

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Literature has indicated that South Africa, like the rest of the world, has a huge teenage pregnancy problem (Integrated Regional Information Networks: 2007) (IRIN). “The number of pregnant schoolgirls jumped from 1169 to 2336 in 2006 in Gauteng, the country’s economic heartland and most populous province, according to statistics released in the provincial parliament” (IRIN, 2007:1).

The Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in 2008 revealed varying statistics on teenage pregnancy in South African schools. The following table shows the learner pregnancy rates per province from 2004 to 2008:

Table 1.1: Shows learner pregnancy rates per province from 2004 to 2008

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF PREGNANT LEARNERS PER 1000 REGISTERED	NUMBER OF LEARNERS CAPTURED
Eastern Cape	68.8	11852
Free State	53.6	2837
Gauteng	34.1	4866
KwaZulu-Natal	62.2	15027
Limpopo	60.3	12848
Mpumalanga	55.7	5015
Northern Cape	59.3	1070
North West	55.8	3211
Western Cape	34.4	2710
TOTAL	53.8	59436

Source: EMIS data for 2004-2008

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2009) (hereafter the PMG) insists that although the rate of teenage pregnancy has been declining in South Africa, it is still unacceptably high. It has been noted that the rate of teenage pregnancy was higher in some race groups as there were more teenage pregnancies in African and coloured groups compared to Indian and white groups (*ibid*).

Different reasons for teenage pregnancy have been widely documented. The Human Sciences Research Council (2009) (hereafter HSRC) has alleged that teenage pregnancy is due to the lack of proper guidance from parents and schools. Roche, Tucker, Thomson and Flynn (2004) have also noted that sex education is traditionally secondary to all other forms of education inside and outside of the school as there is a fear that it puts ideas into young people's minds.

Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009) (as cited in Bhana, Morrel, Shefer and Ngabaza, 2010) hypothesize that gender power inequalities restrict young women's sexual choices and that in many cases pregnancy is the result of coercive sex, with teenage girls being unable to negotiate condom use and being vulnerable to male pressure. In contradiction to this it has been noted that some girls fall pregnant deliberately with the hope of securing their relationships with their boyfriends or because they just want to have a baby (HSRC, 2009). Economic reasons teenage such as poverty and unemployment as money are often exchanged for sex, have also been linked to teenage pregnancy.

On the other hand, the Commission on Gender Equality blames the South African government for seemingly encouraging teenage pregnancies, as they argue that the government grants paid out to needy teenage mothers worsen the problem (Joubert, de Waal and Rossouw, 2004). A study by Makiwane and Daniel (2007) found no evidence to suggest that teenage girls are deliberately falling pregnant in order to receive the child care grant. In their study, Makiwane *et al.* (2007) suggest that this is not a widespread phenomenon because only 20% of teenagers who bear children are beneficiaries of the child support grant. In the same study, Makhiwane *et al.* (2007) found that the number of pregnancies among girls between the ages of 15

and 19 years peaked in 1996, two years before the child support grant was introduced.

Another issue raised as the reason for teenage pregnancy is the power imbalance between boys and girls in sexual relationships (Thorpe, 2002). An observation made was that sharing control in decisions within relationships was not seen as a possibility by the boys, and girls generally agreed that power was vested in boys (Thorpe, 2002). A double standard has been observed among black South African communities where teenage pregnancy is perceived as a problem, while on the other hand boys are encouraged to prove their sexual capability (Maseko, 2006:16). This results in boys putting pressure on girls to have sexual relations with them (*ibid*). In most cultures and societies sexual violence against women is not recognised as criminal behaviour and, as a result, much of the violence that girls experience at the hands of the boys is dismissed as normal behaviour for boys (Tomaszewski, 1991).

Interventions have been done to address the problem of high teenage pregnancy. According to the PMG (2009) the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) recommended the implementation of sex education in schools, with the focus both on abstinence and safe sex. The DoBE has also promoted community-based interventions where parents and children are encouraged to communicate on sexuality issues (*ibid*). The National Curriculum Statement has included Skills Programmes in Learning Areas such as Life Orientation, which is compulsory from grades R to 12 (Department of Education, 2007). Life Skills programmes include topics such as human sexuality, negotiating abstinence, dealing with peer pressure, teenage pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, etc. (*ibid*).

The government has made the access to contraceptives easy as they are available at no cost from the government hospitals and clinics (Ehlers, 2003). The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996 was passed in 1997 and this Act provides abortion on demand for a variety of cases like when a woman is pregnant because of rape (Government Gazette, 2008; McQuoid-Mason, 2010). Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009:1) point out that, "Policy responses to teenage pregnancy since democracy in 1994 have focused on empowering teenagers to prevent pregnancy".

The Girls' Education Movement (GEM), which was launched in 2003, is aimed at raising awareness about out of school girls and reporting them to the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2005). GEM clubs also provide materials on managing and eliminating gender- based violence and some of these materials have been translated into Braille so as to accommodate blind learners (Department of Education, 2005). Nevertheless, the problem is still continuing and the rate of teenage pregnancy has not dropped to the satisfaction of the government (IRIN, 2007).

Before 1994 there was no written national policy on learner pregnancy and therefore the decisions on this issue were left to the discretion of the individual schools, with the consequence that pregnant learners were expelled as soon as the school managers learned about their pregnancies (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides, 2009). Following the high rate of teenage pregnancy and the consequences thereof, the South African government formulated a policy in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 that gives a directive on how schools should be run. According to this Act, "No person may unfairly discriminate against a learner. All learners shall enjoy equal treatment before the law and shall receive equal protection and benefits of the law" (Department of Education, 2003: B-36). This, however, is in contrast to many other developing countries like Mozambique, Togo and Zanzibar where teenage mothers cannot return to school after giving birth (Shaningwa, 2007). This marks the end of education for pregnant learners.

The Bill of Rights, as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108/1996, affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, including the rights of the children (Section 28) and the right to education (Section 29). Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter the Constitution) guarantees the right to basic as well as further education for everyone, which the state must make available and accessible (Joubert, de Waal and Rossouw, 2004). The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 clearly states that, "every person is to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or educational institution on any grounds whatsoever" (Department of Education, 2003: A-4).

The aim of all these policies is to prohibit all gender discrimination, since schoolboys who father children do not face the same sanctions as pregnant school girls (Shaningwa, 2007). In the same vein, the democratic government is committed to gender empowerment and to ensure that all children of school- going age, especially girls, have access to education (Department of Education, 2005). Literature has emphasised the importance of educating the girl child as she will then grow up to be a mother who will be able to understand the importance of her own children being educated, and will also be better able to provide for her children (Shaningwa, 2007 and Hannes, 2007).

In South Africa where pregnant learners have had a legal right to continue with schooling since 1996, few studies have been conducted to examine how this is benefitting the affected children and how formal schools have responded to this (Runhare, 2010). Studies have shown that there is no strict monitoring of these policies (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare, 2010) as a result of which, the main aim of them, which is to educate the girl child, is in vain as pregnant learners continue to drop out of school before the completion of their education (Mpanza, 2006; Nkani and Bhana, 2011 and Runhare, 2010).

Literature has also shown that the stakeholders of the schools have different perceptions of the policies that call for the mainstreaming of pregnant and parenting learners in formal education (Runhare, 2010; Wright, 2008 and Shaningwa, 2007). This study aims to explore the perceptions of the school stakeholders which include educators, learners and parents on the policies that demand the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Teenage pregnancy is one of the major factors leading to girls dropping out of school especially in developing countries such as South Africa (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare, 2010). In an effort to bridge the gap between male and female educational access the South African government has put forward policies which allow for the

continued enrolment of learners who could fall pregnant while at school (Runhare, 2010). However, there is evidence that pregnant girls continue to drop out of school even though these policies are in place (Mpanza, 2006 and Maseko, 2006). Hence this study investigated the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners and one of the stakeholders being the learners themselves.

1.3 Research questions

For this study I have focussed on one main research question and three sub-questions. These research questions are listed below:

1.3.1 Main research question

What are the school stakeholders' perceptions of the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the two selected secondary schools?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

1.3.2.1 How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the selected schools?

1.3.2.2 What are the stakeholders' views on supporting the pregnant learners academically, and why?

1.3.2.3 What are the leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions on mainstreaming of pregnant learners?

1.4 Purpose of the study

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools. It also aimed to

investigate the way the pregnant learners are perceived and treated in their schools, and the views of the stakeholders on supporting the learners academically. The study aimed, as well, to look into the leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

1.5 Significance of the study

Most studies undertaken on the issue of teenage pregnancy have focused on issues like the reasons for pregnancy, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, expulsion of pregnant learners from school and attitudes towards pregnant learners (Mpanza, 2006 and Maseko, 2006). Studies that focus on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners are very few in South Africa. These studies have given a voice only to educators and parents (Mpanza, 2006 and Nkani & Bhana, 2011). There is a gap where learners' voices should be so this study aims to close that gap.

In South Africa there are policies in place that demand that pregnant learners be allowed to continue with their studies in all public schools until such time that they decide to stop (Runhare, 2010). Literature has revealed that most of the time the stakeholders of the school are ignorant of the policies that are in place for the mainstreaming of both pregnant and parenting learners in public schools and this has resulted in those learners being victimised at their schools (Nkani and Bhana, 2011). According to Runhare (2010) there is inadequate dialogue on-, and understanding of these policies among stakeholders within schools. "There is a need for studies to be undertaken to assess particularly the implementation of policy measures on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in their schools" (Runhare, 2010:4).

This study is significant in many ways including the following:

- It will explore the relationship between policy and practice and investigate whether the policies are serving their purpose of educating the girl child.

- It will look into the challenges faced by the educators in coping with the responsibility of ensuring that the pregnant learners have access to the type of education that is equivalent to that of other learners.
- It will look at the coping mechanisms of pregnant learners should they choose to continue with their schooling in ordinary schools.
- It will give the parents an opportunity to know more about mainstreaming policies and also to reflect on these policies and their practices.

1.6 Scope or delimitation of the study

This study focused on the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. It was conducted in two secondary schools in East London in the Eastern Cape Province

1.7 Key Concepts

This section presents a definition of some of the concepts as they relate to this study.

Stakeholders: An organisation or body with a direct and continuing interest in the education institution, programme, phase or sector in question (Department of Education, 2003). The stakeholders I am referring to for the purpose of my study are the educators, learners and parents.

Teenage pregnancy: When a girl who is between the ages of thirteen and nineteen falls pregnant (Mpanza, 2006). In this study it will refer to any learner who falls pregnant.

Perceptions: The attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought (Lindsay and Norman, 1977).

Mainstreaming: This is the enrolment of learners with special needs in a regular school (Chambers, 2001). For the purpose of this study this refers to the continued enrolment of pregnant and parenting learners in ordinary secondary schools.

The next section discusses the organisation of the study.

1.8 The organisation of the study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The outline of these chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

This chapter focused on the introduction and background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope or delimitation of the study and key concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter looked at the literature that is going to support some of the arguments that are going to arise from the discussions. Firstly, I have discussed mainstreaming as the conceptual framework and also conceptualise teenage pregnancy. Secondly, I have focused on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in South Africa and the policies around the management of learner pregnancy. Thirdly, I looked into the factors that affect the implementation of policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. Lastly, I focused on the perceptions of learners and parents on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

Chapter 3: Research methods and methodology

This chapter looked at the overall approach, paradigm and design of this research. It also consisted of the methods that will be used for collecting data which include interviews, observations and document analysis. I also discussed the sampling I followed to select the research site and the research participants and also discuss the size of the sample. The remaining sections of this chapter focused on data analysis, research trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

This is where the actual data from the research was tabled and discussed. After that it was analysed so as to make sense of what was being said by the participants

Chapter 5: Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study

In this chapter I have drawn conclusions from the data and then made my own recommendations. I presented a critical overview of the study and reflected on the main findings. I also looked at the lessons learnt from this study, the limitations of it and made suggestions for future research on the basis of the study.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented an overview to this study. This included, amongst other things, the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions and the significance of the study. The next chapter, the literature review, presents and discusses the main theoretical arguments and research findings based on existing literature in order to make new claims for my study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

South African schools face many challenges with learner pregnancy being one of them. As indicated earlier my study will be looking into the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. The school stakeholders this study refers to are the educators, parents and learners.

The review of literature related to this study is divided into eight sections as follows:

2.1 Conceptual framework: mainstreaming

2.2 Conceptualising teenage pregnancy

2.3 The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in South Africa

2.4 The policies around the management of learner pregnancy in South Africa

2.5 Policy intent and policy implementation

2.6 Factors that affect the implementation of policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

2.7 Perceptions of learners on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

2.8 Perceptions of parents on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

Lastly the conclusions have been drawn based on the arguments that have risen during the discussions.

2.1 Conceptual framework: mainstreaming

Landsberg (2005:7) defines mainstreaming as “the educational equivalent of the normalisation principle which suggests that people with disabilities have a right to life experiences that are the same as, or similar to, those of others in society.” Mainstreaming affords children with special needs an opportunity to be in an environment in which they can grow as individuals in much the same way that others do in mainstream schools (Cigman, 2007). The goal of mainstreaming is to return learners with disabilities to the mainstream of education as much as possible, alongside normally developing peers (Landsberg, 2005).

There has been a debate on whether mainstreaming and inclusive education mean the same thing (Cigman, 2007; Landsberg, 2005; Chambers, 2001). The verdict has been that they are different from each other but one cannot take place in the absence of another (*ibid*). In differentiating between the two, Chambers (2001: 19) says, “Mainstreaming is the placement of children with disabilities in ‘regular’ classrooms, while inclusion is ensuring that every child is able to participate in and benefit from all activities with the same opportunities as children without disabilities.” Therefore, for positive results mainstreaming and inclusive education must co-exist.

During the apartheid era in South Africa provision of schooling for children with disabilities was segregated and diverse (Chambers, 2001). White children were better provided for than the children from other racial groups, with the black children having practically no provision (*ibid*). This resulted in black parents keeping their disabled children at home, not through choice but simply because there was no alternative schooling available for them (*ibid*).

When the democratic government came into existence in 1994, a policy that would cater for all learners was put in place (Runhare, 2010). The South African Schools Act of 1996 directs that all children should have access to learning and to equal opportunities in education (*ibid*). This Act also states that where necessary the children should be given support and state resources should be provided to ensure this (Chambers, 2001). Also, under this Act schools may not refuse access to

children with special needs, and parents have a right to choose where they want their children placed (*ibid*).

Mainstreaming has its advantages and disadvantages both socially and academically (Engelbrecht & Green, 2009 and Evans, Lunt, Wedell & Dyson, 1999). The social advantage is that children with disabilities get to learn in the same environment with peers who do not have disabilities (*ibid*). By doing so, learners with special needs get to interact with their peers in the ways that would not happen in special schools and this boosts their self-esteem (Chambers, 2001). The academic advantage is that learners with special needs get to receive the same curricular material as their nondisabled peers (Engelbrecht and Green, 2009). This gives the disabled learners an opportunity to learn something that they may not have had a chance to learn in special schools (*ibid*).

The social disadvantage is that some disabled learners have behavioural needs that can be embarrassing to the disabled learner when these needs are addressed in front of non-disabled learners (Chambers, 2001). This can be more damaging to his or her self-esteem than would happen if the learner was not mainstreaming (*ibid*). The academic disadvantage is that the learner with special needs may not be able to keep up with the work like the rest of the class (Evans *et al*, 1999 and Chambers, 2001). The extra effort that the educator has to put into helping learners with disabilities to understand their work may result in the rest of the class being neglected (Engelbrecht & Green, 2009).

The South African Schools Act of 1996 classifies pregnant learners as children with special needs (Department of Education, 1996). This study is focusing on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools. In view of the observation that mainstreaming of pregnant learners may pose challenges, my study is investigating the perceptions of the educators, learners and parents in mainstreaming of pregnant learners in selected schools.

2.2 Conceptualising teenage pregnancy

A teenager is any person who is between the ages of thirteen and nineteen (PMG, 2009) and pregnancy is a process between conception and childbirth (Mpanza, 2006). Since this study is dealing with learners, teenage pregnancy will, therefore, mean when a teenage schoolgirl falls pregnant while still at school (Mpanza, 2006).

Studies have shown that this is the age where learners are more vulnerable to engage in risky social and sexual behaviour (Social Surveys, 2010). “There is greater peer pressure to have sex, greater freedom and independence, accompanied by more sexual opportunities, as well as physical maturity (*ibid*: 1). Teenage pregnancy is viewed as a social problem in many developed and developing countries (Maseko, 2006). It can no longer be perceived as a personal problem as it is very prevalent even here in South Africa (*ibid*).

The United States of America (USA) has the highest teenage pregnancy rate among the developed countries (Women’s Health Care Physicians, 2009). Every year in the USA it is estimated that 750 000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 become pregnant (*ibid*). The table below illustrates the pregnancy rate by age of teenagers in the USA from 1990 to 2004:

Table 2.1 Shows pregnancy rates (per 1000 women in specified group) by age

Age (y)	1990	1995	2005	2002	2004
<15	3.4	2.9	2.0	1.7	1.6
15-19	116.8	101.1	84.8	76.0	72.2

*Data from Women’s Health Care Physicians (2009). Adolescent Facts: Pregnancy, Birth and STDs. Washington, DC. : The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The pregnancy estimates in Table1 include the sum of live births, induced abortions and miscarriages (Women's Health Care Physicians, 2009:5). Between 1990 and 2004 the teenage pregnancy rates in USA decreased by 38% in the 15-19 years age group (*ibid*). From Table1 there is evidence that in girls below the age of 15 years the teenage pregnancy rate between 1990 and 2004 decreased by 53%. Between 1995 and 2002, most of the decline in teenage pregnancy (86%) was due to improved contraceptive use and the remaining 14% was due to teenagers delaying sex (*ibid*: 6). Despite these changes teenage pregnancy rates in the USA are still considerably high (*ibid*).

More than 90% of teenagers in USA who give birth choose to raise their babies themselves (Women's Health Care Physicians, 2009). They rarely give their babies up for adoption (*ibid*). In the USA 8% of infants born to unmarried teenagers aged 17 years or younger are placed for adoption (*ibid*: 9). Studies conducted in the USA have established that teenage childbearing has a negative impact on the teenage parents' schooling and on their future as adult citizens (*ibid*).

The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in South Africa will be discussed in the next sub-section.

2.3 The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in South Africa

The problem of teenage pregnancy is a major concern in many countries including South Africa. Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009:675) point out that the rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa is high and they claim that the problem lies in "accepting, or even encouraging the sexual appetites of young people rather than sternly disciplining them."

The rate of teenage pregnancy has been shown to be high in some racial groups compared to others. For instance the study conducted by HSRC on South African fertility trends in 1994 found that 48% of black women, 17% of coloured women, 30% of Indian women and 17% of white women gave birth before turning twenty years of age (Maseko, 2006). A study conducted in South Africa and Zimbabwe by Runhare

(2010) on institutional responsiveness to mainstreaming of pregnant girls in formal education showed that rural and low income group settlements have higher teenage pregnancies than middle and upper income social groups.

The two schools which are research sites in this study are in the East London District of Education which is in the Eastern Cape Province. The 2006 Annual Survey of the Eastern Cape Department of Education shows figures and statistics on reported cases of pregnant learners in the Eastern Cape districts in 2006. The following table shows the results from this survey:

Table 2.2: Shows cases of pregnant learners in Eastern Cape districts in 2006

Districts	Grade 8	Grade9	Grade10	Grade11	Grade12	Total
B/Worth	32	54	57	57	57	257
Cofimvaba	37	40	31	33	21	162
Cradock	7	6	11	10	7	162
Dutywa	44	56	80	60	35	275
East London	14	26	37	46	32	155
F/Beaufort	4	10	10	10	11	45
Graaf Reinet	6	10	12	14	12	54
Grahamstown	13	11	25	33	30	112
KWT	29	26	35	39	29	158
L/Frere	15	35	11	19	14	94
Libode	60	101	112	75	48	396
Lusikisiki	77	10	164	128	133	512
Maluti	23	38	37	36	14	148
Mbizana	37	59	80	61	49	252
Mt Fletcher	20	29	25	47	32	153
Mt Frere	19	34	16	9	15	93
Mthatha	71	76	94	84	71	396
Ngcobo	26	28	29	35	17	135
P.Elizabeth	13	28	97	78	50	266
Queenstown	17	30	46	35	19	147
Qumbu	24	38	30	22	35	149
Sterkspruit	37	32	35	18	14	136
Uitenhage	12	18	33	36	25	124
TOTALS	648	913	1131	1003	790	4485

Source: Eastern Cape Department of Education Annual Survey (2006)

Literature has put forward many reasons for, or factors contributing to, teenage pregnancy and these include lack of proper guidance from parents and schools, coercive sex due to gender power inequalities, poverty and unemployment, to mention just a few (HSRC, 2009; Roche, Tucker, Thomas and Flynn, 2004 and Bhana, Morrell, Shefer and Ngabaza, 2010). Some authors like Joubert, de Waal and Rossouw (2004) even blame the government for seemingly encouraging the teenage pregnancies through the payment of child support grants, although some studies argue against this, showing that there is no correlation between the child support grant and the high rate of teenage pregnancy (Runhare, 2010 and Nkani & Bhana, 2011).

