/social virtues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suppression of all negative feelings.</td>
<td>Search for valid information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always acting to win not to lose.</td>
<td>Making free and informed choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting and controlling environment and others unilaterally.</td>
<td>Flexible and willingness to share information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unjustified attributions and evaluations.</td>
<td>High freedom of choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating courses of action that discourage inquiry.</td>
<td>Encouraging public testing of attributions and evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking one’s own views as obviously correct.</td>
<td>Surfacing of conflicting views and accommodating others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making prompt attribution and evaluations.</td>
<td>Increased rationalisation of one’s actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-saving, leaving potentially embarrassing facts/situations unstated or dealt with.</td>
<td>Increased self-introspection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little public testing of ideas.</td>
<td>Taking care of what could distort situations and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced search for valid information.</td>
<td>Saying what one know but would fear to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive, rigid and low freedom of choice.</td>
<td>Explaining and exposing principles, values, and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistant to change.</td>
<td>Accepting and creating alternative world view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased likelihood of single-loop learning.</td>
<td>Increased capacity to face unsurfaced assumptions, biases, fears (openness).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased likelihood of double-loop learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985)

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

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

3.6 Chapter summary

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

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

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