Interventions have been done to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa. These include the inclusion of sex education in schools through Life Orientation, the Termination of Pregnancy Act which allows for termination of pregnancy during the first trimester, and also the availability of free contraceptives in all government clinics and hospitals (PMG, 2009; Department of Education, 2007; Ehlers, 2003; McQuoid-Mason, 2010 and Government Gazette, 2008). Due to these interventions the rate of teenage pregnancy has been shown to decline. Kanku & Marsh (2010:564) point out that, "Teenage pregnancy rates in South Africa have dropped from 7.8% in 15-19 year olds in 1996 to 6.5% in 2001."

In support of the argument that teenage pregnancy rates have declined in South Africa, the following table illustrates the percentage of South African teenage girls who have ever been pregnant in 1998 and 2003:

Table 2.3: Shows the percentage of South African teenage girls (15-19) who have ever been pregnant

Province	1998	2003
Eastern Cape	18%	14%%
Free State	13%	15%
Gauteng	10%	12%
KwaZulu-Natal	17%	2%
Limpopo	20%	17%
Mpumalanga	25%	13%
North West	13%	14%
Northern Cape	18%	15%
Western Cape	16%	14%
South Africa	16%	12%

*Source: Berry, L. and Hall, K. (2009, September). Teenage Pregnancy. HIV&AIDS and STI: National Strategic Plan 2007-2011, p1-4.

In spite of these figures the rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa is relatively high when compared to the USA (5.3%), Brazil (4.5 %), Australia (1.6%), Japan (0.4%) or Italy (0.6%) (Kanku & Mash, 2010:564). Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009) further argue that the key to success in teenage pregnancy is to make girls aware of their rights and the risks of sexual intercourse, and that there is a need for engagement with men and boys on the issues of masculinity, their role in child rearing and how they can avoid pregnancy from happening. From my point of view,

including boys in teenage pregnancy issues is a smart move as it takes two to fall pregnant. This is why this study is also looking into the perceptions of male learners on mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

2.4 The policies around the management of learner pregnancy in South Africa

Before 1994 there was no written national policy on the management of learner pregnancy and therefore the decisions on this issue were left to the discretion of the individual schools (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides, 2009). Pregnant learners were expelled as soon as the school managers learned about their pregnancies (*ibid*). Although in the past schools used to expel learners, after 1996 learners were given a right to stay in the classroom even if they are pregnant (Mpanza:2006).

There had been a proposal for the teenage mothers to stay at home for the period of two years after giving birth so as to take care of the child, but it was stressed that the two-year plan was not a policy; it was just a suggestion that was made in the interests of the child (PMG, 2009). The assumption here was that the pregnant learner would take some time off to make new arrangements for the baby that is coming on board and then she could reconnect with the school system (*ibid*).

The policy on teenage pregnancy for South African public schools is clearly set out in the Measures for Prevention and Management of Teenage Learner Pregnancy, which the Department of Education has made known to all public schools in South Africa (DoE, 2007). In this document the Department of Education stresses its intention to provide an environment in which learners are fully informed about reproductive matters and the risks thereof through Life Orientation and other learning areas in the curriculum (*ibid*). The information in these documents is underpinned by three important constitutional principles: the right not to be discriminated against, the right to education and the rights of the child (*ibid*). Furthermore the document takes into consideration the legal and other requirements pertaining to children and learner

pregnancy looking at the condition of the new born baby and the possibility that the learner goes back to school (DoE, 2007).

According to the DoE (2007) guidelines, learners are required to take leave of absence from school in order to address pre-and post-natal health concerns as well as to care for the new born baby. In addition, the guidelines state that a learner must produce a medical report declaring that the learner is fit to resume classes. The pregnant learner should also be able to demonstrate to the school principal and the School Governing Board (SGB) that proper arrangements have been made for the care and safety of the baby (DoE, 2007).

The South African Schools Act of 1996 is against the expulsion of learners for any offence committed and also states that the expulsion of learners lies with the Head of Department after correct procedures have been followed (Department of Education, 2003).

Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter the Constitution) guarantees the right to basic as well as further education for everyone, which the state must make available and accessible (Joubert, de Waal and Rossouw, 2004). The National Education Policy Act of 1996 clearly states that, "An educator is required and expected to uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools (Department of Education, 1996). This implies that in whatever way educators operate, they should not violate the Constitution when disciplining learners.

The Bill of Rights, which is Chapter 2 of the Constitution, also states that every child has a right to education and therefore every child of school going age deserves to be at school during school hours (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1994). Schools operate under the supreme Constitution; it is therefore "important for the principals and educators to know the law relating to school discipline and punishment and to be familiar with legal concepts, principles and procedures so that they can continue building and maintaining effective schools" (Joubert, de Waal and Rossouw, 2004:79). The democratic government is committed to gender

empowerment and to ensure that all children of school going age, especially girls, have access to education (Department of Education, 2005).

The policies allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners; however, Chigona and Chetty (2007) have noted that in Sub-Sahara Africa and other developing countries girls are losing the battle for equal access to education. "In South Africa 61 percent of the uneducated adult population are women" (*ibid*: 1). In Zimbabwe the Education Ministry released a circular in August 2010 which granted pregnant girls three months maternity leave and male students responsible for these pregnancies also qualified for paternity leave (Runhare, 2010). However, members of the community felt that this would promote irresponsible sexual behaviour among learners by removing preventive punishment (*ibid*). Consequently this circular was reversed and in September 2010 pregnant girls and boys responsible for these pregnancies were to be expelled from school (*ibid*). After much debate, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of expelling learners, the decision on expulsion was reversed again (*ibid*). Presently the pregnant learners and the affected boys can go on leave and then continue with their studies later on (*ibid*).

In my study, the mere existence of positive learner pregnancy management policies is not the central issue. Instead it is the perceptions of the school stakeholders on mainstreaming of pregnant learners that needs to be examined. The next section discusses the policy intent and policy implementation.

2.5 Policy intent and policy implementation

As the main discussions of this study are around the policy that legislates the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, this section looks into the issues of policy intent and policy implementation in general. This might help in understanding what is entailed when the policies are formulated, the reasons behind policy formulation and also what needs to be done to ensure that the policy has been effective or has done what it had set out to do.

The 1994 elections brought about huge constitutional and political changes. This culminated in the adoption of a new Constitution with specific values that should be respected by all South Africans as well as institutions in South Africa. The new Constitution has created new processes, structures, institutions and procedures that serve as mechanisms for policy formulation in the new constitutional dispensation (Matshikwe, 2004).

Cloete (1994:102) claims that the policy process can be placed in three groups, namely:

- Policy making process (this includes formulation and legitimization).
- Policy implementation process.
- Policy analysis and evaluation processes.

Hanekom (1987) states that by breaking down policy making into different phases makes it possible to get a clear picture of its very nature.

This section discusses the intentions and development of a policy and the implementation thereof.

(a) Policy intent and policy formulation

Gumede (2008:8) defines public policy as “all formal publicly known decisions of governments that come about through predetermined channels in a particular administration.” Public policy is shaped by the interaction between the state and interest groups (Matshikwe, 2004). These interest groups must be recognised by the state so that they can be allowed representation (*ibid*). Policies are made, implemented and evaluated by public officials and by governmental institutions duly authorised or specifically established to do so (Hanekom, 1987).

In their guidelines for policy formulation, development and review, the University of the Free State (2005:1) argues that the policies assist in:

- Providing guidance with regard to the execution of actions and provide persons working in the organisation with a framework as to the manner in which actions are to be executed.
- Promoting efficiency within the organisation in that ideas do not continually have to be deliberated.
- Ensuring consistency in the performance of activities, especially in cases where operating units are geographically or strategically scattered.
- Ensuring compliance with legal and other requirements of the organisation and they also serve as a tools for quality improvement within the organisation.

Public policy formulation is guided by certain values, which should be observed by all organs of state (Hanekom, 1987). In South Africa the courts play a key role in protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms (Matshikwe, 2004:127). In fulfilling this function and enforcing observance of the Bill of Right by others, the courts are bound to promote values that underlie an open democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom (*ibid*). Hanekom (1987) also mentions that vision is an important component of policy development and is useful for giving policy making and policy implementation a sense of purpose.

Political policy, which will be the policy of the ruling party, will always be the highest policy level in the public sector (Cloete, 1994). The governing party sets objectives (policy) which point the way in which the authorities will direct community life (*ibid*).

Matshikwe (2004) states that institutions as cultural systems include families, religious institutions and educational institutions. These cultural systems impose a major constraint on policy formulation, especially in countries like South Africa where the society is not homogenous (*ibid*). This means that policies should accommodate and cater for cultural and religious diversity.

The University of the Free State (2005) has recommended the following steps when embarking on the development of a new policy or the review of an existing policy:

- Identification of the issue or problem to be addressed.

- Necessity of a new policy.
- Consultation with appropriate stakeholders.
- It should now be determined who will be affected by the proposed policy and who should assist in the development of the proposed policy.
- It is also important that those who will be affected by the proposed policy should be consulted throughout the drafting process and their inputs and comments obtained.

In linking the above steps to this study I would say the issue or problem that needed to be addressed was the high rate of pregnancy among learners in South African schools. This resulted in a large number of learners dropping out of schools due to expulsion from their schools, amongst other reasons. This, in turn, necessitated the formulation of a policy that would allow the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling until such time that they feel unfit to do so. The stakeholders, with respect to this study, who are affected by this policy are the educators, the parents and the learners.

(b) Policy implementation and evaluation

O'Toole (2000) argues that the practical world is now just as much in need of valid knowledge about policy implementation as it ever has been.

Policy implementation is what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action.

(O'Toole, 2005:265)

O'Toole (2005:266) also argues that clients or targets of the policy must be more than recipients of publicly initiated efforts. They are among the parties who have to be active toward implementation, through co-production or in a less direct fashion. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides fundamental rights to be respected by all legislative and executive organs of the state (Matshikwe,

2004). This means that individuals should exercise their rights so that they can influence policy-making (*ibid*). There are many acceptable ways in which the individuals can make sure that their voices are heard, especially when they feel that they are not pleased with the policies that have been formulated and implemented. Matshikwe (2004:43) asserts, “An individual can draw up a petition which can be submitted to others for signature before submitting it to the relevant public institution, political office bearers or officials. A petition submitted to the legislature will have an impact proportionate to the number of signatures it bears.” Matshikwe (2004) also points us to Section 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which states that everyone has a right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present a petition. This means that South Africa, being a country that practises democracy, gives its citizens a chance to voice their opinions about policies that have been put in place, as long as proper channels or procedures have been followed.

Hanekom (1987) argues that, although policy making and policy implementation are two distinct and distinguishable functions, they are so closely interrelated that separating them is difficult, if not impossible, or impractical. Public policy becomes significant only when implemented, usually by the public official who originally formulated the policy (*ibid*).

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa stipulates that public institutions that are responsible for the execution of policies must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution (Matshikwe, 2004:64-65). This includes the following principles:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly equitably and without bias.
- People’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making.
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information (*ibid*).

Many principles have been mentioned but I have selected only those principles that are relevant to this study. In the case of this study, the public institution that is responsible for the execution of the policy on the management of learner pregnancy is the school. This means that when the schools are drawing up their policies on management of learner pregnancy, the above principles should be taken into consideration.

After the policy has been implemented, it has to be analysed and evaluated (Hanekom, 1987 and Matshikwe, 2004). In the public sector policy analysis is concerned with conditions affecting implementation such as efficiency, recipients, monitoring and enforcement (Hanekom, 1987). Policy analysis provides the policy makers with relevant information that can be used either in the adoption of existing policies or in devising proposed policy (*ibid*). The findings from this study will assist the policy makers when analysing the policy on management of learner pregnancy to see whether the objectives of the policy have been achieved.

Hanekom (1987:89) claims that public policy evaluation has often been referred to as the last stage of the policy process. On the other hand, Matshikwe (2004) argues that policy evaluation occurs as a continuous process throughout the policy process. During the evaluation of a policy the people who determined and implemented the policy and those who were affected by the policy attempt to establish if it has really worked (*ibid*). Again, the findings from this study can be used when evaluating the policy on the management of learner pregnancy. Hanekom (1987:89) further argues that public policy evaluation is an appraisal or assessment of policy intent, implementation and impact in order to determine the extent to which the specified policy objectives have been or are being achieved.

The next section discusses the factors that affect the implementation of policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools.

2.6 Factors that affect the implementation of policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

In a study on teenage mothers, Chigona (2007) established that the policies managing learner pregnancy in South Africa have certain shortcomings as schools partially comply with them. Some of the reasons pointed out are:

- schools have problems implementing the policy as it has little consideration on how schools respond to the special needs of teenage mothers;
- schools and teachers do not make special provisions to address the learning difficulties that hinder the teen mothers' education process;
- some principals are not sympathetic to the needs of teen mothers and therefore do not make special arrangements to accommodate them; and
- teachers do not have the necessary skills to deal with teen mothers' situation (Chigona 2007).

The above argument implies that if the guidelines on the management of learner pregnancy are to be implemented in an appropriate manner, the school community should be clearly capacitated to understand the implications of the departmental policies. In this section I am going to discuss cultural factors and inadequate training of educators on mainstreaming of pregnant learners as some of the factors that affect the implementation of policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

2.6.1 Cultural factors

Before I discuss this section I would like to quote Geronimus (2004:158) on the influence of culture on the decisions taken by the community:

“Cultural ideals are central to the development of personal identity. Conversely, cultural ideals are central to the intensity and rigidity into

which parents or adults express specific social control messages and to their willingness to provide social support, and to whom”.

During the time the pregnant learner is on ‘maternity leave’ the school should make sure that the learner continues with her studies at home (Department of Education, 1996). “Alternative suitable arrangement must be made to cover the curriculum. This means that lesson notes and assignments must be made available to her and that she must take responsibility for completing and returning the assignments to the school” (WCED, 1996). In theory this will ensure that by the time the learner returns to school, she is not behind in the syllabus. This puts the school in a difficult position as the teachers may not be willing to go that extra mile, like making alternative arrangements for the pregnant learner to cover the curriculum at home (Mpanza, 2006).

In a study conducted in Zimbabwe it was noted that the educators also face a challenge, especially in rural communities where culture and morals are still held high (Shaningwa, 2007). Here the educators are confronted by parents who do not approve of having a pregnant learner amongst their children as they see pregnancy as an immoral behaviour (*ibid*). Lema (1997), as cited in Shaningwa (2007), points out that in some developing countries, regardless of age, a girl is regarded as an adult after she has given birth. The girl is, therefore, expected to terminate her education and assume adult responsibilities (*ibid*).

The new curriculum in South Africa has included sex education as a separate module to be taught in Life Orientation, which is a learning area that is supposed to educate the learners about the facts of life (Department of Education, 2007). Nevertheless this has been a problem in most schools as the educators are not comfortable with this topic and most of the time there is disagreement over who should teach it (Shaningwa, 2007). In African culture the adults are not allowed to talk about sexual matters with the children (*ibid*).

One of the areas of conflict between pregnant learners and the communities, as pointed out by Chigona and Chetty (2008), is on the culturally prescribed dress code for pregnant women. According to cultural values, especially those of Africans,

Page 28 of 176

pregnant women are not supposed to wear close-fitting clothes that show off their pregnant bodies. Women who turn a blind eye to this dress code not only embarrass themselves, but rather embarrass the rest of the women folk with them (*ibid*). Unfortunately, pregnant learners have to wear school uniform when going to school and usually the school uniform is not shaped like a maternity gown, therefore it tends to emphasise the shape of the growing abdomen. This results in pregnant learners being ridiculed on their way to and from school (Chigona and Chetty, 2008 and Shaningwa, 2007).

Section 9 of The South African Schools Act (1996:3) cautions the school authorities to abide by the policies in place in order to avoid any action that may constitute unfair discrimination against the pregnant learner. However, the pregnant learners should also understand that some members of the school community might not readily accept the pregnancy and not be supportive of their situation because of the value systems to which they subscribe (*ibid*).

The above arguments imply that pregnancy is socially defined, and that there are underlying socio-cultural factors that could influence how the educators perceive and treat pregnant learners. In a study by Runhare (2010), the perceptions of pregnant learners in school, home and family were investigated. This is what this study was aiming to do but in a different context.

2.6.2 Inadequate training on mainstreaming of pregnant learners

As much as some educators and the school management team are aware of the Department of Education's policy regarding learner pregnancy, some are concerned that they are not trained on how to handle emergencies that may result from pregnancy, like being in labour (Mpanza, 2006).

Schools have been advised to enter into a written agreement with the parent or guardian of the pregnant learner (WCED, 1996). In this agreement it will be stated clearly that during the time of pregnancy the learner is attending the school at her own risk (*ibid*). The school will not be accountable for any pregnancy-related

injuries or incidents that may happen to the pregnant learner while at school (*ibid*). From this statement it can be argued that the Department of Education is only concerned about the learner getting education; it is not concerned about the health of the learner or the risks that come with being pregnant. This again questions the implementation of the policy and whether the beneficiaries are benefiting from it (Runhare, 2010). According to Maseko, "It is suggested that the government policy allowing pregnant and parenting adolescents to remain in school should be augmented by establishing educational structures accommodating the needs of these learners, as well as by offering training for teachers to deal with factors affecting the [pregnant or] parenting learner" (2006:59).

Since the WCED (1996) policy itself makes it clear that the pregnant learner attends school at her own risk, some educators, being parents themselves, feel that by chasing pregnant learners away from school they are doing them a favour as they can get a chance to stay at home where they will be taken care of by their relatives who can then take responsibility for whatever happens to their children (Ruppel, 2009). As some educators have voiced their concerns about not being trained on how to handle pregnant learners and the complications that come with being pregnant (*ibid*), they may need professionals to come and equip them with basic skills on how to handle teenage pregnancy and how to deal with emergencies that result from pregnancy.

In a study by Mpanza (2006) some educators have argued that the lack of training and equipment to help pregnant girls creates a negative attitude to the mainstreaming policies and to the pregnant learners themselves. Bloem (2000), as cited in Chigona and Chetty (2008:269), argues that, "Teachers may need professionals to come and inform them about handling teens and their situations, and they need in-service training to keep track of changes that the society is facing." The NSE document requires the educator to be knowledgeable about the problems of the community and to demonstrate the ability to deal with current social and educational problems appropriately (Department of Education, 2000).

In an American study about schools' response to teenage pregnancy and parenthood, it transpired that schools do not even have a comprehensive written policy concerning the management of learner pregnancy (Zellman, 1981). This is after nine years of the enactment of Title X, an American policy that allows for the pregnant and parenting learners to attend regular schools (*ibid*). The fact that policy regarding the management of learner pregnancy is not strongly enforced or does not exist at all in regular schools allows staff attitudes about learner pregnancy and parenthood to dominate (Zellman, 1981; Runhare 2010 and Nkani and Bhana, 2011).

Educators have different views on mainstreaming of pregnant learners (Mpanza, 2006; Runhare, 2010 and Bhana *et al*, 2010). Carlson (1992) and Kelly (1998) (as cited in Runhare, 2010) categorise educators into two groups, namely the conservative and the liberal in terms of how they perceived and treated pregnant and parenting learners. The conservatives state clearly that those learners should be asked to leave school once pregnancy shows and come back after giving birth, or better yet register in another school where they are not known (*ibid*). Some of the reasons given are that these learners give the school a bad image and are a bad example to other learners (Mpanza, 2006 and Shaningwa, 2007). The liberals, on the other hand, support the mainstreaming of pregnant learners (Runhare. 2010).

When the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners were formulated the assumption was that the girls would receive adequate support from their educators (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Unfortunately some educators consider the pregnant or parenting learners' situation a private matter and none of their concern (*ibid*). The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) document requires the educator to have extensive knowledge about community problems (Department of Education, 2000). In my opinion learner pregnancy, which is teenage pregnancy, is a community problem.

There has even been a call for separate schools for pregnant and parenting learners (Runhare, 2010). Some of the reasons to support this are that pregnant learners are difficult to discipline by educators as they are now adults by virtue of being pregnant,

and the schools have no facilities for pregnant people (*ibid*). Developed countries like the USA agree that education should be accessible to both pregnant and parenting learners with the option of attending single-sex schools where only such learners study (*ibid*). In justifying the negative attitude of the educators towards pregnant learners, some educators say that they are retaliating to the bad behaviour and negative attitude of the pregnant learners themselves (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

The conservatives also feel that the mainstreaming policies are contributing to the moral decay among teenagers and only serve to increase the rate of teenage pregnancy, school indiscipline and declining standards in some schools (Mpanza, 2006 and Runhare, 2010). Some educators opposed the policies on mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools because it is against their cultural values, and they viewed schools as places of innocence where innocent children should not be allowed to mix with pregnant learners in case they copy their bad behaviour (Bhana *et al.*, 2010 and Runhare, 2010).

It has been noted that pregnant and parenting learners have a high rate of absenteeism compared to their peers and so the schools fear that these learners would fail, which, in turn, would lead to low pass rates in the schools (Mpanza, 2006). The mainstreaming policies have also been found to create confusion in schools as one of the educators pointed out that, “The Department [of Education] wants too much from us...on the one hand they demand good results, on the other they expect us to support the pregnant learners” (Nkani & Bhana, 2011:5). Educators have also cited lack of support from parents who do not come when they are invited by the schools to come and discuss their daughters’ intervention programmes (*ibid*). The NSE document requires the educators to be knowledgeable of learning barriers and how to overcome these barriers (Department of Education, 2000). Because of this I am of the view that educators should be able to come up with strategies that would put the pregnant learners on the same level as other learners so that they may pass at the end of the year.

In some cases where pregnant learners continue schooling, they are often described as and assumed to be incapable learners; as a result educators give up on them (Chigona and Chetty, 2007). Instead of supporting the pregnant and parenting learners to complete their schooling, this attitude of educators can result in pregnant learners dropping out of school. Being pregnant does not automatically mean that the girl will be hopeless as a learner.

A contrasting view often held by some educators is that sometimes when learners return from maternity leave they bring an enhanced academic performance with them (Zellman, 1981). Taking into consideration the fact that some of these pregnancies are the result of rape and ignorance on the part of the teenagers, if the conservatives had their way, girl children would continue to bear the burdens of rape and promiscuity (Runhare, 2010). This would pave the way for yet more generations of impoverished and uneducated women (*ibid*). Also, it is not only pregnant learners who fail at school, other learners fail too. Therefore in my opinion it is unfair to the pregnant learners for them to be associated with failure automatically. As Duncan (2007:309) argues, “It is not babies, but social disadvantage that ruins young mothers’ lives.”

However, not all educators have written off pregnant learners as a hopeless case. Some educators have noted that when teenage mothers return to school they perform better academically (Zellman, 1981). This may be due to the fact that these learners have become more serious about school than before because of their parental responsibilities. As Zellman (1981) asserts, students generally attribute their more mature attitudes to the fact of being a parent and their babies’ dependence on them for financial and emotional support. Many parenting learners describe how motherhood makes them feel stronger, and marks a change for the better (Duncan, 2009). For them parenting seems to provide an incentive or motivation to continue their schooling so as to get a good education which will secure good employment in the future (*ibid*).

Even though there are negative sentiments against the inclusion of pregnant learners in public schools, there is acknowledgement that these learners have a right

to education. The liberals, which are the majority of educators, support the mainstreaming of pregnant learners on the bases that this can help to achieve gender equality in education and in society (Runhare, 2010). Educated girls can be financially independent and not depend on social grants and abusive men to take care of their babies (*ibid*). “Whereas the conservative discourse calls for punitive measures to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, the liberal discourse is based on the premise that pregnant and parenting learners have an equal right to education” (*ibid*: 70).

Punishment has to be corrective but when a child is denied her right to education, in my view that becomes punitive, not only to the pregnant learner but also to her unborn child. Some educators have noted that some of the girls do become positive and serious after falling pregnant and were eager to achieve their goals and so they deserve to be given a chance to continue with their schooling (Shaningwa, 2007 and Mpanza, 2006).

As much as there are policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, no counselling is provided for them to help them cope with the stigma attached to teenage pregnancy (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This is in contradiction to the Department of Education policy of 2003 on managing learner pregnancy in schools, which states that, “The [pregnant and parenting] learner must be considered to be a learner with special needs with access to counselling by professionals of the Special Learner and Educator Support (SLES) unit with the Education Management Development Centre (EMDC)” (*ibid*:270). Chigona and Chetty (2008) argue that the absence of counselling in schools is a big blow for a teenager who is completely under-developed psychologically and emotionally.

In view of the observation that stigma and lack of support could be one of the challenges faced by pregnant learners in mainstream schools, my study is investigating the perceptions and treatment of pregnant learners in selected schools.

Educators are the people who are supposed to implement the mainstreaming of the pregnant learner’s policy at school level (Department of Education, 2007). Their perceptions on this policy have already been discussed in this section. The following

two sections discuss the perceptions of the learners and parents, respectively, on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

2.7 Perceptions of learners on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

Runhare (2010: 3), whose study has been looking at the institutional responsiveness to mainstreaming of pregnant learners in South African and Zimbabwean formal schools, argues that, “Currently no study has been hosted in both countries to assess the effectiveness with which the continued enrolment of pregnant learners has been implemented in formal schools.” Literature has indicated that all the school stakeholders did not get formal education on management of learner pregnancy (Runhare, 2010).

Despite this, pregnant learners in South African schools have been found to be more aware of their legal right to continue with schooling and they have been exercising it (*ibid*). Nevertheless it has transpired that pregnant and parenting learners are having difficulties in coping with their school work and this has resulted in some of them dropping out of school (Mpanza, 2006 and Maseko, 2006). In the 2000 Commission on Gender Equity report to the South African Ministry of Education it was stated that a number of complaints had been received from pregnant learners concerning the manner in which their schools had been treating them (Chigona and Chetty, 2007:3).

Learner pregnancy management policies in South Africa have made learner pregnancy a school concern, whether or not schools wish it to be so. However, Zellman (1981) points out that policies may serve to override attitudes, but more commonly reflect and reinforce them. “When policies are informed and casually enforced, attitudes dictate policy” (*ibid*: 51). Even though the Department of Education 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 (Runhare, 2010), some learners have

voiced their disappointment in not getting support or assistance from schools while they are on maternity leave and even when they are back in school (Mpanza, 2006 and Maseko, 2006). There is evidence that some learners who miss their lessons for reasons that are not related to pregnancy are often assisted by the educators to catch up when they return to school (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). However, this is not the case with pregnant learners (*ibid*). In the light of this information I can safely say that the pregnant and parenting learners are being ostracized. Because some pregnant learners wish to get the same treatment as their peers, they conceal their pregnancy until birth (*ibid*). This gives them an opportunity to be treated like any learner who is absent because of illness (*ibid*).

In developed countries like America pregnant learners have an option of attending special schools where they could be assisted to learn to balance schoolwork and parenting (Zellman, 1981). In South Africa there are no such schools; pregnant and parenting learners are expected to attend regular schools. In America it has been noted that those learners who choose to stay in regular schools during pregnancy receive little or no extra help from regular school staff (*ibid*). In a South African study by Chigona and Chetty (2007), one school principal admitted that in their school there is no arrangement for the pregnant learner who is on maternity leave to catch up with the rest of the class. In this school when the learner returns she is expected to ask from other learners what has been done during her absence and then see to it that she does whatever she is supposed to do if she is left behind (*ibid*). This lack of support from the head of the school may influence attitudes of teachers and other learners towards pregnant learners.

In an attempt to make the learning environment of teen mothers socially welcoming, Chigona and Chetty (2008) are of the view that separate schools for pregnant and parenting learners should be made available in South Africa. These schools should be optional to those who feel that they cannot cope in regular schools for different reasons, with a curriculum that is the same as that of regular schools (*ibid*). The advantages of separate schools include the elimination of stigmatization, ridicule and prejudice as all the learners there would be in the same situation (*ibid*). In my

opinion this may help to boost the self-esteem of pregnant learners especially if that is coupled with counselling.

Studies have shown that pregnant and parenting learners, including their peers who have never been pregnant have different views and perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners (Bhana *et al*, 2010; Shaningwa, 2007 and Maseko, 2006). It has been shown that some of their peers, that is those who have never been pregnant, show sympathy to pregnant learners and welcome the mainstreaming policies as they feel that the pregnant learners have learnt from their mistakes and therefore deserve to be given a second chance (Maseko, 2006 and Shaningwa, 2007). In many studies the boys, especially, were the ones who have been shown to display a very negative attitude towards the mainstreaming policies, as a result of which they often bullied and ridiculed pregnant girls to such an extent that they refused to go back to school (Runhare, 2010; Shaningwa, 2007 and Maseko, 2006). Chigona and Chetty (2007) point out that in South Africa there are no strong policies to deal with any mockery, teasing and marginalising of teen mothers in school. These offensive comments may affect the teen mothers in a negative way and they may be forced to drop out of school. Moreover, some studies have established that fear of expulsion and stigmatization has led to dangerous abortions among female students (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare, 2010).

Literature has indicated that when some pregnant girls continue coming to school they experience a lot of intimidation and prejudice from both learners and educators (Shaningwa, 2007 and Mpanza, 2006). Pregnant learners are often made to feel unwelcome in school. They are ignored, ridiculed or put down by their peers and their participation in class is equally unwelcome (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Pregnant learners often complain of being ridiculed by their educators in front of other learners when they have not fulfilled the class requirements (Chigona and Chetty, 2007). Sometimes the pregnant learners will resist the teachers' use of judgemental language in front of other learners and speak back to the negative remarks they encounter (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Unfortunately this gives the learner a reputation of being problematic and the educators therefore do not consider empathising with pregnant learners (*ibid*).

The mainstreaming policies are aimed at promoting girls' education but pregnant learners drop out of school because they experience rejection from other learners (Shaningwa, 2007 and Ruppel, 2009). There is evidence that negative treatment towards young mothers is a global problem (Runhare, 2010 and Shaningwa, 2007). Even in developed countries where the mainstreaming of pregnant learners has been legalised since the 1980s, many young mothers face the greatest challenges in terms of the way they are treated by their peers (*ibid*). Pregnant and parenting learners complain of being subjected to different types of abuse in school which ranges from loss of friendship, isolation, mockery, negative labelling to being given nicknames by others (Runhare, 2010). A study conducted in Kenya revealed that about 48% of pregnant learners undergo harassment at school (Shaningwa, 2007).

For a woman of any age being pregnant comes with its problems, be it physical or emotional. This means that pregnant learners need some support in order for them to cope at school. Pearton (1997), as cited in Chigona and Chetty (2007: 277), argues that, "Adolescents are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first fall pregnant." Despite this, mature and adult decisions are required of these emotionally pressured adolescents (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This means that pregnant learners need tremendous support to facilitate their schooling. If society expects the girls to succeed with schooling, provision must be made to meet the special needs of these learners (*ibid*).

Studies conducted in Sub-Saharan countries have established that teenage mothers could not cope with parenting and that they lacked parental skills (Runhare, 2010; Shaningwa, 2007 and Maseko, 2006). In a Zimbabwean study by Shaningwa (2007) some parenting learners agreed that they do not have enough time to focus on their schoolwork, especially at home, because of the added responsibility of being a mother. Even though family members may help in looking after the child while the young mother goes to school, the mother is primarily responsible for looking after the child (Maseko, 2006). As a result, as soon as the girl returns home from school she has to take over her responsibility as a parent immediately (*ibid*).

Denying pregnant learners the support they need to pursue education condemns them and their babies to a vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance (Runhare, 2010). Adequate support to pregnant and parenting learners would enable most of the girls to stay in school and succeed in getting their Matric certificates (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This would give them a better chance in securing better employment which, in turn, would make them independent adults who would be able to support their children. This is necessary as in most studies pregnant and parenting learners have indicated that their relationships with the babies' fathers ended when the fathers learnt about the pregnancy (Shaningwa, 2007; Chigona and Chetty, 2007 and Nkani and Bhana, 2011). Very often the babies' fathers are "also young, unemployed, have low level of education...and live in a low socio-economic community ... As a result these girls do not get any kind of support from the babies' fathers." (Maseko, 2006: 27). It is the educators' duty to offer academic support to the pregnant learners and teenage mothers. The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) document requires an educator to guide, counsel and tutor learners in need of assistance with social or learning problems and demonstrate the ability to respond to current social and educational problems (Department of Education, 2000).

Chigona and Chetty (2008) argue that the counselling process for learners should be managed and co-ordinated by the school principal. However, the counselling process poses two challenges for the schools. The first one is that the school principals seem to be too busy to co-ordinate the counselling process (*ibid*). The second one is that, since there are very few professional counsellors to cater for a large number of schools, professional counselling in public schools is not readily available (*ibid*). This calls for educators to equip themselves with basic counselling skills. The NSE document also states that the educator should demonstrate caring, committed and ethical professional behaviour which includes an understanding of education in dealing with the protection of learners and the development of the whole person (Department of Education, 2000).

Educators themselves might be in need of guidance or sensitization with respect to how they can encourage and support teen mothers academically (Chigona and Chetty, 2008: 277). The NSE document requires the educator to recognize and

Page 39 of 176

judge appropriate intervention strategies to help learners to cope with learning and other difficulties (Department of Education, 2000). Educators should also access and work with professional services to deal with social and learning problems of the learners (*ibid*). In my view this may help the educators to cope with having pregnant learners in their classes so that they do not make these learners' lives worse because of their insensitivity.

Some pregnant and parenting learners have given positive feedback on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners (Shaningwa, 2007 and Maseko, 2006). These are mostly from urban areas studying in urban schools (Shaningwa, 2007). These learners were reported to show gratitude for being given a chance to continue with their schooling (*ibid*). They have also been shown to be more serious than ever as they now know that they have a responsibility to raise a child and they see getting education as a solution to their problems (Shaningwa, 2007 and Maseko, 2006).

Due to the negative and conservative discourses, some of the programmes that have been outlined in the learner pregnancy policies have been found to exist only as a requirement that prohibits the expulsion of pregnant learners (Runhare, 2010). To this end, the educational experiences and outcomes intended for the benefit of pregnant learners were found to be on the negative side (*ibid*). This study, therefore, intends to investigate how the pregnant learners themselves perceive their mainstreaming.

The next section discusses the perceptions of parents on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools.

2.8 Perceptions of parents on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

The findings of the study conducted by Runhare (2010) on mainstreaming of pregnant girls have shown that the parents of both pregnant and mainstream learners, including those who serve in the school governing board, indicated that they did not know anything about the policy guidelines on the management of learner pregnancy. They also pointed out that they have never even discussed the issue

with the school management (*ibid*). In a South African study by Mncube (2009) it transpired that only 55 % of parents in the School Governing Boards confirmed their knowledge of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. This proves that even to this day there are schools in South Africa where parents are not yet playing their full role as governors mandated by legislation (Mncube, 2009). It has also been established that sometimes even parents in the School Governing Board (SGB) are not given a chance to be involved in decision-making; decisions are taken by the school principals and the school management teams (*ibid*). This is in contradiction with the democratic school governance which implies that all the school stakeholders, including the parents, decide on school policies which affect the education of their children (*ibid*). One parent in the SGB of a certain school is quoted as saying, "At times as parents we are not given the chance of full control as parents of learners of the school and decisions are taken by the SMT while they need to have been taken by the SGB" (Mncube, 2009: 91). In some cases the parents in the SGB have to endorse a decision taken by the principal and his or her SMT (*ibid*). There is also an issue of the parents in the SGB being undermined by the school principal and the staff. A parent in the SGB of one school noted that in some cases if the parents raise an issue in an attempt to check whether the correct procedures are being followed, no one takes the parents seriously (Mncube, 2009).

Parents at some rural schools are reluctant to participate in the decision-making by the SGB as a result of their low educational level or of power struggles in SGBs (Mncube, 2009). "In practice, parent governors are not at all participating fully yet since many of them lack the skills to perform the duties assigned to them" (Mncube, 2009:85). In such situations, the principal continues to perform functions now supposed to be the responsibility of the SGB (*ibid*). Because there are parents who are not aware of or familiar with the policies that keep pregnant learners in school, some schools use the parents' ignorance to their advantage and trick the parents of pregnant learners into taking their daughters out of school (Nkani & Bhana, 2011). This way it will look like the parents took their daughter away out of their own free will, and the school is, therefore, protected against the violation of the policy as parents have been part of the decision against the policy (*ibid*). Sometimes, even

when the parents are aware of their children's rights, they are afraid to challenge the school practices because they fear the victimisation of their children, like the school failing their children deliberately (Mncube, 2009). "This is in line with Martin (1999) whose research suggests that a 'good' parent is one who does not ask too many questions and does not involve himself or herself in professional matters of the school" (Mncube, 2009:96).

Pregnant learners have cited lack of support from their parents when they choose to continue with schooling (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This may be due to the fact that in African culture the mistake of falling pregnant is viewed as a shame and curse to the girl's family (Runhare, 2010). Consequently parents feel that girls who fall pregnant while they are young have no discipline, and, as a punishment, they should not be allowed in school (*ibid*). Some parents feel ashamed of their daughter's pregnancy, as a result of which they distance themselves from their daughter (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Others feel that by supporting their pregnant daughter they would be condoning the alleged bad behaviour, so they punish the girl by withdrawing their support (*ibid*). This is evident in the case where a new mother's parents may gladly provide resources to her and her child if she is married, but withhold the same resources if she is not (Geronimus, 2004). Section 9 of the South African Schools Act (1996:3) acknowledges the fact that some members of the school community might not readily accept the pregnancy and not be supportive of their situation because of the value systems to which they subscribe.

There have been reported cases where a parenting learner would not have time for her studies at home because no one at home is prepared to look after the child while the mother is busy with schoolwork (Chigona and Chetty, 2007). The learner's relatives may be willing to look after her baby while she goes to school but as soon as she comes home from school the responsibility of looking after the child is hers alone (*ibid*). In a study by Mncube (2009) 94% of the parents agreed that it is the parent or the guardian's responsibility to provide time and space for his or her child's homework. However, since the parents had given up on teen mothers, they did not consider creating a sound educational environment at home for the girl as a priority (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

The Euro-Americans have a culture that calls for biological parents to be self-sufficient in the care of their children (Geronimus, 2004). This means that the parents should not expect support from others whom they cannot afford to pay (*ibid*). In a society such as this parents and other members of the community may not see a need to support a teenage mother in looking after her baby, especially if she will not pay them. In most cases the teenage mother cannot afford such payments. In contradiction to that, in the Zimbabwean system parents are highly involved once a schoolgirl becomes pregnant and they are required to monitor the behaviour and academic work of their child (Runhare, 2010). “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” (Runhare, 2010:69).

Some parents complain that allowing pregnant and parenting learners in public schools is like rewarding these learners for immoral behaviour (Shaningwa, 2007). One of the parents in a study by Runhare (2010) argued that schools are faced with a difficult situation as it is very difficult to discipline a girl with a baby even at home. The parents therefore viewed the mainstreaming of pregnant and parenting learners in schools as lowering the quality of education (*ibid*). In some communities where pregnant learners are still expelled from school there are cases where pregnant girls are reported by other parents that they are pregnant because these parents fear that pregnant learners will send negative messages to their children who are in the same class as the pregnant learner (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

There are, however, parents who support the mainstreaming of pregnant and parenting learners. These parents see the exclusion of these learners from schools as double punishment for the same offence as they feel that pregnancy in a young girl is already a punishment on its own (Ruppel, 2009). Some parents would like to see the pregnant learners getting a good education so that they can grow up to be independent adults who will be able to take care of their own kids in the future (Shaningwa, 2007). There are even parents who support their pregnant daughters by accompanying them to school or fetching them after school so as to protect them

from public abuse because they understand that their pregnant daughters also have a right to education (Runhare, 2010).

It is clear from the studies that have been discussed that the role played by the parents and their influence on the education of their children cannot be ignored. Hence this study is also examining the views of the parents on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above arguments that most of the school stakeholders have different perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. What is more evident is the way mainstreaming policies are poorly implemented in schools. It looks like the stakeholders are not familiar with these policies and therefore they are not aware of the positive side of these policies. There is also evidence that the Department of Education has also failed in monitoring the implementation of these policies, an important step that could serve to address all the problems, fears and worries that are experienced by the stakeholders of the schools regarding the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. This study will, then, give the school stakeholders a chance to reflect on these policies and their practices.

In the next chapter I have discussed the research methods and methodology relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explores and analyses the different research methods that have been used in conducting my study. The research methods and approaches selected were determined by the purpose of the study, which is to investigate the perceptions of the educators, parents and learners on the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in school.

As I have piloted my research questions before conducting the main study, I have discussed the main study as well as the pilot study. In the main study I discussed the overall research approach, the research paradigm, the research design, data gathering instruments, sampling, negotiation of entry, data analysis and ethical issues.

3.1 The overall research approach: qualitative research

For my study I have used the qualitative approach. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) indicate that the qualitative method investigates the why and how of decision making. This approach was relevant for my study because I was going to interview the stakeholders of the school who are part of decision making in the school (Educators Labour Relations Handbook, 1996). Henning (2004:1) defines qualitative research as “research that seeks to understand and explain argument by using evidence from the data and from literature what the phenomenon being studied is about.” Through this study I was trying to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders of the school on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners. I have also used evidence from the data and from the literature to try to explain the arguments that might arise from this study.

The qualitative research approach is characterised by the description and interpretation of the world of the participant in the context of the study in an attempt to get shared meanings with others (Bassey, 1995). With this research I was trying to understand how the stakeholders of the school perceived the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools and my findings were backed with the literature. Shaningwa (2007) points out that female researchers, when investigating the challenges faced by teenage mothers in schools, run the risk of injecting their own personality and experience into the study. To produce a qualitative study, I had to be sensitive to biases inherent in qualitative research (*ibid*).

There are some documented strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative approach. I have started by mentioning some of the strengths of qualitative approach.

3.1.1 Strengths of a qualitative approach

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not rely on statistics or figures to interpret its findings (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). It examines complex questions that can be impossible with quantitative methods (*ibid*). This has been useful in that the research questions in this study could be answered mainly through verbal communication where I was able to probe further so as to get more information. As Maxwell (2005:22) points out, “In a qualitative study you are interested not only in the physical events and behaviour that are taking place, but also in how the participants in your study make sense of these, and how their understanding influences their behaviour.”

Qualitative research enables more complex aspects of a person’s experience to be studied, and individuals can be studied in more depth (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). This is something that would be impossible for me to achieve had I opted for a quantitative approach where I would have to rely on statistics. “The interest in a qualitative study is in process rather than outcomes” (Maxwell, 2005: 23). This does not mean that qualitative research is not concerned with outcomes, but the emphasis

is that the strength of a qualitative research is in getting at the process that led to these outcomes (*ibid*).

In a qualitative research, participants are able to provide data in their own words and in their own ways (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). This is an advantage in that fewer assumptions, if any, would be made by me in this study.

Qualitative research also provides understanding and descriptions of people's personal experiences of phenomena (*ibid*). By choosing to use the qualitative approach, I was hoping that it would provide me with the understanding of the stakeholders of the school's experiences and perceptions on the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools.

The weaknesses of a qualitative approach are discussed in the next section.

3.1.2 Weaknesses of a qualitative approach

It generally takes more time to collect the data in a qualitative research when compared to a quantitative one (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). This is true, but it also means that I should set myself a time limit for each task. For instance, I planned to take not more than an hour for each interview and the whole process of collecting data was to be completed within three months.

Another weakness is that data analysis in qualitative research is often time consuming (Henning *et al.*, 2004). This is because open-ended questions can sometimes create lots of data, which can take a long time to analyse (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). In this case, I needed to be fully prepared when I conducted interviews so that I knew what I was looking for. This helped me to maintain my focus and not to deviate from the point of the discussion.

The results in qualitative research can be more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). As a result, it is harder to determine the extent of the influence that the researcher had over results (*ibid*). Cohen and Manion (1994) caution us about the problems surrounding the use of

interviews which could result in invalidity and bias. They argue that the sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer and the respondent, which include the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer towards the respondent, and preconceived notions on the part of the interviewer to what is being asked (*ibid*). In the light of this argument I was careful to minimise the amount of bias.

Knowledge produced might not generalize to other people or other settings (Henning *et al.*, 2004). This means that findings might be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study (*ibid*). In this case I had to be sure of the transferability of the findings of my study. Transferability is the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Transferability of findings has been discussed in detail under the section on Trustworthiness which is discussed later on in this chapter.

3.2 The Research Paradigm: interpretivism

“A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003). For this research I have used interpretivism. The importance of this paradigm is its ability to reflect the reality as perceived by each individual’s own experiences and interpretations (Shaningwa, 2007). It allowed me as a researcher to gain understanding of the stakeholders of the school and their perceptions on the mainstreaming policies. “The interpretive paradigm aims to capture the worlds of the people by describing their situations, thoughts, feelings and actions and by relying on portraying the research participant’s lives and voices” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004:499).

The interpretive design is characterised by a concern for an individual and his or her subjective world of experience and treats human behaviour as varied and informed by the situation and the context where it takes place (Shaningwa, 2007:30). It is primarily concerned with human understanding, interpretation, inter-subjectivity and lived truth and the attempt to understand human experiences at a holistic level (*ibid*).

Since the purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions of the stakeholders of the school on the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners, this would help to inform the relevant decision makers and policy makers in the area in which this study is located.

As I was dealing with different stakeholders, this research paradigm helped me to understand and make sense of the actions and views of my participants from an individual perspective and to understand that different people can perceive the same social phenomenon differently.

Interpretive research also tries to understand the social world as it is from the perspective of individual experience (Rossman and Rallis, 2003:46). This was relevant in this study in that this helped me to get the stakeholders' thoughts and feelings about the mainstreaming of pregnant learners and also to be able to look into their actions from their points of view.

3.3 The Research Design: case study

Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in Runhare (2010:14), define a research design as a "plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance." A research design, therefore, constitutes everything that the researcher employs and does, in order to implement the research proposal, answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the research (*ibid*).

For my research I have used a case study. A case study research is a research "... in which a specific situation is studied, either to see if it gives rise to any general theories or to see if existing general theories are borne out by specific situations" (Goddard and Melville, 2001:9). In my case the situation studied was the perception of the stakeholders of the school on the mainstreaming policies. Punch (2005:145) defines a case study as "... a method of studying social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case. The case may be a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of social life". In this

Page 49 of 176

study the phenomenon being studied was the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, and the case was the stakeholders of the school which are the educators, learners and parents.

Yin (1994) differentiates between two types of case studies, namely, holistic case studies and embedded case studies. A holistic case study is one which is focused on the case as a unit of analysis (Yin, 1994). In an embedded case study the case still functions as the unit of analysis, but there are also sub-units of analysis within the case (*ibid*). In this study the focus was on the stakeholders of the school only, which in this case were the parents, educators and learners only. This is, therefore, a holistic case study.

The advantage of a case study is that it is based in reality although it is difficult to organise a case study which studies the issue in depth (Cohen and Manion, 1994). It is widely believed that case studies are useful in the study of human affairs because they are down to earth and attention-holding (Stake, 1978). The fundamental nature of a case study is that it tries to shed light on a decision or set of decisions, that is: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what results (Yin, 2003). The greatest strength of the case study method is to allow the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work (Shaningwa, 2007:32). This case study allowed me to focus on the issue of mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools and how the parents, educators and learners perceive this.

As I explored the perceptions of the stakeholders on mainstreaming policies, I had found the case study approach to be applicable in my study because “the case study method is an extremely useful technique for researching relationships, behaviours, attitudes, motivations and stresses in organizational settings (Runhare 2010:16). With this case study I was able to understand the reasons behind the school stakeholders’ actions, attitudes and responses towards the mainstreaming policies. “A case study is both a process of learning about a case and the product of our learning from a case: a case study report” (Johansson, 2004: 31). With this case study I was hoping to learn more about the perceptions and attitudes of the school stakeholders

on mainstreaming of pregnant learners as I interact with them during the interviews. In return I was hoping that anyone who showed interest in the topic of my study would benefit from the case study report.

Case studies are intended to take the researcher into the world of the subjects and can, therefore, provide a much richer and more vivid picture of the phenomena under study (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). Another reason for choosing the case study method is that it would help me inform the relevant decision-makers and policy-makers in the area in which the study is located (Cohen and Manion, 1994). "A case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of the object to be studied...and the object of study must be the case" (Johansson, 2004: 31). In this research the object of study is the stakeholders of the school. Therefore, in this case study the stakeholders of the school are the case. Since I studied two schools, I have used a multiple case study approach.

Another characteristic of a case study is that it makes use of a variety of research instruments which include in-depth interviews, observations, documentation, focus groups and artefacts (Johansson, 2004; MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). Johansson (2004) advises a case study researcher to give analytical arguments for the selection of the case, and to use multiple methods of data collection. Hence in my study interviews and document analysis were used as instruments for collecting data. The next section discusses my choice of instruments for data collection.

3.4 The Data Gathering Instruments

In accordance with qualitative case study research I used a combination of instruments to collect data (Johansson, 2004; MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). The reason for using a combination of data collecting instruments was to achieve data saturation by widening the perceptions of participants (Runhare, 2010). In a qualitative study the researcher is expected to make use of at least two methods of collecting data and preferably three (Henning,

Van Rensburg and Smith, 2004). This is to ensure that the phenomenon has been investigated by means of different sources of information, thus giving the data variety (*ibid*)

LeCompte and Preissle (1993:147) argue that, “Data collection strategies are informed by theory; the techniques chosen must match the constructs in the theory so that the data collected answers the questions posed in the study”. It is for this reason that I had chosen to use interviews and observations of collecting data for this study. I thought that these two strategies, if used properly, would enable me to get more data for my study.

In the next paragraphs I have discussed in detail the two strategies of my choice, namely, interviews and document analysis.

3.4.1 The Interviews

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:43) point out that, “Interviews have long been used in research as a way of obtaining detailed information about a topic or subject [and they] can produce vast amounts of data.” The interview provides access to the mind of the interviewee and makes it possible to understand the perceptions, opinions and thoughts of the interviewee (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Interviews also enable the researcher to probe on answers given and to observe the body language of participants (*ibid*).

Interviews were the main source of collecting data for this study because they allowed me to converse naturally with the participants (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010). The interviews also helped me to get clarity on vague statements by encouraging the interviewee to elaborate on brief comments. Best and Kuhn (1986) point out that an interview is often superior to other data collecting instruments as people are more willing to talk than to write.

The strengths of an interview as a method of collecting data are that it is (i) targeted-meaning that the interview focuses on the case study topic; and (ii) insightful-

meaning that it gives information from personal experiences. The weakness of the interview is that it may be biased because of poorly constructed questions (Johansson, 2004). As a researcher I had to go to an interview with carefully prepared questions that would eliminate any form of bias from my side and that of the participants. Another weakness of the interview is that the interviewee may be inaccurate due to poor recall, or give the answers that the interviewer wants to hear (*ibid*). In this case I did not think that there was much I could do other than making sure that the participants knew or understood the reasons for conducting the research and the importance of being honest during the interview.

Cohen and Manion (1994) caution us about the problems surrounding the use of interviews which could result in invalidity and bias. They argue that the sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer and the respondent, which include the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer towards the respondent, and preconceived notions on the part of the interviewer to what is being asked (*ibid*). In the light of this argument, I had to be careful to minimise the amount of bias.

An interview may be more or less structured (Johansson, 2004). A structured interview makes use of a carefully worded questionnaire with simple, specific closed questions (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993; MacMillan and Schumacher, 2004). Unstructured interviews are characterised by extensive probing and open-ended questions (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). In case studies the most commonly used interviewing technique is the semi-structured interview (Johansson, 2004). This technique consists of open and closed questions (*ibid*).

For this study I have chosen semi-structured interviews which are face to face interactions which allow the interviewer to ask carefully prepared questions (Bless and Smith, 2000). For this type of interview the interviewer develops and uses an interview schedule (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). This is a list of questions and topics to be covered during the interview usually in a particular order (*ibid*). Semi structured interviews are neither fixed nor fully free and yet they are a flexible research technique or method (O'Leary, 2004). The interviewer follows the interview schedule but is also able to follow other topics that may stray from the schedule

when he or she feels this is appropriate (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The purpose of using this instrument was to be able to allow my respondents to explain more and having follow-up questions where necessary. This would also give me a chance to probe the respondent's reasoning and to ask clarity-seeking questions (Bless and Smith, 2000). Bernard (1988) points out that the semi-structured interviews are mainly used when the researcher will not get more than one chance to interview someone. For this study I interviewed the educators, learners and parents.

I conducted one-on-one, hour long semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule that was used consisted of a list of open-ended questions, which would cover certain themes that were of relevance to the research topic. The interview schedule was used so that I, as a researcher, could also raise particular themes that might not evolve naturally during the course of the interview, but would assist in answering the research questions (Maseko, 2006).

All the interviews were conducted in either English or IsiXhosa, depending on the choice of the participant. This was because I wanted the participants to be comfortable and to express themselves freely during the interviews so that I, in turn, could get as much information as possible. I preferred to use a tape recorder to taking down notes during the interviews. This is because while it is possible to try to take notes to capture the respondents' answers, it is difficult to focus on conducting an interview and take down notes at the same time (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). This approach may result in poor notes and also weaken the development of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee (*ibid*).

Development of rapport and dialogue is essential in semi-structured interviews (*ibid*). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004) suggest that the interviewer consider having someone to take down the notes during the interview in cases where it is not possible to use a tape recorder. For this study the interviews were recorded on tape and were transcribed later. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) point out that since semi-structured interviews often contain open-ended questions and discussions may diverge from the interview schedule, it is generally best to use a tape recorder during

interviews and then transcribe the tapes later. I only took notes during the interviews so as to record the participants' non-verbal communication (Maseko, 2006).

In this study I interviewed the stakeholders of the school who, in this case, were the educators, learners and parents. In each school I interviewed two Life Orientation educators, two parents who were members of the School Governing Board (SGB), one pregnant learner or teenage mother, one non-teenage mother or non-teenage father and one teenage father. All in all there were seven respondents in each school and since I conducted my research in two schools that made a total of fourteen respondents

The next section discusses the second research instrument, the document analysis.

3.4.2 Document analysis

Runhare (2010:121) defines document analysis as a “non-interactive data collection method in which issues are investigated through a review of artefact or archival collections such as personal diaries, photos, video clips, minutes of meetings or other forms of organisational records.” Lincoln and Guba (1985) define a document as any written or recorded material not prepared for the purposes of evaluation. Document analysis is important because it gives the researcher a general background to the subject that is being studied (*ibid*). Since official records are vital sources of data, it is necessary to include documents which supplement the interviews and observations (Shaningwa, 2007; Mncube, 2008). Document analysis would also help me to understand the educationally related challenges faced by pregnant learners at school (Shaningwa, 2007).

The strength of document analysis is that it provides the opportunity for the study of trends over time (Stake, 1988; Yin, 1994 and Gillham, 2000). It is also useful for determining values, interests, positions, political climate, public attitudes, historical trends or sequences (Gillham, 2000). Document analysis is also inexpensive and documents can be obtained locally (*ibid*). The weakness of document analysis is that documents may be incomplete, inaccurate and may have questionable

Page 55 of 176

authenticity (Yin, 1994). Access to the documents may also be difficult and analysis may also be time consuming (Yin, 1994; Gillham, 2000). The documents in this study were used to complement the semi-structured interviews and to enhance the findings, and as such were not necessarily analysed in detail as principal or main evidence.

Documents can be divided into two major categories, namely, public records and personal documents (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Examples of public records are newspaper archives, census reports or local business records (*ibid*). These can help the researcher to gather information about the larger community and relevant trends (*ibid*). For the evaluation of educational innovations, public records include documents such as student transcripts and records, policy manuals, minutes of meetings, grade and test reports, official correspondence and internal memoranda (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These are useful in describing backgrounds and academic performances of students, and in identifying institutional strengths and weaknesses (*ibid*). Public records can also provide a record or history not subject to recall bias (*ibid*).

In this study I planned to collect public documents such as school policies on learner pregnancy, documents on learner pregnancy statistics in the schools and also relevant meetings of staff and school management teams. I also included school exercise books of targeted pregnant learners or teenage mothers and promotion schedules in this study as a means to highlight the issues and challenges these learners faced in their studies, and to determine trends in their school participation and performance before, during and after pregnancy (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare 2010). Such records, added to what was verbally captured, helped me to understand the nature of service provision, problems and motivational factors that influence pregnant learners' rights to education (Runhare, 2010). These documents were scrutinised and analysed so as to get a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the school stakeholders on mainstreaming of pregnant learners, and also to help me to analyse my findings. Document analysis also helped me to verify

what was happening in schools regarding the implementation of learner pregnancy policies in the East London district where my study is based.

Gillham (2000) defines personal documents as the first-person accounts of events and experiences. These documents include diaries, portfolios, letters to the paper, photographs and poetry, amongst other things (Gillham, 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Personal documents can help the researcher to understand how the participant sees the world and what she or he wants to communicate to the world (Gillham, 2000). In this study I gave each pregnant or teenage mother and teenage father a notebook to use as a journal. In these notebooks the learners were required to write a journal on their experiences as a parent while being a learner. They were also requested to write about the way they were treated by parents, educators and other learners. Most importantly I wanted them to write about how they felt about being in this situation. In line with what Mncube (2008) recommends, for ethical reasons all documents and records used in this study, whether public or personal, were negotiated in advance.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent groups from which they were selected (Gay, 1987:101). Sampling was done at two levels, namely:

- (a) Sampling the research sites
- (b) Sampling the respondents

I have started by discussing the sampling of the research sites followed by sampling of the respondents.

3.5.1 Sampling the research sites

Two secondary schools were sampled as sites. I chose secondary schools because this study is partly about teenage pregnancy and teenagers are between the ages of

thirteen and nineteen (Mpanza, 2006). These are the ages of the learners that are in secondary school.

In sampling the sites, purposive sampling was used. Babbie and Mouton (2004) state that purposive sampling is appropriate when the researcher's knowledge of the population will enable him or her to ensure that the sample is most representative of the population. I studied schools that are in the area where I am working, in which case I consulted our District Manager for the schools' statistics on pregnant learners. This gave me an idea as to which schools were the most affected in terms of having the highest number of pregnant learners in a certain period. I then selected schools which are the most affected by learner pregnancy as I hoped to get more information from them.

The next section discusses how the sampling of the respondents took place.

3.5.2 Sampling the respondents

In each school I interviewed two Life Orientation educators, two parents who are members of the School Governing Board (SGB) - preferably the chairperson and the secretary as they are guaranteed to be present at almost all SGB meetings -, one pregnant learner or teenage mother, one non-teenage mother or non-teenage father and one teenage father. Since I was conducting this study in two schools, this gave me a total of fourteen respondents. This was my sample. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents in the sample.

Table 31: Shows the distribution of the respondents in the sample

SAMPLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Educators	4
Parents	4
Pregnant Learners or teenage mothers	2
Non-teenage mothers or fathers	2
Teenage fathers	2

Qualitative research typically uses small, information-rich samples selected purposefully to allow the researcher to focus in depth on issues related to the study (Cantrell and Mertens, as cited in Shaningwa, 2007).

When choosing my sample I looked for certain qualities and features so this again is purposive sampling (McBurney and White, 2004). "Purposive sampling allows a sample that contains the most characteristics or typical attributes of the population" (De Vos, 2002: 207). The reason I chose these stakeholders of the school was that all of them have a role to play in the decision-making of the school and in the formulation of the policies of the school (ELRC, 2003).

For my sample I chose parents from the SGB since they are supposedly informed about most things that are happening in the school and they are the voices of the parents of the school. I chose the educators because they are the ones who are in direct contact with the pregnant learners and they know the issues related to pregnant learners better than the school managers. I also chose educators who were experienced in teaching Life Orientation because they are the ones who deal with lessons on teenage pregnancy and sexuality in their classes. I also wanted to choose those who were comfortable with the topic, in which case I had to ask for volunteers after I had presented my study to them. To avoid gender bias I preferred my sample to consist of a mix of males and females.

Because it is not always easy to tell whether a person is or has been pregnant or not, I had to ask the chairperson of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to refer me to relevant learners for my study. I chose the chairperson because all the issues concerning the students should always come to his or her attention.

3.6 Negotiation of Entry

Before conducting the research I sought permission from the Eastern Cape Department of Education to draw participants from the two schools that would be taking part in this study. This was to ensure that even if an official from the Department found me conducting interviews in those schools I would have had

consent from the Department. I only received a verbal confirmation that I could continue with my research. I was promised that a written permission would follow later.

I also wrote a letter to each of the principals of the schools where I would be conducting research to get permission from them to interview the educators and learners in their schools. I also drafted letters of consent for the participants and the parents or guardians of the learners who would be taking part in the research since interviewing minors is a sensitive issue.

3.7 Data collection phase

Data for this study was collected in two phases, namely, the pilot phase and the main study. Both phases have been discussed below

3.7.1 The pilot phase

McLeod (2007) defines a pilot study as an initial run-through of the procedures to be used in an investigation. It is a small experiment designed to gather information prior to a larger study in order to improve the quality and efficiency of the study (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). The aim of a pilot study is to try out the research approach to identify potential problems that may affect the quality and validity of results (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009). In support of that Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) assert that a pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed study and these can be addressed before time and resources are spent on a larger scale study. In cases where a pilot study uncovers many difficulties in the design of a problem, it is necessary for the planning to be revised (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995). Pilot study can also be used with the aim of eliminating ambiguity of research questions. Best and Kahn (1998) maintain that no matter how astute the researcher has been in wording the interview questions, it is essential to try them out with respondents prior to the commencement of the actual study. Bell (1993) also saw the importance of piloting so as to detect all the problems that might crop up

Page 60 of 176

when the actual study was done. Through a pilot study the researcher gets to see a broader picture of what can be expected in the main study.

Piloting involves selecting a few people and trying out a study on them (McLeod, 2007). Lowe (2007) concurs that the sample for a pilot needs to be representative of the target population. In other words, it should be done with respondents similar to those in the main study. The sample used in the pilot study may be carried to the main study (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009; Thabane, 2010). This increases the efficiency of a study in that the participants can give feedback about the study and raise issues about confusion or uncertainty or just ask questions about the study (Thabane, 2010). With this feedback the researcher can assess his/-her study and make the necessary changes (*ibid*). Examples of changes that can be made include formulating less ambiguous questions in an interview schedule, changing to better quality recording equipment that has the right resolution, finding an easier way of recording that interferes less with the observed process, or adding other methods to capture aspects not yet captured or not in sufficient detail (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009:14).

Piloting has its advantages and disadvantages, but, as Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) point out, the advantages of a pilot study far outweigh the disadvantages. The advantages and the disadvantages of the pilot study have been discussed below

Advantages of a pilot study

Some of the advantages are that a pilot study can help the researcher spot any unusual things or confusion in the information given to participants or problems with the task devised (McLeod, 2007). Woken (undated) concurs that a pilot study can provide a researcher with ideas, approaches and clues he or she may not have foreseen before conducting the pilot study. Such ideas and clues increase the chances of getting clearer findings in the main study.

Piloting the study allows the researcher to judge whether his or her chosen questions are effective in collecting the information he or she wants (Lowe, 2007). “Experienced researchers recommend that before the researcher can administer research instrument in the field, it is essential that a preliminary trial of the research measures be undertaken in order to evaluate the validity and relevance of the research instrument” (Mpanza, 2007:27).

Piloting also permits a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, giving the researcher a chance to evaluate their usefulness for the data (Holloway, 1997). This enables the researcher to make necessary alterations in the data collecting methods and therefore analyse data in the main study more efficiently (*ibid*).

Piloting allows the researcher to save a lot of time and money (Woken, undated; McLeod, 2007; Lowe, 2007). This is because the pilot test gives you an estimate of the amount of time it will take to complete the interview (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). It also provides an initial idea of the pattern of responses that the researcher is likely to get from participants and whether revisions will need to be made (*ibid*).

Disadvantages of a pilot study

Pilot studies have a number of limitations. I will only mention a few of them in this section.

Firstly, there is the possibility of making inaccurate predictions or assumptions on the basis of pilot data (Holloway, 1997). Unfortunately, many research ideas that seem to show great promise are unproductive when actually carried out (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). I see this as a disadvantage of a pilot study. The brighter side is that the pilot study almost provides enough data for the researcher to decide whether or not to go ahead with the research study (*ibid*).

Another disadvantage is that a second pilot study with a modified research plan may be necessary (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009). Because of this sufficient time should be planned between a pilot study and the actual study (*ibid*). The researcher should also keep an eye on the time taken as the intention of the study could be out of date by the time the sample is completed (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

Thirdly, a pilot study is normally small in comparison with the main experiment and therefore can provide only limited information (*ibid*). As the sample size in a pilot study is likely to be smaller than that of the main study, results could be misleading (*ibid*). There is also a risk of the possibility of making inaccurate predictions or assumptions on the basis of pilot data (McLeod, 2007). This is because completing a pilot study successfully is not a guarantee of the success of a full-scale survey (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Other problems with the study may not become obvious until the larger-scale study is conducted (*ibid*).

Lastly, problems could also arise from contamination (Holloway, 1997). Contamination occurs where data from the pilot study is included in the main results and where pilot participants are included in the main study, resulting in new data being included (*ibid*).

In the next section I discuss piloting in relation to this study. I have discussed the lesson that I had learnt from piloting, which have afforded me the chance to improve on my main study.

Pilot study report

My main study consists of seven respondents in each of the two schools. These are two parents from the SGB, two educators, one learner who has never been pregnant, one learner who has fathered a child and one learner who has been pregnant. Piloting was conducted over three days using three respondents. These were a learner who has been pregnant while at school, a parent who serves in the

SGB and an educator. These are the lessons that I learnt while conducting the pilot study:

- Interview questions were in English and the respondents are Xhosa speaking people. This meant that the questions had to be translated for clear understanding.
- Answers of the respondents are in IsiXhosa and I had to translate them into English when transcribing. Sometimes the meaning would be lost with translation.
- Progress in conducting interviews was slow because respondents had to find time to fit me in their schedule. This resulted in some of the appointments not being honoured.
- From the pilot study it emerged that the interviews took a long time to conduct.
- The learners had to be interviewed after school hours so as not to interfere with the tuition time. When I discussed the venue, which was to be at school, with the girl learner she voiced her fears that she would not like us to be at school after hours as there were many thugs around. At the same time she was not comfortable with the interview being conducted at her home because her parents and siblings might be interested in her responses, which she regarded as personal and confidential. We opted for my house but this meant I had to wait until she got a chance to come to me.
- I have been able to test whether my recording equipment was in good working order so as to avoid surprises in my main study.

- Piloting has also afforded me a chance to review questions on the interview schedule.
- Looking at the responses of the participants I can safely say the main research question and all the sub-questions were answered.

The next section discusses the research methods and methodology in the main study.

3.7.2 The main study

In the main study data was collected using the interviews and document analysis. The documents that were analysed include the teenage mother and the pregnant learners' journals, learners' books and life orientation syllabuses.

The interviews were conducted after school hours at the respondents' homes. All the interviews were one hour long and were conducted either in English or IsiXhosa, depending on the choice of the participant. This was because I wanted the respondents to be comfortable and to express themselves freely during the interviews so that I, in turn, could get as much information as possible.

During the interviews emotions were evoked. For instance, both the teenage mother and the pregnant learner broke down and cried during and after the interviews. One of the parents also showed signs of anger at some stage during the interview.

3.8 Data Analysis

Analysis of data involves working with data, breaking it down, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what a researcher will tell others (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 145).

Vithal and Jansen (1997:27) argue that data analysis is to makes sense of the accumulated facts or information the researcher has collected from the field. The analysis of data presented in this study will involve reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries and looking for patterns (Cooper and

Schindler, as cited in Shaningwa, 2007:38). McMillan and Schumacher (1993) point out that the categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection.

I have analysed the data according to Babbie and Mouton's (2004) techniques which would be conducted as follows:

- The organisation of the details of the data in a logical order according to research questions.
- Specific meanings of the data would be examined and categorised as related to the research questions, and
- The data would be scrutinised and grouped into themes, and identified patterns, from which the conclusions would be drawn from the emerging themes.

The last stage in data analysis would be for me to write an analytical and interpretative report of the data.

3.9 Research trustworthiness

Krefting (1990) defines trustworthiness in research as a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound and the arguments made based on the results are strong. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290). This trustworthiness can be increased by maintaining high credibility and objectivity (Krefting, 1990).

In order to maintain high trustworthiness in a qualitative study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested four criteria to ensure valid interpretation of data. These are truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality (*ibid*). I have, therefore, discussed trustworthiness of a research under those four criteria.

(a) Truth value

In the qualitative approach, truth value is measured by credibility (Krefting 1990). This means having an adequate engagement in the research setting so current patterns in the data can be properly identified and verified (*ibid*). Runhare (2010) defines credibility as the extent to which results of a study are truthful or realistic, taking into account the social and cultural contexts of the participants and the conditions under which data was collected. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define credibility as an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a credible conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data. In order to maintain truth value, the researcher can confidently consider the findings related to the participants and the context in which the study was undertaken, to be true (Mwahombela, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of triangulation to increase the credibility of a research. Triangulation has been discussed separately in one of the sections below

(b) Applicability

Applicability is established with transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents (Mwahombela, 2004). This means allowing the readers to be able to apply the findings of the study to their own situations (*ibid*). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also define applicability as the degree to which the findings of the enquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the particular study. In the same vein, Krefting (1990) points out that the research meets the criterion of applicability if the findings can fit into another context or setting. In order to ensure applicability the researcher must therefore present sufficient data to allow comparison (*ibid*). I have made sure that the findings of this study can be used to make a comparison with a study that could be done in a similar context.

(c) Consistency

For a research to be consistent, it must be dependable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This means that the research must provide the audience with evidence that, if it were replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same or similar context, its findings would be repeated (*ibid*). Mwahombela (2004) also argues that if the inquiry was replicated with different subjects or in a similar context and the result was that the participants hold the same opinions, then the findings would not be altered. This would prove that the research is consistent or dependable (*ibid*).

(d) Neutrality

In a qualitative approach neutrality is measured by confirmability (Krefting, 1990). Confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher (*ibid*). Since a qualitative researcher's perspective is naturally biased due to his or her close association with the data, sources and methods, Shenton (2003) suggests the use of various audit strategies to confirm findings. One of the strategies suggested by Shenton (2003) to reduce the effect of investigator bias is triangulation. "The role of triangulation in promoting such confirmability must again be emphasised in this context to reduce the effect of investigator bias" (Shenton, 2003:72). I have discussed triangulation later on in this chapter.

All researchers want their measures to be reliable and valid in order to establish truthfulness, credibility and believability in their research study (Mpanza, 2006:27).

Mavimbela (2001: 28) identifies three strategies which are believed to increase the internal validity or credibility of a research. These strategies are as follows:

- **Lengthy data collection period:** This provides opportunities for continual data analysis, comparison and verification to refine ideas and to ensure the match between research-based categories and participants' realities. I collected data over three months during the schools' third term.

- **Participants' language:** Subjects should be encouraged to express their views in their own words. I collected data using both IsiXhosa, which is the participants' home language, and English. The translation of IsiXhosa into English was done later after the interviews.
- **Field research:** The interviews are to be conducted in natural settings where there are no restrictions or disturbances. I left the choice of venue to the participants although I also made some suggestions. This is because I wanted the participants to be comfortable. Almost all the respondents chose the interviews to be conducted in their homes. This was fine with me because, in the end, I wanted the interviews to take place in settings with which the participants are familiar.

The use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour is referred to as triangulation. This is in line with Shaningwa (2007:38) whose definition of triangulation is "multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings." Using triangulation in this study helped me to seek connections in the data collected through different tools and to confirm the emerging categories and themes (Shaningwa, 2007). Hence in this study I have used different methods for collecting data, namely, interviews and document analysis to ensure triangulation. Cohen and Manion (1994) perceive triangulation as a useful technique where a researcher is engaged in a case study, and they also regard triangulation as a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in a qualitative research. This is relevant to this study as the research design here is a case study and the approach is qualitative.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:112) point out that using one method of collecting data can yield sufficient data in some fields of study but it provides only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact. In this study where I am looking into the perceptions of the school stakeholders on mainstreaming of pregnant learners, using only one method of collecting data would have resulted in me losing out on some important information which would be useful for this study. As Cohen *et al.* (2000) maintain, exclusive

reliance on one method may cause bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular piece of reality he or she is investigating.

One of the advantages of triangulation, as cited by Shaningwa (2007), is collecting witnesses' account of an event. This is the main intention of a case study, to respond to multiplicity of perspectives present in a social situation (*ibid*). In the context of this study the witnesses are the stakeholders of the school and the event or social situation is the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools. As I was interviewing different stakeholders of the school, I hoped to get multiple perspectives of the situation at hand.

The next section discusses the ethical issues.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethics are considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper and good or bad. Collecting data from people raises ethical concerns (Goddard and Melville, 2001). I tried to get permission from the district office and the principals of the schools where I conducted my research. I did this so that they would not be surprised if they saw me conducting research in those schools.

Studies have shown that all research involving human subjects requires that the participation of individuals be completely voluntary (Shaningwa, 2007 and Mavuso, 2006). There is an obligation on the part of the researcher to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research study (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). I made sure that the participation of the interviewees was voluntary and that they were well informed what the research was all about (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2007). This also meant that they were free to withdraw at any time during the research. For this purpose, I designed a consent form.

The participants also need to be assured on the issue of confidentiality (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2007). Neumann, as cited in Shaningwa (2007), argues

that a researcher has a moral obligation to uphold confidentiality of data. This includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising participants' names in field notes (*ibid*). In the same vein, Runhare (2010) points out that the subject of schoolgirl pregnancy is viewed as a sensitive issue in schools. Because of this there is a need for measures to ensure the deconstruction of any negative perceptions to the study (*ibid*). I promised the participants that no names would be mentioned; only pseudonyms would be used and that no harm would come to them as a result of participating in this research.

Teenage pregnancy is seen as a failure in most communities, especially if the girls fail to get married (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare, 2010). Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that, "If the research involves subjects in a failure experience, researchers must ensure that the subjects do not leave the situation more humiliated, insecure and alienated than when they arrived." Being ethical limits the choices we can make in pursuit of truth but research ethics say that, while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better (Shaningwa, 2007). Consideration, therefore, needs to be taken to protect the personal dignity and confidentiality of the pregnant and former pregnant learners.

Before the actual interview I made sure that all the participants understood the purpose of my study and they were given the opportunity to ask questions. The interview questions were also discussed with them before the interview started. After transcribing the notes from the interview, I sent them back to the participants so that we both agreed that what I had written was correct (Goddard and Melville, 2001).

As the research topic is very sensitive, questions from the interview may cause the participants, especially the pregnant learners, to re-live their experiences (Runhare, 2010). This can be a traumatic experience as old wounds may have to be re-opened and the participants may need counselling after the interviews (*ibid*). In this case my course in basic counselling came in handy. I also offered to book an appointment with the child psychologist at the East London District offices for the teenage mother and the pregnant learner.

As I planned to use a tape recorder during interviews, I first asked the participants for permission to use it. After the notes had been transcribed they were sent back to the participants for editing. Participants were also informed that once the report had been completed the transcripts and the audiotapes would be destroyed. Names of the participants were not indicated when their ideas are compiled into a report.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed all the methods that will guide me in conducting my research. This chapter looked at the overall approach, paradigm and design of this research. It also discussed the methods that were used for collecting data, the sample and the size of the sample. In this chapter I have also described the negotiation of entry, the data analysis, trustworthiness, reliability and validity, limitations and ethical issues. In the next chapter I will present the data collected through the interviews, observations and document analysis. I will also discuss the findings of my research.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on presentation of data and discussion of findings. As stated in Chapter 3, data is collected through interviews and document analysis. Two schools were identified as the sites for the main research. In each school there were seven respondents who consisted of two educators, two parents from the SGB, one pregnant or parenting learner, one boy who has fathered a child and one learner who has never been pregnant or fathered a child. All in all there were fourteen respondents.

The respondents were well informed about what the research is all about. They were also informed that participation in this research is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time during the research. The participants were also assured on the issue of confidentiality. They were promised that no names would be mentioned, only pseudonyms would be used. They were also promised that no harm would come to them as a result of participating in this research.

The following research questions guided the data presentation:

Main Research Question:

What are the school stakeholders' perceptions of the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the two selected secondary schools?

Sub-questions

- How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the selected schools?
- What are the stakeholders' views on supporting the pregnant learners academically, and why?

- What are the leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions on mainstreaming of pregnant learners?

The major themes that have emerged from the data collected from the different groups of respondents will be presented in this chapter.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

4.1 Profiles of the respondents

4.2 Teenage mother and pregnant learners' stories

4.3 Presentation of data collected through semi-structured interviews

4.4 Analysis and discussion of data

4.1 Profiles of the respondents

The profiles of the respondents will be presented in the form of a table. In each school there were seven respondents who consisted of two educators, two parents from the SGB, one pregnant or parenting learner, one boy who has fathered a child and one learner who has never been pregnant or fathered a child.

Due to ethical reasons the real names of the respondents will not be used. The names that appear in the following tables, and throughout this study, are just pseudonyms.

Table 4.1: Shows the profiles of the parents

Location	Name	Age	Gender	Highest Educational Qualifications	Position in SGB
School A	Noxie	54	Female	Grade 10	SGB additional member
	Malbi	46	Male	B.A degree	SGB Chairperson
School B	Naks	43	Male	Marketing Diploma	SGB Chairperson
	Thenjie	38	Female	Grade 12	SGB additional member

In School A the parents who took part in this research are both members of the SGB. One of them (Noxie), a 54 year old female, is an additional member of the SGB. Her highest educational qualification is Grade 10. The other one (Malbi) is a 46 year old male who is the chairperson of the SGB. His highest educational qualification is a B.A. degree.

In School B the parents who participated in this research are also members of the SGB. One of them (Naks) is a 43 year old male who is the chairperson of the SGB. The other one (Thenjie) is a 38 year old female who is an additional member of the SGB.

Table 4.2:Shows the profiles of educators

School	Name	Age	Gender	Educational Qualifications	Rank	Teaching Experience	L.O. Teaching Experience
A	Nkoli	41	Female	B.Ped; B.Ed (Hons)	PL1	17 years	4 years
A	Bafo	50	Male	STD	PL1	21 years	2 years
B	Lindy	49	Female	S.T.D; B.A	PL2	26 years	3 years
B	Xoli	47	Female	S.T.D, ACE (Math Lit)	PL1	24 years	2 years

In School A one educator (Nkoli) is a 41 year old female who is in Post Level 1 (PL1). She holds a B.Ped and a B.Ed (Honours) degree. She has teaching experience of seventeen years and has been teaching Life Orientation for the past four years. The second one (Bafo) is a 50 year old male who is also in PL1. He holds a Secondary Teachers Diploma (S.T.D) and has been a teacher for the past twenty one years. He has two years' experience in teaching Life Orientation. In this school the language of teaching and learning is English although IsiXhosa is sometimes used to explain certain concepts.

In School B one educator (Lindy) is a 49 year old female who is in PL2. She is the Head of the Commerce Department, meaning that she is an SMT member. She holds a Secondary Teacher's Diploma and a B.A. Degree. She has been a teacher for the past twenty six years and has two years' experience in teaching Life Orientation. The other respondent (Xoli) is also a female and is 47 years old. She holds a Secondary Teacher's Diploma and a certificate in Mathematical Literacy. She is in PL1 and has teaching experience of twenty four years. She has been teaching Life Orientation for the past three years. The language of teaching and learning in this school is English. IsiXhosa is sometimes used to explain certain concepts.

I have chosen educators who have experience in teaching Life Orientation since they are the ones who are directly involved in teaching sex education to the learners.

Table 4.3: Shows the profiles of the learners who participated in the study

Location	Name	Age	Gender	Grade	Learner status
School A	Siya	16	Female	10	Teenage mother Became pregnant at the age of 14
School A	Sim	17	Male	10	Teenage father
School A	Solly	20	Male	11	Non-teenage father
School B	Zikhona	17	Female	11	Non-teenage mother
School B	Kuhle	14	Female	8	Pregnant learner
School B	Onke	19	Male	11	Teenage father

Table 4.3 above indicates that six learners participated in the study. They were selected from the two schools that are referred to as School A and School B. There are three males and three females.

In School A there are three participants named Siya, Sim and Solly. Siya is a sixteen year old teenage mother who is in grade 10. She got pregnant while she was still in grade 8 and is now a parent to a two year old boy. Sim is a seventeen year old learner who is a teenage father. He is now in grade 10. Solly is a twenty year old learner who is a non-teenage father. He is in grade 11.

In School B there are also three participants known as Zikhona, Kuhle and Onke. Zikhona is a seventeen year old learner who is a non-teenage mother. She is in grade 11. Kuhle is a fourteen year old learner who is pregnant. She is in grade 8. Onke is a nineteen year old learner who is a teenage father. He is in grade 11.

4.2 The teenage mother and the pregnant learners' stories

During the course of this study four of the six learners who participated in this research were requested to write a journal. These learners include Kuhle, the pregnant learner; Siya, the teenage mother, and the two teenage fathers, Sim and Onke. In the journals they were requested to share their experiences while being pregnant or from the time they got to learn about their girlfriend's pregnancies. Only the two girl learners submitted their journals.

When Sim, the teenage father, started participating in this study, he had not yet gone to the initiation school to become a man. That was when he started writing his experiences in his journal. After he graduated from the initiation school and came back, I asked about the journal. That is when he told me that he had destroyed the journal because according to the tradition he is reportedly supposed to destroy all the stuff he possessed before he went to the initiation school. He was also not prepared to write a new journal as he claimed that now that he is a 'man' there are things he cannot discuss with a woman and that includes me. This is reportedly

something he was told while still at the initiation school. A 'man' in this case is someone who has graduated from the initiation school.

The second teenage father, Onke, kept on telling me that he was still writing in his journal. When it was time for submission, he told me that there was no journal. He did not want to give reasons for not writing. Although the reasons were not clear, I concluded that they may have something to do with what Sim had told me as Onke had already graduated from initiation school when I requested him to write a journal. However, there are several possible explanations for this. Both teenage fathers told me they were still prepared to give me an interview but that they could not commit to writing about it the way I wanted.

In this section I have presented the stories of the pregnant and parenting learners as they appear in their journals. Each story is about the journey and experiences of the girl as a parent or being pregnant while being a learner. The story is also about how she was treated by educators, her parents and other learners, and, most importantly, how she felt about the way she was treated by others.

4.2.1 Siya's story (unedited)

"I am a girl who lives with her grandparents, who doesn't know how it feels to experience the love of the parents. When I finally had a clue of the love of my mother she died. When my mother died and I lost my brother I felt alone and embarrassed about myself and I did not even have the love of my father. He was not there for me when I really needed him. I wanted to kill myself about the way I was treated at home but as the days went on I tried to be strong, t the things that they say I could handle.

But one day I was going to the shop. I was angry. Then I met this guy, he talked to me saying he loved me but I was not in love with him but I just wanted to talk to someone to keep my mind off things. He told me most of the things that I didn't care about and things I didn't know. I did not care about love and I did not know everything about love at that time because when my mother died she never told me

that she loves me. She just left and even worse I lost my brother because he was someone that I can live for. Then this guy told me how much he loved me but I was not ready to love someone.

Then it was just one night we slept and he took away my virginity. The days go on. I realised what I did was wrong but it was too late. I was pregnant but I did not know that. I was angry all the time and hated this guy. One day I was washing myself getting ready for school my grandmother asked me if I was pregnant. I was so confused and did not know. When I come home my father's sister call me she said that I must come to her home. My heart beat faster. I knew why they were calling me. I did not know what to do, and then I tried so hard to kill myself. I even went to the toilet to kill myself but could not. I believe if I was pregnant they have to forgive me.

They asked me many questions because they did not know I have a boyfriend. I never left the house at night to go and visit my boyfriend. I did answer their questions when I was there. They did not know for sure if I was pregnant or not. Then my aunt took me to the doctor then I found out that I was pregnant. It was like I was dreaming but not one person comes and wakes me up. The next day I knew I was not dreaming. It was true.

Then my father's sister wanted me to have abortion but my grandmother did not believe in abortion. She said that I will not have abortion. They were all emotional about my pregnancy. I was also so confused I cried and cried. I just wanted someone to wake me up to this horrible dream that I was dreaming. But I knew that was my mess so I have to listen to what they saying.

They told my grandmother that I will not have abortion. But the next day when I was going to school they said I must go with them to the hospital. I did not know what that was for. I thought it was for check-up. When I got there, there were so many tests I did not know. I heard the doctor say I can't have abortion because I am 5 months pregnant.

It was not that bad dream because now I have something to live for. My unborn child. So they say if I want to have this child I will go to school. I say yes I will go to school. I know it will be hard but I can't just throw my dreams away.

I was living the hard time at home. I was treated different at home and I even lost my friends. Every day when I was at school learners would talk behind my back and laugh. That was a nightmare and others pretended to care but I stayed strong. And I can see other teachers were not treating me as other learners, they treated me differently. I knew my situation but I wanted not to be treated different. There was this English teacher, she was worse than the students. When it was her period it was like the baby was coming. She was like she never saw a pregnant student before or she treated them the same as me, making fun about pregnant students and saying that I must buy windbreaker. And my grandmother did not have that kind of money.

Sol was thinking of leaving school but there was this special teacher that helped me forget about that. She had the heart to talk to me and asked me how I feel and I talked to her. And she asked me how other learners are treating me and I told her and she advised me and talked some sense in me. She said that if other learners are saying things that I don't like I must come to her. That's what I was doing. Then I was brave enough to face my new world.

During the holidays I gave birth to a healthy little boy because when I was pregnant I really looked after myself. What I was eating was very important with help of my grandmother. I really love my child and it was hard for me not to be next to him because he lived with my grandmother in the morning when I am going to school. Then I will see him when I am back from school.

At school I was treated so nice again, it was not like when I was pregnant and the teachers were so cool again.

Life went on. My grandfather was a difficult man; he was making my life a hell. When he got drunk he wanted to beat me and shouted at me saying things that were hard to handle. That day I did not understand why my mother died and I still don't. I

slept crying wondering how my child is feeling and wondering why my mother didn't come and take me away from this family. And I did not believe I had a father. I believe I was adopted. I prayed and prayed for the good family for my child so that he cannot live the life that I am living.

Every night I slept crying. Then I was tired. Then I decided to stand up for myself. Then I told my family that I am leaving. I am going to take my child and give him to his father. And I was going to live with my mother's family. I can see that they don't need me. They were not angry with me. My grandfather was so sad and he apologized and said he will never do that again. And my father's sister who is living in Cape Town took my child and lived with him so that I can concentrate on my school work and I will see the child on school holidays.

Now I am trying so hard to get my life together. Being a learner and a mother is not that easy but on the other side I really enjoy it. I really enjoy being a learner and being a mother but there are things I must let go of first. I must let this anger that I have inside me go and try to believe that my mother is died. But I don't think that I can do that. It is hard to talk to someone you know about these things and to be open. So now I just live my life as a lie, waiting for my mother to come back so I can see my brother in Johannesburg so I can be free inside. But on the other side being a mom is cool. And to be a learner too.

That's my story. This book really helped me a lot so I can say what I feel inside than to talk to someone."

4.2.2 Kuhle's story (unedited)

"When I discovered that I was pregnant I felt like dying because my family didn't know that I was pregnant. When I washed my body I would want to close the door. Three weeks ago on Monday I was washing my body in the room and my older sister said that my breasts are big and she thinks that am pregnant but I denied that but all the time I knew that was pregnant.

When I told my boyfriend that was pregnant he refused that because we didn't know how we will support the child when he is born. He said I am joking. I must stop playing with serious things. A child is expensive.

Days went on and my stomach grow bigger and bigger. Then my family found out about my pregnancy. I was thinking that they will chase me out of the home but instead they advised me to go to the clinic and start booking. My aunt was so disappointed about what have I done to myself.

My boyfriend told his mother but his mother was very happy that she will have a grandchild. She said she is very happy she will do anything to make me happy all the time. My boyfriend would not sleep until he saw me and the little unborn baby. He would always brush my tummy even if we are walking on the street.

Treatment at school was sometimes bad; people were very awful to me because other people were gossiping about me that I am pregnant. What I like is that I have a friend who cares about me even if we fight. But other people are friendly, if I carry something heavy, they will say I must leave it they will take it into the class.

In school the teachers are nice to me. They tell me that I must not stop going to school. I must finish school because I am good at school. My aunt says she is going to look after my baby when I go to school. She says she wants me to go to school and finish school.

Last week my baby was born. He is a boy. He is born early at seven month pregnant. The doctors say he is growing too big for me. When my baby was born I was writing the November examinations, I did not write the other subjects because I stayed at hospital with my baby. He is very small. After one week the nurses said I can go home with my baby. Then I went to school and wrote the other subjects. So I did not write all the subjects because I was absent.

I am happy about my baby but I do not know what I am going to do. My aunt wants me to stay at home the whole day because my baby is drinking milk from me. My baby is also crying too much. I think I will just run away and live the baby at home. The father of my baby does not come to us anymore. He has gone to the holidays.

My baby does not have enough clothes. All of them are old clothes. I love my baby but I am confused now.

Maybe I am going to fail because I did not finish the examinations. But if someone can take away the baby I can go back to school and finish my studies. The baby was a mistake but I have accepted that. I love my baby boy and I will finish school and work for him.

4.3 Presentation of data gathered through semi-structured interviews

Data was collected in two schools using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were guided by the main research question and three sub- questions which were stated earlier in the introduction of this chapter. Themes emerged from the responses of participants in the two schools in which the research was conducted. The themes have been discussed below.

4.3.1 The school stakeholders' perceptions of the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools.

Before the respondents could be asked to comment on the policy I wanted to ascertain if they were aware of the existence of this policy. Therefore, with regard to this issue three themes have been identified, namely, (a) responses on the awareness of the existence of the policy that legislates the mainstreaming of pregnant learners; (b) the respondents' perception on the contents of this policy; and (c) responses on whether the policy should be abolished or not.

The themes have been discussed below.

(a) Responses on the awareness of the existence of the policy that legislates the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

All educators and parents (100%) stated that they were aware of the existence of this policy. Xoli, an educator in School B, who confirmed that she was aware of the existence of the policy stated, *“Yes, we are aware. It’s just that in our school we do not have our own policy based on that of the Department.”*

When responding to the same question another educator from School A, Nkoli, declared:

“Yes, I am aware of the existence of this policy. I have never thought of looking it up in the formal documents though, so I cannot say I am clear about it. What I know is what I have heard other people say. Knowing that there is a policy that says pregnant learners should not be expelled has been enough for me.”

Malbi, an SGB chairperson in School A noted, *“I have never seen [the policy] but I heard somewhere about its existence. I don’t remember where.”*

All six learners (100%) were reportedly unaware of the existence of such a policy.

“... I was not aware of its existence. I have noticed that the pregnant learners are no longer expelled from school but I did not know that they are protected by a policy”. (Onke, a teenage father from School B)

Zikhona, a non-teenage mother in School B, stated, *“I was not aware of the presence of such a policy...”*

What has transpired from these findings is that all parents and educators (57% of the respondents) were aware of the existence of the policy that allows for mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. All these respondents also indicated that they are not familiar with the contents of this policy since none of them has seen it. These are the same respondents who are supposed to implement the policy at school level.

An implication of this is that the policy was never discussed in SGB meetings. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Runhare (2010) whose study established that the parents in the SGB never discussed the mainstreaming of pregnant learners policy with the members of the SMT in their meetings. The implication of not knowing the policy could create attitudes about learner pregnancy and motherhood.

The rest of the respondents (43%), which includes six learners, stated that they were not aware of the existence of this policy. The next section will discuss the comments of the respondents on the policy now that they know about its existence.

(b) Respondents' perception on the contents of the policy that legislates the mainstreaming of pregnant learners

When asked to comment on the policy some of the respondents (29%) saw the policy as a good move on the part of the government while the others (43%) saw it as a bad thing. There are also respondents (29%) who noted that the policy has both the good and the bad sides.

The respondents who saw the policy as a good thing (29%) indicated that it gives the pregnant learners a second chance in their education and also that the pregnant learners have a right to education. These respondents include one parent and three female learners. Here are some of the responses:

"...it gives the learner a second chance to realise her dreams."

(Thenjie, a parent from School B)

Kuhle, the pregnant learner from School B, declared, *"Pregnant girls used to be expelled whereas they had the intentions of continuing with their schooling until they give birth."*

"The policy is good because every learner has a right to education."

(Zikhona, a learner from School B)

Six respondents (43%) reported the imperfect side of the policy. These respondents included two educators, one parent and three male learners. Their responses could be categorised into the following sub-themes:

- i. Fear of premature birth
- ii. Influence on other learners
- iii. Cultural issues

These sub-themes have been discussed below.

i. Fear of premature birth

Two of the respondents (14%) have voiced their fear of premature birth when the pregnant learners are allowed to stay at school for the duration of their pregnancy. These are Solly, the non-teenage father from School B, and Sim, the teenage father also from School B.

“Another thing we have to consider is that if the policy says the pregnant learners are allowed to continue with schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so, who knows when that time will be? Nowadays girls give birth prematurely...?” (Solly)

“What if they give birth prematurely...” (Sim)

ii. Influence on other learners

There has also been a concern that the pregnant learners could influence the other learners negatively. It is alleged that other learners may be influenced by pregnant learners, which may lead to an increase in the number of pregnant learners. This fear has been voiced by eleven respondents (79%) who included four parents, four educators and three learners.

Here are some of their responses:

"I do not agree with that policy because if the pregnant learners are allowed to continue with schooling and mingle with other learners, this can result in those learners who are not pregnant to see pregnancy as a right thing... the pregnant learner will end up spoiling other learners because here at school we are not of the same age..."

(Solly, learner from School B)

"I am afraid that when children are together, they learn from one another. Those that are not pregnant will be told things that they are not meant to hear by these pregnant learners..."

(Naks, SGB Chairperson from School B)

"This is not good at all. It's like the pregnant learners are showing off their pregnancy, they enjoy being pregnant. As a result other learners, on seeing that a pregnant learner can continue schooling, will also get pregnant. The schools will be full of pregnant learners."

(Noxie, parent from School A)

"... It sets a bad example for the learners that are still young because they might find it 'cool' and copy this behaviour".

(Bafo, an educator from School A)

"...Because the policy allows the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling, some learners will think that it is a good thing to be pregnant while still at school..."

(Lindy, an educator from School B)

Studies have shown that people who are against the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, felt that the mainstreaming policies are contributing to the moral decay among teenagers and only serve to increase the rate of teenage pregnancy, school indiscipline and declining standards in some schools (Mpanza, 2006; Runhare, 2010).

iii. Cultural issue

Cultural issues have been raised, directly and indirectly, when some of the respondents commented on the policy. Culture has been shown to have an influence on how the society views the issue of teenage pregnancy (Runhare, 2010). In African culture pregnancy out of wedlock, especially in young girls, is a taboo, as a result, a pregnant girl should be ashamed of her condition (*ibid*). The dress code of a pregnant woman is also influenced by culture (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Three respondents (21%) have raised the issue of culture. These include a learner, a parent and an educator. This is how they responded:

“...Sometimes the pregnant learners seem to be showing off their pregnancy, it does not look like they are ashamed of their condition.”

(Lindy, an educator)

“This is not good at all. It’s like the pregnant learners are showing off their pregnancy. They enjoy being pregnant...Seeing a girl with a big tummy in her school uniform is disgusting.”

(Noxie, a parent)

“Pregnant learners should not be allowed at school. Even our culture does not allow pregnant girls to mingle with those that have never had children... A pregnant learner in a school uniform is embarrassing...They must stay away from school and hide their pregnancies at home.”

(Sim, a teenage father)

These findings imply that due to expectations of the society the pregnant learners might find themselves dropping out of school. This, in turn, would ruin their lives. As Duncan (2007:309) argues, “It is not babies, but social disadvantage that ruins young mothers’ lives.”

As much as some respondents have stated either the bad side or the good side of the policy only, others have noted that the policy has both the good and the bad side. These are four respondents (29%) who include two parents and two educators. Some of the responses are quoted below:

"I think the intention of introducing the policy was good because it gives a second chance to girls who find themselves pregnant to continue with their studies...but the policy needs to be revised because we see girls as young as 12 and 14 years getting pregnant, and seemingly this pregnancy thing is becoming a fashion to these young girls."

(Nkoli. an educator from School A)

"The way I see it this policy has both the good and the bad side. The good thing about this policy is that the child does not lose tuition time even though she is pregnant... The bad thing about it is that the pregnancy of one learner affects the other learners at school. The other learners might see this pregnancy as a good thing and then have a desire to be pregnant too."

(Malbi, SGB Chairperson in School A)

The above findings indicate that the majority of respondents (43%) see the introduction of this policy as a bad thing. Some respondents (29%) feel that the introduction of the policy is good, while the others (29%) have indicated that the policy has both the good and the bad sides. The next section will discuss the next theme on whether the policy should be stopped or kept.

(c) Responses on whether the policy should be abolished or not

The arguments on this issue have resulted in two sub-themes. There are respondents who feel that the policy should be abolished and the pregnant learners should not be allowed in school. Others feel that the policy should be kept so as to allow pregnant learners to continue with their schooling.

Of all the fourteen respondents, seven (50%) have stated that the policy should be kept and pregnant learners should be allowed to stay in schools. The liberal discourse which says the pregnant learners should be allowed to continue with their schooling is based on the premise that pregnant and parenting learners have an equal right to education (Runhare, 2010).

Of these seven respondents, five of them (36%) felt that the pregnant learners should continue with schooling but at the later stages of pregnancy they should stay at home until they give birth. These respondents include four educators and one learner.

“I feel that pregnant learners should continue coming to school but when the time for her to deliver the baby is nearer I think she should then stay at home.”

(Lindy, an educator in School B)

“I think for the first few months they should attend school because if they don’t they will lose a lot in terms of their lessons... So it is up to the learner, when she knows that she is in her last months of pregnancy, to stay at home so that whatever happens to her takes place at home.”

(Nkoli, an educator in School A)

“I think the pregnant learner should continue with her studies. Then when the time for giving birth to her baby is nearer, she should stay at home.”

(Zikhona, a learner in School B)

Nkoli indicated that as much as she feels that the policy should be kept, she is also of the view that it should be revised. She reported that as much as the intention of the policy was good, the learners were now abusing it. This is what Nkoli said:

“... Since we are a democratic country our children have a tendency of not being able to set their priorities straight. Last things come first and vice versa. As I have said earlier, the intention of the policy was good but the learners are just irresponsible...These days children have a tendency of bragging about wrong things...”

The pregnant learner and the teenage mother (14%) felt that the policy should be kept and the pregnant learners be allowed to continue with their schooling until they feel unfit to do so.

“Yes, the pregnant learners should be allowed to continue with their schooling until they decide for themselves that they want to stop coming to school. If a pregnant learner wants to stay at school for the whole duration of pregnancy, she must be allowed to do so...” (Siya, the teenage mother)

“Yes, [the pregnant learners] should be allowed to continue with their schooling. I feel sorry for those pregnant learners who dropped out of school because they were pregnant. If you leave school and stay at home until you give birth, by the time you come back to school you will be far behind in your work and you may even fail at the end of the year...”(Kuhle, the pregnant learner)

In this case the pregnant learners are supported by the Bill of Rights which states clearly that every child has a right to education and therefore every child of school going age deserves to be at school during school hours (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1994).

The rest of the respondents (50%) felt that the policy should be stopped and the pregnant learners should not be allowed in schools. These respondents include four parents and three learners. Different reasons, ranging from cultural issues to pregnant learners not coping at school, have been put forward.

“Pregnant learners should not be allowed at school... In our community some of these girls stay at home and hide their pregnancies. Why don’t they do the same at school?”(Sim, a teenage father in School A)

“I think the pregnant learner, once she discovers that she is pregnant, should stay at home until she gives birth to her baby. After that she can go back to school. This is because a lot can happen when one is pregnant...” (Noxie, a parent in School A)

“I think they should stay at home because I don’t think they are coping anyway. What I have observed even here at home is that the pregnant girl becomes withdrawn and does not mix with other children, so that might be happening at school too.”(Naks, a parent in School B)

In a study conducted by Runhare (2010) the conservatives, who are people who are against the mainstreaming of pregnant learners, state clearly that the pregnant learners should be asked to leave school once pregnancy shows and come back after giving birth, or better yet, register in another school where they are not known.

It is clear from the findings that half of the respondents (50%) are of the view that the policy should be kept while the other half feels that it should be stopped. The following section will discuss the themes that have emerged from the second research question.

4.3.2 Responses on how pregnant learners are perceived and treated in schools.

This section discusses how the pregnant learners were treated by the educators, their parents and by the other learners. The parents, in this case, include all the adults that stay together with the pregnant learner at home and also the older people in the community. The four themes that emerged from the findings will be discussed below.

(a) Treatment by educators

The majority of the respondents (86%) believed that pregnant learners were treated well by the educators. This means that there was no discrimination against them as a result of being pregnant. They were treated in the same manner as other learners who were not pregnant. These respondents included 75% of the parents, the 100% of educators and 83% of all learners. Some of the responses are quoted below:

“From what I hear, [the pregnant learners] are treated well at school, they go to school, they learn and the teachers take good care of them. They are also given a chance to go on maternity leave.”(Naks, SGB Chairperson in School B)

Bafo, an educator in School A, declared, *“The educators treat the pregnant learners just like any other learner because the educators are so conversant with the learners’ rights.”*

When asked to elaborate on this, Bafo pointed out that,

“Educators are aware of the rights of the learners even from other policies like the South African Schools Act. They know that all learners should be treated equally regardless of their race, gender or any physical condition. The SACE document also spells out how the educators are supposed to behave towards learners.”

The South African Council of Educators (SACE) insists that the educators should behave in an appropriate manner towards the learners (SACE, 2000).

Lindy, an educator in School B, also shared Bafo’s sentiments and she said,

“The educators do not have a problem with [pregnant learners]. They treat all the learners equally. When a teacher goes to a class he/she does not go there to teach pregnant or non pregnant learners, they are all the same to him or her.”

Kuhle, the pregnant learner said, *“The teachers encourage me not to drop out of school...and because of that I have resolved to continue with my studies.”*

Solly, a learner in School A, even felt that pregnant learners were given special attention by educators.

“Educators treat pregnant learners well but sometimes they overdo it. They treat a pregnant learner as if she is the most important person in class...” (Solly)

Only one parent, Noxie, attested to the ill-treatment of the pregnant learners by the educators. Noxie remarked,

“Even teachers use demeaning words. Sometimes they say the pregnant learners are just mothers who have come to occupy seats in the school. They even say, ‘We no longer have learners now, instead we teach parents.’”

When asked if she has a child who is pregnant or had one before, Noxie confirmed that none of her daughters have ever been pregnant. She further explained that she knows about the treatment of pregnant learners through listening to the conversations between her daughters and their friends. Educators who show this kind of treatment towards pregnant learners justified this by saying they are retaliating for the bad behaviour and negative attitude of pregnant learners themselves (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

Siya, the teenage mother, has reportedly experienced both kinds of treatment from different educators. This is what she had to say about the ill-treatment from some of the educators:

“For instance I would come to school wearing my tunic only because I did not have a school jacket or blazer. They would humiliate me in front

of the other learners and ask me why I did not try to hide my growing tummy by wearing a blazer. They never asked me privately.”

Some of the educators reportedly treated Siya fairly.

“Some would call me aside and give me advice on what to do. They did not humiliate me in front of the other learners.”(Siya)

The above findings indicate that pregnant learners generally receive appropriate treatment from educators. That is confirmed by 86% of the respondents (12 out of 14).

(b) Treatment by parents

On the issue of the treatment of pregnant learners by their parents, including older people in the community, six respondents (43%) felt that pregnant learners were treated unfairly by their parents and the older members of their community. These respondents include three parents, one educator and two learners. The reasons put forward are that once a girl becomes pregnant she is regarded as an adult by the members of the community and, as such, she should learn to take care of herself and not rely on the support of her parents. Also, the pregnant learner must stay at home away from other learners.

Studies have shown that some parents punish the pregnant girl by withdrawing their support (Chigona and Chetty, 2008; Runhare, 2010).

Respondent Naks, SGB Chairperson at School B, asserted,

“As for us, once the girl becomes pregnant...we tell ourselves that she is now an adult. If you were supporting the child financially or academically you withdraw your support so that she can learn to be independent as she is now a mother.”

“Sometimes [the older people in the community] pass comments in a rude manner that when the pregnant learner is starting to show, she should just stay at home until he gives birth.”(Xoli, an educator)

“I was ill-treated at home. Maybe it was because they were not used to my condition. After I had a baby things started to get better.” (Siya, the teenage mother)

The pregnant girl is also seen as an unruly child who should not be mixing with other children in case they adopt her bad behaviour. In some communities innocent children, that is those who have never had children, are not allowed to mix with pregnant girls in case they copy their behaviour (Bhana, Morrell, Shefer and Ngabaza, 2010 and Runhare, 2010).

“The other parents in the community do not approve of the pregnancy as a result when they discipline their children they will say things like, “I don’t want you to end up like so and so’s child who became pregnant at a very young age. This does not go down well with the pregnant learners, they do not like it.” (Solly, a learner)

Four respondents (29%) reported that the treatment received by pregnant learners from the parents differs from parent to parent. Some parents will treat pregnant learners well while others will not. These respondents include one parent (25%), and three educators (75%).

Nkoli, an educator in School A, remarked,

“Parents differ in their treatment of pregnant learners because others, being responsible parents, support the pregnant learners. Others see them as unruly or misbehaving children.”

Malbi, an SGB person in School A, concurred,

“Parents differ when it comes to the way they treat pregnant learners. Some parents have an understanding that the learner became pregnant because she did not get proper guidance when she reached puberty stage. Other parents criticise the child and write her off as a good for nothing person.”

Some studies concur with what respondent Malbi has said on why some teenagers get pregnant. Lack of proper guidance from parents has been cited as one of the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy (HSRC, 2009; Roche, Tucker, Thomas and Flynn, 2004; Bhana *et al.*, 2010).

The other four respondents (29%) felt that the pregnant learners were treated well by the parents. Some of the parents allegedly advised pregnant learners on how to handle pregnancy while others even congratulated them on being pregnant. These respondents are 67% of learners.

Kuhle, the pregnant learner, remarked, *“They treat me well and they would advise me on what to do or not to do now that I am pregnant. They also encourage me to continue with schooling... .”*

Solly, a learner in School A, said,

“Usually parents are disappointed by what their children have done but they understand that they cannot undo what has already been done. They accept that and treat their pregnant daughters in a good way.”

Some parents understand that pregnant learners need to be supported academically so that in the end they can support their babies (Runhare, 2010). Educated girls can be financially independent and not depend on social grants and abusive men to take care of their babies (*ibid*).

In some communities the teenage mothers are even congratulated on getting pregnant.

“Where I come from there are older women who would congratulate a girl on getting pregnant. They say it is a sign of being fertile. They say it also shows that the girl will be able to bear children for her future husband.” (Zikhona, a learner in School B)

From the above findings it is evident that the pregnant learners are reportedly not treated well by the parents as only 29% of all respondents could say the pregnant learners receive fair treatment from the parents.

(c) Treatment by other learners

Some respondents (36%) felt that pregnant learners are treated unfairly by other learners. It has been noted that they are ridiculed and teased by other learners. These respondents include 100% of parents and 25% of educators. Chigona and Chetty (2007) point out that in South Africa there are no strong policies to deal with any mockery, teasing and marginalising of teenage mothers in school. These offensive comments may affect the teen mothers in a negative way and they may be forced to drop out of school (*ibid*).

“[The other learners] tease pregnant learners and make fun of them. They also say bad things about them.”(Xoli, an educator)

“[The other learners] even do not want to share desks with pregnant learners. They accuse pregnant learners of making them drowsy.”
(Noxie, a parent)

Other respondents (36%) indicated that the pregnant learners are treated in a good way by other learners. This includes 50% of educators and 50% of all learners. It has been shown that some learners show sympathy towards pregnant learners as they feel that these learners have learnt from their mistakes (Maseko, 2006; Shaningwa, 2007).

“Some of us make it a point that we treat pregnant learners well. We would like to see them smiling and happy all the time.” (Sim, a teenage father)

“Learners in my class treat me well. They would even make sure that the door in our class is kept closed so that I do not get cold. Others even offer to carry my schoolbag when I come to school or when I go home.” (Kuhle, a pregnant learner)

“...The learners do not give the pregnant learners any problems. I think it is because of the information and skills that they received from Life Orientation lessons.”(Bafo, an educator)

“I have never noticed anything different and I have never even heard a pregnant learner reporting ill treatment by other learners.” (Xoli, an educator)

The rest of the respondents (29%) mentioned that the treatment received by pregnant learners from other learners differed from learner to learner. Some learners were reportedly disrespectful towards pregnant learners while others reportedly treated pregnant learners with dignity. These are 50% of learners and 25% of educators.

Siya, the parenting learner, remarked,

“[Other learners] did not treat me too badly but there are those that started gossiping as soon as my pregnancy started to show. Some learners did not even want to talk to me or share a desk with me.”

“Learners are not the same; they are different from each other. Some will support the pregnant learner because they have also been pregnant before, so they know how it feels to be in that situation. In some cases

the younger learners will start gossiping once they see that one of them is pregnant.” (Nkoli, an educator)

From the above findings it is difficult to say which side the majority of respondents support. This is because 36% of the respondents claimed that the pregnant learners are treated fairly by other learners. At the same time there is another 36% of respondents who feel that pregnant learners are not treated fairly by the other learners.

(d)Traditional views of parents and community about a pregnant teenager.

The respondents were requested to comment on this because I wanted to see if culture and traditions have an influence on how the pregnant teenagers are treated by their families and the community.

All parents (100%) have indicated that pregnancy of an unmarried woman is unacceptable in their communities, especially since these girls fall pregnant at a very young age. One of the reasons for this is that teenage pregnancy is seen as an immoral behaviour and as such a pregnant girl is not supposed to be seen in the company of other girls who have never been pregnant. Teenage pregnancy is regarded as a shame in African culture (Runhare, 2010).

Naks, an SGB Chairperson in School B, alleged,

“First of all, it is a disgrace for a young girl to fall pregnant. To us that is immoral. Secondly, we tell other children not to associate themselves with her. She is not supposed to mingle with the other children.”

Another parent, Noxie, remarked,

“We regard a pregnant girl as someone who does not have values, someone who has low morals. She has been sent to school to get good

education, instead she brings a baby. This girl is a poison to other girls. She is not even supposed to be in the company of other girls. She must stay away from other children.”

“We look down on pregnant girls. We do not even want our children to be seen with them in case other people think they conduct themselves the same way as pregnant girls. They are a disgrace to the community.” (Thenjie, a parent)

The dress code of pregnant learners is another thing that is a concern to the community. According to cultural values of Africans, a pregnant woman is not supposed to wear tight-fitting clothes (Runhare, 2010).

“...They wear tight fitting school uniforms that show off their growing tummies.” (Noxie, a parent)

The above findings indicate that teenage pregnancy is unacceptable in the communities where these pregnant learners live. All parents (100%) have attested to that.

4.3.3 The stakeholders’ views on supporting the pregnant learners

With regard to this issue two themes have been identified. The first theme is the respondents’ views on whether the pregnant learners are supported by the educators, parents and other learners. The second theme is whether the pregnant learners deserve support from educators, parents and other learners. The two themes will be discussed below.

(a) Respondents' views on the pregnant learners' support by educators, parents and other learners

Most respondents (79%) have indicated that pregnant learners do get support from educators, parents and other learners. This support can either be in the form of extra classes, looking after the baby when the parenting learner is at school, or even peers staying behind after school to assist the pregnant or parenting learner. These respondents include 50% of the parents, 75% of the educators and 100% of the learners.

Responses for each group of stakeholders will be discussed below.

i. Support from parents

The parents reportedly supported the teenage mothers by looking after the baby when they are at school. The study by Chigona and Chetty (2008) concurred with this. They also advise their pregnant daughters on what to do in case of emergency while they are at school. Chigona and Chetty (2008) have noted, too, that pregnant learners need tremendous support from their parents on how to cope with physical pressures that come with being pregnant.

“...Even the parents give them a chance by allowing these learners to stay at school after hours so that by the time they get home, they will have completed their school work.”(Noxie, a parent)

“...Immediately the learner gives birth, she returns to school...this this means that the parent has given the learner the support she needs because the parent looks after the baby so that the learner can go to school immediately...” (Nkoli, an educator)

“...The parents help by preparing the pregnant learner on how to cope with emergencies should something happen while she is at school...”
(Zikhona, a learner)

Adequate support to pregnant and parenting learners would enable most of the girls to stay in school and succeed in getting their Matric certificates (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). This would give them a stronger chance in securing better employment which, in turn, would make them independent adults who will be able to support their children.

ii. Support from other learners

It had been reported that other learners supported the pregnant learners and teenage mothers by staying behind after school to help them to catch up or by taking formal tasks to the learners who are on maternity leave.

“Other learners stay behind stay behind after school to assist parenting learners. I hear that they have study groups where they assist each other academically....” (Noxie)

“Sometimes the study groups would remain behind after school...The other learners will study with the pregnant learner as long as she is present in the group....” (Zikhona)

“...On the other hand the other learners also assist by bringing the tasks to the learner who is on maternity leave, especially if they belong to the same study group. To me they support each other.”(Nkoli)

iii. Support from educators

The respondents have noted that the educators support pregnant learners and teenage mothers by offering extra classes for them.

“...Another thing, the educators are also parents, as a result after the learner comes back from the maternity leave, which is usually one or

two weeks, the teacher would go an extra mile and try to update the learner on the school work....” (Nkoli)

“I hear that some teachers are conducting extra classes for the learners that are falling behind in their schoolwork. Sometimes the teenage mothers find it hard to complete their home-works because of the demands of the baby. By staying behind for extra classes the pregnant and teenage mothers get a chance to concentrate on their studies.”(Noxie)

“Yes, they do get support from educators. When pregnant learners need extra help with the lessons they are free to go to the teachers for assistance. The teachers never refuse to help them. In fact the teachers do that for all learners....” (Zikhona)

Only one respondent (7%) has indicated that the pregnant learners do not get enough support from the educators, parents and other learners. This respondent makes up 25% of the parents.

“They do not get enough support from any of the people you have mentioned. People need to be educated about teenage pregnancy so that they know how to deal with it.”(Malbi, SGB Chairperson in School A)

The rest of the respondents (14%) have pointed out that they are not aware of any kind of support that is offered to the pregnant learners by the educators, parents and other learners. This includes 25% of the educators and 25% of the parents. The possibility is that some parents feel ashamed of their daughter’s pregnancy; as a result they distance themselves from their daughter (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

“No, I cannot say they do get support from other people. I have never witnessed that.”(Xoli, the educator)

"I never heard of a special kind of support for the pregnant learners. To me they are treated just like other learners."(Naks, the parent)

The above findings indicate that the pregnant learners and teenage mothers can get some kind of academic support from parents, educators and other learners if they ask for assistance. This is confirmed by 79% of the respondents.

(b) Respondent's views on whether pregnant and parenting learners deserve academic support from the educators, parents and other learners

Most respondents (79 %) felt that pregnant learners deserve academic support from the educators, parents and other learners. These respondents include 100% of the parents, 50% of the educators and 83% of the learners. The respondents feel that the future of the pregnant learners cannot be thrown away because of one mistake.

Malbi, an SGB Chairperson from School A, stated,

"Yes, they deserve support because we cannot just throw their future away, no matter what these girls did. People should learn to look for solutions instead of focussing on a problem."

Nkoli ,an educator in School A, remarked,

"...In some cases it is not that these learners got pregnant because they are unruly. For others this is just a mistake, maybe they did not receive proper guidance... Therefore children need to be given a second chance in life... So we cannot write them off because of just one mistake."

Siya, the teenage mother, commented, “...*I want people to give me another chance. I have learnt from my mistakes.*”

The rest of the respondents (21%) felt that the pregnant learners do not deserve any kind of support from the educators, parents and other learners. They feel that pregnant learners only have themselves to blame for their pregnancy since they allegedly had low morals. These respondents include 50% of educators and 17% of the learners. Here are some of the responses:

“The support should go hand in hand with good morals and ethics. Once a learner discovers that she is pregnant, she should immediately stay at home and focus on her pregnancy. My concern is that we need to raise the standards of morals.”(Bafo, an educator in School A)

“Sometimes I feel they do not deserve this support because they only have themselves to blame for being pregnant. And if they keep on being absent from school, where do they think they will get all the information?”(Solly, a learner in School A)

The above findings have indicated that the majority of respondents (79%) feel that the pregnant learners deserve academic support from parents, educators and other learners. The rest of the respondents (21%) are against that.

4.3.4 The perceived challenges faced by the schools in the management of pregnant learners

Five themes emerged in response to the above research question. Due to the nature of the question, in some cases only the educators were requested to respond to this question. The themes are as follows:

(a) The educators’ perceived challenges on teaching a pregnant learner.

(b) Respondents' views on whether the presence of pregnant learners in class affects other learners.

(c) Respondents' views on the academic performance of pregnant learners.

(d) The educators' views on assisting learners on maternity leave.

(e) Respondents' views on the challenges posed by the policy on the school management team (SMT).

All the themes will be discussed in detail below.

(a) The educators' perceived challenges faced by educators while teaching a pregnant learner

In responding to this issue the educators cited two challenges, namely, the behaviour or attitude of pregnant learners and not knowing what kind of punishment to administer to a pregnant learner when a need arises.

All educators (100 %) have reported that the pregnant learners are generally cheeky, grumpy and lack discipline. The educators also reported that usually there is no problem before pregnancy; this behaviour manifests itself after pregnancy. In a study conducted by Chigona and Chetty (2008) pregnant learners were also reported to display a negative attitude and bad behaviour in class.

"...Sometimes the pregnant learner becomes cheeky and moody, a behaviour that was not there before she got pregnant..." (Lindy, an educator in School B).

"It is their attitude. They are cheeky. Maybe it is a defence mechanism. They do not want to be asked anything about their pregnancy. I think they are frustrated and they take it on other people..." (Nkoli, an educator in School A)

Some of the educators (50%) have also noted that this attitude depends on who is pregnant as some pregnant learners' attitude and behaviour are the same as that of other learners.

"It depends on who is pregnant. You can see that some learners are ashamed of their pregnancies; they humble themselves and try to do whatever it takes to please the educator. Others are just not disciplined." (Xoli)

On the issue of punishment, Xoli, an educator in School B, remarked,

"There are challenges like when you have to decide on the form of punishment that would be suitable for a pregnant learner...You have to ask yourself first if this will not affect the pregnant learners' health and that of her unborn child."

None of the educators interviewed indicated that they did not have a challenge while teaching a pregnant learner. The major challenge cited by the educators is the bad attitude and behaviour of pregnant learners.

(b) Respondents' views on whether the presence of pregnant learners in class affects other learners

For this question only the educators and learners were requested to respond. The assumption was that the parents might not know exactly what is happening inside the classrooms. The pregnant and the parenting learners were also not requested to respond to this question. This is because the question is about them and their effect on other learners so I wanted to avoid bias. All in all, only eight participants were allowed to respond to this issue.

Most respondents (75%) have indicated that the presence of pregnant learners in class affects the concentration of other learners. Some respondents complained that the pregnant learners go in and out of the class because they have to attend to emergencies that are related to pregnancy. These respondents include two educators and four learners.

Zikhona, a learner, stated,

“...Sometimes they become sick and they would go in and out of the class to attend to this sickness. As a result this disturbs us and we find it hard to concentrate on the lessons.”

Xoli, an educator, commented,

“... It can affect other learners especially those who are curious as to what is happening to someone when she is pregnant. The pregnant learner will end up discussing her pregnancy with other learners. Every chance they get, the other learners want news or information from the pregnant learner. This is valuable time that could have been used for constructive things. So their presence in class disturbs the others.”

Two respondents (25%) have indicated that this depends on who is pregnant, meaning that the presence of one pregnant learner in class may affect the other learners while in some cases it may not. These respondents are 50% of the educators. Nkoli, an educator in School A, declared,

“... As I have said earlier, it depends on who is pregnant. Some learners make sure that their pregnancies do not affect their daily activities at school. Others will make their pregnancy an excuse of not doing their group work. In this case they are a burden to other group members.” (Nkoli)

The above findings indicate that from the respondents' point of view the presence of pregnant learners in class affects other learners negatively. This is confirmed by 75% of the respondents.

(c) Respondents' views on the academic performance of pregnant learners

The academic performance of all learners is a concern of the school management team since the schools have to answer to the Department of Education for their low pass rates (Nkani and Bhana, 2011). Only eight respondents (57%) commented on the academic performance of teenage mothers and pregnant learners. These include four educators, two parents, the teenage mother and the pregnant learner.

Both the pregnant learner and the teenage mother stated that their academic performance was good when they were pregnant. The pregnant learner stated that hers has improved since she got pregnant. She also indicated that this improvement came as a surprise to them and they do not know how it happened.

The pregnant learner, Kuhle, declared,

"When I saw my report card for June Examinations I was shocked because I had performed very well. I could not believe it was me. I got more marks than I ever had before I got pregnant...I do not know [how this happened]."

The teenage mother indicated that her academic performance was good when she was pregnant and before that. Things started going downhill only after the baby was born.

This is what Siya, the teenage mother, said,

"When I was pregnant I did not have a problem with coming to school. I would come to school every day and focus on my studies. After I had a

baby it was not easy for me to go to school every day. I could not even focus on my studies at home because I had to attend to the baby.”

All educators (100%) and two of the parents (50%) have reported that generally the academic performance of pregnant and parenting learners drops after their pregnancy. Some of the reasons put forward for this are tiredness of the pregnant learners, their absenteeism from school and not having enough time to focus on their studies because of the demands of the baby. In the same vein, the findings in the study by Mpanza (2006) have shown that pregnant learners and teenage mothers have a high rate of absenteeism compared to other learners; as a result, they fail their studies.

“...they do not cope anyway...most of the time the pregnant learners are absent from school or they are too tired to do their schoolwork and this causes them to fail.” (Naks, SGB Chairperson in School B)

“...Most of [the pregnant learners] perform poorly because pregnancy will always take its course [and] being a parent is a responsibility on its own...Being a parent and a learner at the same time cannot give you the same results you would get if you were a learner only... Also, when you are pregnant you tend to feel tired most of the time and your concentration in class can never be the same like when you were not pregnant...”(Nkoli, an educator in School A)

“...A learner cannot cope with her studies while at the same time she has to attend to the problems that come with being pregnant. Obviously the studies are going to suffer.” (Noxie, a parent in School A)

From the above findings it is evident that generally the academic performance of pregnant learners and teenage mothers, as alleged by 83% of respondents (5 out of 6), is poor compared to their performance before they got pregnant. The next section will look at the effect of the presence of pregnant learners on other learners.

(d) The educators' views on assisting pregnant learners on maternity leave

All the educators are against this. Educators do not see themselves teaching learners who are not within the school premises. Amongst other things the educators cite the lack of time and the impossibility of that task as they also have a responsibility to other learners. This is contrary to the objectives of the policy. When the policy was formulated, the assumption was that pregnant learners will receive adequate support from the educators (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

This is what two educators had to say on the subject:

"I am against it. I do not see myself giving lessons to a learner who is at home...." (Xoli)

"To me that is unreasonable...I am qualified to be a classroom-based educator not a home-based educator...There is no budget allocated for the educator to go and teach the learner at home. I do not even know the learners' background so I do not know what to expect there...."
(Bafo)

On the lack of time and responsibility to other learners Xoli commented, *"...there are many learners in school whom I have to give extra lessons. Where will I find time for a learner who is at home...?"*

Bafo concurred,

"...There is also time factor. I am supposed to teach that child for one period only and then move to the next class. How am I supposed to do that when the child lives about 10 kilometres away from school...?"

All the educators (100%) do not see themselves assisting learners who are on maternity leave. As this may have an impact on the academic performance of

learners, the next section will look at respondents' views on academic performance of pregnant learners.

(e) Respondents' views on the challenges posed by the policy on the school management team (SMT)

Most of the respondents (50%) felt that the policy poses a challenge on the SMT as people who have to ensure the smooth running of the school. These respondents included 75% of the educators, 33% of the learners and 50% of the parents. The main challenges that were cited were the extra workload of the educators caused by the presence of pregnant learners in school, having to convince the educators to assist learners who are on maternity leave, and the concern that educators do not have midwifery skills.

Naks, an SGB Chairperson in School B, stated, *"...the school now becomes a place for young parents and that makes things difficult for teachers."*

Malbi, an SGB Chairperson in School A, concurred,

"...the policy makers have shifted the burden of being responsible for pregnant learners to the teachers. The teachers are the ones who have to deal with pregnant learners. This is adding on the workload of the teachers which is already too much..."

Although Xoli, an educator in School B, noted that she is not really aware of the challenges posed by the policy on the SMT, she also commented on the extra workload caused by the presence of pregnant learners in schools.

"I think the government is just making things difficult for us because there is no provision in place for dealing with emergencies that may result from the learner's pregnancy."

Lack of equipment to deal with emergencies from pregnant learners has also been cited by educators in a study by Mpanza (2006).

The educators also remarked on the impossibility of the task of catering for learners who are on maternity leave.

“This also means that the SMT must have provision to assist all learners that might be absent from school for whatever reason. To me that is impossible”. (Lindy, an educator in School B)

“This means every time a learner is pregnant the SMT have to sit down and draw a new timetable which will accommodate this learner...There also has to be transport arrangement because how else am I supposed to travel to the learners’ home?...I am trained to be a school based educator, not a home based one...” (Bafo, an educator in School A)

Another issue that has been raised is that the educators are not capacitated in dealing with pregnancy issues. The findings in a study by Mpanza (2006) have shown that educators are concerned that they were not trained on how to handle emergencies that may result from pregnancy, like being in labour.

“I do not agree with this policy because what would happen in the case where the learner would be on labour while she is in the classroom. The teachers have no midwifery skills. That could have fatal results.”(Bafo)

“...I was only trained to be a school teacher and not a midwife....” (Lindy)

“... I do not think the female teachers have been trained on that....” (Solly, a learner in School A)

“...I also do not think that our teachers can handle that as they were not trained to be doctors....” (Sim, a teenage father in School A)

Only 25% of educators reported that the policy does not really pose a challenge to the SMT as most of the pregnant learners in their school do not go on maternity leave for a long time. The educator stated,

“Sometimes you don’t even notice that the [pregnant] learner has been away from school as a result they do not lose many lessons. The educator indicated earlier that sometimes the pregnant learners would go on maternity leave for one week only.” (Nkoli)

The above findings indicate that the presence of pregnant learners in schools allegedly poses a challenge to school management teams. This is based on the responses of 50% of the respondents. Six respondents (43%) were silent on this issue while 7% of the respondents felt that the policy does not really pose a challenge to the SMT.

The next section presents the analysis of the above findings with the aim of interpreting the meanings thereof.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation of data

This section sets out to analyse all the data that was collected in this study. The aim here is to interpret the data so as to find the meanings thereof. Literature will be used to back up some of the arguments that may come up during the discussions. The emotions evoked during the interviews have also been discussed. This section is organised as follows:

4.4.1 Analysis of findings gathered through semi-structured interviews.

4.4.2 Document analysis.

4.4.3 Emotions evoked during the interviews.

The sections below will discuss the analysis and interpretation of data as indicated above.

4.4.1 Analysis of findings gathered through semi-structured interviews

This section will analyse the findings as they have been presented in the section on presentation of data gathered through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the findings will be discussed under each research question. This way all the themes that emerged from each research question will be analysed.

(i) What are the school stakeholders' perceptions of the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the two selected secondary schools?

The study revealed that only the parents and the educators were aware of the existence of the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. What was revealed by the study was that all the parents had indicated that they did not remember how they came to know about the existence of this policy. This is, however, an unanticipated finding as all parents who participated in this study are members of the SGB, the same people who are supposed to be part of decision making in their schools. An implication of this is the possibility that the policy has never been discussed in the SGB meetings. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Runhare (2010) whose study established that the parents in the SGB never discussed the mainstreaming of pregnant learners policy with the members of the SMT in their meetings. This also shows that parents are not playing their full role as governors mandated by the legislation (Mncube, 2009). What Mncube (2009) has established in his study about the role played by parents in the SGB is that sometimes the parents are not given a chance to be involved in decision making. Decisions are taken by the school principal and the SMT (*ibid*). It has been noted that parents are sometimes not taken seriously by the school principal and the staff; they are undermined (*ibid*). My study has also shown that all the learners who took part in this research were also not aware of the existence of this policy; an implication of this is the possibility that the school principal and the staff did not inform the learners about this policy; it was never discussed with them. This

argument is based on the finding that even the SGB parents were not informed because their contribution was not important (Mncube, 2009).

The majority of the respondents saw the introduction of this policy as an immoral thing. In reviewing the literature, it has been noted that the conservatives, that is, people who are against the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, felt that the mainstreaming policies are contributing to moral decay among teenagers and only serve to increase the rate of teenage pregnancy, school indiscipline and declining standards in some schools (Mpanza, 2006 and Runhare, 2010). Most respondents felt that for the same reasons the policy should be stopped. Another interesting finding here is that all the three boy learners who participated in this research, as opposed to all three girl learners, felt that the pregnant learners should not be allowed in schools. Two of these boys are teenage fathers themselves. In many studies the boys especially were the ones who have been shown to display a very negative attitude towards the mainstreaming of pregnant learners policies (Maseko, 2006; Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare; 2010).

Again the majority of respondents (79%) have indicated that they are not comfortable with the presence of pregnant learners in public schools. There is a feeling amongst the respondents that pregnant learners set a bad example for other learners. Literature has also indicated that the mainstreaming of pregnant learners has been opposed by some school stakeholders as they viewed schools as places of innocence where innocent children should not be allowed to mix with pregnant learners in case they copy their behaviour (Bhana *et al.*, 2010; Runhare, 2010).

Most respondents (50%) are of the view that a pregnant learner should stay at home once she discovers that she is pregnant and only go back to school after giving birth. In a study conducted by Runhare (2010) the conservatives state clearly that the pregnant learners should be asked to leave school once pregnancy shows and come back after giving birth, or better yet, register in another school where they are not known.

As much as the majority of the respondents wish that a pregnant learner should stay away from school, there is also another group of respondents, albeit in a minority,

who feels that the pregnant learners should be allowed to stay for the whole duration of pregnancy. These are the pregnant learners themselves. They feel that if a pregnant learner wants to stay at school for the whole duration of pregnancy, she should be allowed to do so. The pregnant learners in this case are supported and protected by the Bill of Rights, which is Chapter 2 of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights states clearly that every child has a right to education and therefore every child of school going age deserves to be at school during school hours (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1994). The democratic government is also committed to gender empowerment and to ensure that all children of school going age, especially girls, have access to education (Department of Education, 2005).

(ii) How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the selected schools?

From the findings it has transpired that pregnant learners generally receive appropriate treatment from educators. There is no discrimination against the pregnant learners. This has been confirmed by 86% of the respondents. One respondent noted that this is because the educators are so conversant with the learners' rights as stated in the Bill of Rights and also in the South African Schools Act (1996). The South African Council of Educators' code of conduct for educators also requires that the educators behave in an appropriate manner towards the learners (SACE, 2000).

The findings in this study have indicated that the pregnant learners are not treated fairly by their parents as only 29% of all the respondents could say the pregnant learners receive fair treatment from the parents. From one of the parents it has transpired that once a girl becomes pregnant she is regarded as an adult by her parents and other members of the community. According to this parent, the pregnant girl should, therefore, fend for herself as she is no longer a child who depends on her parents for any kind of support. Literature has shown that some parents feel that by supporting their pregnant daughter they would be condoning the alleged bad behaviour, so they punish the girl by withdrawing their support (Chigona

and Chetty, 2008; Runhare, 2010). The mistake of falling pregnant is viewed as a shame and curse to the girl's family (Runhare, 2010).

It has been noted that the treatment of pregnant learners by the other learners differs from learner to learner. Some respondents felt that pregnant learners are treated unfairly by other learners. They are reportedly teased and ridiculed by other learners. This is supported by the findings in the study by Shaningwa (2007) where it was discovered that pregnant learners suffer humiliation, ridicule and name-calling at the hands of the other learners.

Other respondents indicated that some learners treat the pregnant learners in a decent manner. It is alleged that the reason for this is because these learners have also been pregnant before so they know how it feels to be in that situation. Again this shows that the girls are the ones who are most sympathetic to the situation of pregnant learners (Shaningwa, 2007).

The findings also show that the teenage pregnancy is unacceptable in the communities in which these girls live. All parents in this study have attested to that. This is because teenage pregnancy is viewed as a shame in African culture (Runhare, 2010). The dress code of pregnant learners has also been one of the issues of conflict between the pregnant learners and the community. Traditionally a pregnant woman is supposed to wear an outfit that is loose-fitting, something that is not going to show her structure (Shaningwa, 2007). This is not the case with pregnant learners as they are required to wear a school uniform that gets tighter and tighter as the months go by.

(iii) What are the stakeholders' views on supporting the pregnant learners, and why?

The findings have indicated that the pregnant learners do get some kind of support from the educators, parents and other learners. This is confirmed by 79% of the respondents. This support is usually in the form of educators giving the learners extra classes, parents looking after the baby when the parenting learner is at school

or even the other learners staying behind after school to assist the pregnant or parenting learners with their school work. The reason behind this support is about giving the pregnant learners a second chance in attaining their goals. Some educators have noted that some of the girls do become serious after falling pregnant and were eager to achieve their goals and so they deserve to be given a second chance to continue with their schooling (Mpanza, 2006 and Shaningwa, 2007).

Most respondents feel that the pregnant learners deserve this support from the educators, parents and other learners. These respondents feel that the girls made a mistake; they did not become pregnant because they are unruly. Their pregnancy, in some cases, could be the result of them not receiving proper guidance at home. Literature reviewed has indicated that lack of proper guidance from the parents has been cited as one of the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy (HSRC, 2009; Roche *et al.* 2004 and Bhana *et al.*, 2010). Chasing a pregnant learner away from school is seen as a double punishment for the same offence by some parents as they feel that pregnancy in a young girl is already a punishment on its own (Ruppel, 2009).

Those respondents that feel that the pregnant learners do not deserve any kind of support from anyone cite the immorality of pregnant learners as their reason. As stated in the earlier sections in this chapter, there are some school stakeholders who believe that a girl gets pregnant because she is immoral and badly behaved (Mpanza, 2006 and Runhare, 2010).

(iv) What are the leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions on mainstreaming of pregnant learners?

In this study all educators were against assisting pregnant learners with their school work while the learners are on maternity leave. The educators do not see themselves teaching learners who are not within the school premises. They reportedly do not see the possibility of that happening mainly because of the time constraints. Prior studies have noted that the educators are not willing to go that

extra mile when it comes to assisting the learners who are on maternity leave (Ruppel, 2009). This is in contradiction with what the mainstreaming policies had set out to achieve. When the policies that allow for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners were promulgated the assumption was that the girls would receive adequate support from their teachers (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

Pregnant learners are reportedly ill-disciplined according to most of the educators who participated in this research. It has been established by some of these educators that this behaviour only manifests itself during the period of pregnancy. Usually before the pregnancy there is no problem with the learners' behaviour. It has been noted that this behaviour of the pregnant learners has a bearing on how they are sometimes treated by the educators. As mentioned in the literature review, in justifying the negative attitude of educators towards pregnant learners, some educators say that they are retaliating for the bad behaviour and negative attitude of the pregnant learners themselves (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

All the educators in this study have also indicated that a majority of pregnant learners display the most bad attitude and behaviour compared to other learners who were not pregnant. In a study by Runhare (2010) one parent had mentioned that it is not easy to discipline a pregnant girl even at home, so it must be a very difficult task for the educators to discipline a pregnant learner.

The findings in this study indicate that generally the academic performance of pregnant and parenting learners drops after their pregnancy. This has been reported by all the educators who participated in this study. Some of the reasons for this, according to the educators, include the tiredness of pregnant learners, their absenteeism from school and not having enough time to focus on their studies because of the demands of the baby. The parenting learner who took part in this research mentioned that her academic performance had dropped since she had a baby. She cited the same reasons as the educators. A strong relationship between absenteeism of pregnant learners and their poor academic performance has been reported in the literature. Some studies have indicated that there is a high rate of

absenteeism amongst pregnant learners which, in turn, results in them failing at the end of the year (Mpanza, 2006 and Chigona, 2007).

However, contrary to the above findings, it has been noted that there are some cases where the academic performance of learners improves after they have been pregnant. Even in this study one of the pregnant learners confirmed this when she mentioned that her academic performance now that she is pregnant is better than when she was not pregnant. As much as this learner had indicated that she did not know why she performed better now that she was pregnant, studies have shown that some pregnant and parenting learners actually do display an improved performance in their studies (Zillman, 1981, Mpanza, 2006, Shaningwa, 2007). This proves that they are now more serious about their studies than ever before and are now eager to achieve their goals (*ibid*).

Another interesting finding is that even though the majority of respondents indicated that they are aware of the policy from the Department of Education that allows for mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, most respondents (75%) have indicated that they are not aware of any existence of the policy on learner pregnancy management in their schools. It has been established when reviewing the literature that the school policy on management of learner pregnancy does not exist at all in some regular schools in South Africa and America. (Zellman, 1981; Runhare, 2010; Nkani and Bhana, 2010). The non-existence of this policy in schools allows staff attitudes about learner pregnancy and parenthood to develop (*ibid*).

Most respondents (75%) have indicated that the presence of pregnant learners in class affects other learners. Some of the examples put forward to support this notion were that some learners spend their time trying to find out news or information about pregnancy from the pregnant learner instead of using that time for their studies. It has also been reported that sometimes the pregnant learners become sick and move in and out of the classroom trying to attend to this sickness. This in turn disturbs other learners as they find it hard to concentrate on the lesson when there is someone moving up and down in class. Unfortunately, the literature to support or

talk against this could not be found by the researcher. This leaves a gap for more studies in the future.

The majority of educators (50%) have indicated that the SMT is faced with the challenge of convincing the educators to assist learners who are on maternity leave with their school work. This is a challenge as the educators have already mentioned that they are not prepared to do that as their duty is to teach learners who are within the school premises. In a study by Mpanza (2006) it has been noted that teachers are not willing to go the extra mile, like making alternative arrangements for the pregnant learner to cover curriculum at home. One school principal in a South African school admitted that in their school there is no arrangement for the pregnant learner who is on maternity leave to catch up with the rest of the class (Chigona and Chetty, 2007). This poses another challenge for the SMT as it is obvious that if these learners do not get tuition while they are on maternity leave, then they are going to fail at the end of the year. The challenge here is that the schools are expected to produce a good pass rate at the end of the year but if things continue this way, that will not be possible (Nkani and Bhana, 2011). The schools know if they do not produce good results, they will have to face the wrath of the Department of Education (*ibid*).

There has also been a complaint from the educators that they were only trained to be educators and not midwives. They do not have the necessary skills to deal with learner pregnancy and anything that could result from it. In a study by Mpanza (2006) some educators have argued that the lack of training and equipment to help pregnant girls creates a negative attitude to the mainstreaming policies and to the pregnant learners themselves

This section has been analysing the data gathered through semi-structured interviews. In the following section I will analyse the data gathered through some of the documents used in this study.

4.4.2 Document analysis

In this section I am analysing data collected through different documents which include the pregnant and parenting learners' journals, books that the learners used in Life Orientation for writing notes and class works, the documents outlining the Life Orientation syllabus for grades 7-10 and the Department of Education Annual Survey for 2006.

On top of these documents I have mentioned above, I had also planned to get hold of the staff meeting minutes for both schools which were my research sites, their school policies on learner pregnancy management and the promotion schedules. I also intended to obtain the latest statistics on learner pregnancy for the circuits under investigation from their circuit managers. The staff meeting minutes were going to be used to check what was discussed on management of learner pregnancy in both schools. I wanted to use the promotion schedules to compare the performance of the pregnant learners with that of other learners and also to find out if their pregnancy had an effect on their academic performance. The school policies would be used to compare them with the policy from the Department of Education.

Unfortunately in both schools I was not allowed access to the important documents of the school such as the management of learner pregnancy policy, staff meeting minutes and promotion schedules of learners. This meant that I had to rely on the interviews with the school stakeholders on this issue. In the district offices I could not secure an appointment with the circuit managers. Eventually someone advised me to go to the internet and check the latest IQMS report on learner pregnancy. That is why I could not use this year or last year's statistics in my tables.

In the following sections I will start by analysing the learners' journals, followed by an analysis of the learners' books and Life Orientation syllabuses and, lastly, the analysis of the pregnancy statistics from the Department of Education Annual Survey of 2006.

(i) Analysis of the findings gathered from learners' journals

As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, I had requested the four learners to write their experiences in a journal. These learners included the two girls who have been pregnant and the two teenage fathers. Only the two girls wrote in their journals and submitted them. Both teenage fathers did not submit their journals as they were allegedly not supposed to share their personal stuff with me as I am a female.

What I was interested in in those journals was the experiences of the learners when they were pregnant, the way they were treated by the educators, parents and other learners and the kind of support, if any, that they received from the different school stakeholders. I also wanted to know how the pregnancy had affected their studies. In the paragraphs below I will discuss the findings in detail.

Analysis of Siya and Kuhle's journals

Siya, the parenting learner, lives with her grandparents and it has transpired from the journal that she does not have a close and loving relationship with her family. She got pregnant as a result of not receiving proper guidance at home. Lack of proper guidance from parents has been cited as one of the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy. (HSRC, 2009; Roche *et al.*, 2004; Bhana *et al.*, 2010). Kuhle, the pregnant learner, is also staying with aunts and grandparents. From what I have read, hers is a loving home as she frequently mentions the support she gets from her family.

Pregnancy came as a shock to both girls. When their families found out about the pregnancies, they were disappointed and angry. Runhare (2010) and Shaningwa (2007) noted that in African culture pregnancy of an unmarried girl is a shame to the family and sometimes it is regarded as a curse.

Siya's boyfriend deserted her as soon as she told him about the pregnancy. She vowed to continue with her studies no matter what because she wanted to realise her dreams. *"I know it will be hard but I can't just throw my dreams away"*, she wrote

in her journal. Fortunately both learners were encouraged by their families to continue with their studies. Some studies have shown that some learners, once they discover that they are pregnant, become eager to continue with their schooling for the sake of their babies (Chigona and Chetty, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007).

Both Siya and Kuhle stated that during their pregnancy they lost some of their friends. The possibility is that the other children did not want to be seen in their company as they did not want to be associated with them. Literature reviewed has indicated that a pregnant girl is seen as someone who is immoral and the parents, therefore, would ask their children to stop hanging out with pregnant girls in case they are given the same label (Shaningwa, 2007 and Runhare, 2010).

Siya attested to the poor treatment she received at home now that she was pregnant. She attributes this poor treatment to the disappointment she has caused her family. On the other hand, Kuhle noted that as much as her family was disappointed with the news of her pregnancy, they were very supportive. Even the boyfriend's family was reported to be very supportive. However, both learners' families tried to show their support by offering to look after the baby when the learners are at school. The reason behind this support is about giving the pregnant or parenting learner a second chance in attaining their goals since both girls have indicated to their families that they still want to continue with their studies (Mpanza, 2006 and Shaningwa, 2007).

Both Siya and Kuhle have confirmed that the treatment they received from other learners would differ from time to time. Some learners would treat them in a decent manner and not humiliate them. Kuhle even wrote that some learners would not even allow her to lift a heavy object. In a study by Shaningwa (2007) it was established that some learners would treat pregnant girls fairly as they sympathised with them. Some of these learners, being girls themselves, were in the same situation before and know how it feels to be ill-treated because of pregnancy (*ibid*).

Siya and Kuhle reported that other learners would humiliate them and gossip about them. Although Siya and Kuhle had not been specific about the gender, it has been noted that boys especially were the ones who teased pregnant learners (*ibid*).

Siya stated that she received different treatment from different educators, while Kuhle noted that all educators treated her appropriately. Siya stated in her journal that she was not treated well by some educators as they would make sure that they humiliated her in front of the other learners. Literature has indicated that all school stakeholders did not get a formal education on management of learner pregnancy (Runhare, 2010). This, coupled with lack of knowledge about the contents of the policies on management of learner pregnancy, has resulted in negative attitudes towards pregnant learners (Mpanza, 2006). She did, however, indicate that not all educators treat her badly. On the other hand, Kuhle stated that she received fair treatment from the educators in so much that some of them advised her not to stay away from school as a result of her pregnancy because she was a good student. In a study conducted by Zellman (1981) in America, it was established that not all educators have written off the pregnant learners as hopeless cases. As a researcher I support the idea of encouraging pregnant learners to continue with their studies for the duration of their pregnancy. This is because some studies have shown that once a pregnant girl stays away from school when she is pregnant, she sometimes ends up not going back to school anymore, even after the birth of the baby (Shaningwa, 2007). Punishment has to be corrective but when a child is denied her right to education, in my view that becomes punitive in a negative way not only to the pregnant learner but also to her unborn child.

Once again the issue of dress code cropped up. Siya wrote that there was this English teacher who kept telling her that she must get a loose jacket to hide her bulging tummy and she said that in front of the whole class. Siya indicated that she would have done that if she could afford to buy the jacket. According to cultural values, especially those of Africans, a pregnant woman is not supposed to wear tight-fitting clothes that show her structure (Runhare, 2010). That could be one of

the reasons the educator was irritated with Siya's tight-fitting school clothes. Having said that, I do not justify or condone the teacher's attitude.

Kuhle gave birth in the middle of the final examinations. She could not write some of the papers as she had to stay for a week in hospital after the birth of her baby. She was worried that this may cause her to fail at the end of the year. This is the same concern that has been raised by the educators. The educators have mentioned that pregnant girls have a high rate of absenteeism that, in turn, causes them to fail at the end of the year (Mpanza, 2006). This then causes the schools to have a poor pass rate which puts them on a spot with the Department of Education.

Towards the end of their journals both learners talked about their feelings. Siya mentioned that she wished that the anger inside her would go away so that she could get her life together. She also mentioned that writing in her journal had helped her a lot as she had been able to say what she felt inside, something she had not been able to do before as it had not been easy to talk about her feelings with anyone.

Kuhle ended her journal on a sad note. She mentioned that now that the baby was born, her boyfriend stopped visiting her; he just went away for holidays. She also complained that her baby does not have enough clothes and the ones he has are old clothes. This could mean that the baby's clothes are hand-outs from other people. Although not much has been said about it, I sensed that the boyfriend's family has decided to withdraw their support for reasons known to them. Kuhle wrote that she did not know what to do with the baby. She was also contemplating deserting the baby and running away from home. She also said she wished someone would take the baby away so she could focus on her studies.

During interviews and after going through the journals, I offered to book a counselling session for Siya and Kuhle with the Child Counsellors at the East London District Offices. This is because I felt that old wounds had been re-opened as both learners had to re-live their experiences. However, both of them declined

the offer stating that they are coping in their own way. Siya noted that her baby boy was helping her in her healing process.

(ii) Analysis of the findings gathered from the learners' books and Life Orientation syllabuses.

The main aim of going through the learners' class work and note books was to find out if they had been taught anything about teenage pregnancy and sexuality in class. During the period of conducting this research, Siya was in grade 10 and Kuhle was in grade 8. Both learners' books did not show any evidence of learning about teenage pregnancy and sexuality in class.

I then decided to look at the grade 8 and 10 Life Orientation syllabus to find out whether the syllabus required that they be taught about teenage pregnancy and sexuality in those grades. What I discovered was that the Life Orientation grade 8 syllabus does not require that a learner should be taught anything on teenage pregnancy and sexuality (WCED Online, 2002). It only looks into things such as career choices, physical development environmental health, etc. (*ibid*). Likewise, the grade 10 Life Orientation syllabus does not include a section on teenage pregnancy and sexuality (*ibid*). The grade 10 syllabus is almost similar to that of grade 8.

It was mentioned earlier in the section where learners' profiles were discussed that even though Siya is now in grade 10, she got pregnant while she was still in grade 8. For this reason I also thought I should look into the Life Orientation grade 7 syllabus. My understanding was that the information and skills they acquired in grade 7 should have been useful in preventing the pregnancy that happened in grade 8.

What I have established is that one of the assessment standards in the Life Orientation grade 7 syllabus is that the learner should be able to discuss personal feelings, community norms, values and social pressure associated with sexuality (WCED Online, 2002). I think this is where the learners get to learn about issues around teenage pregnancy and sexuality. Unfortunately I could not get the evidence

Page 129 of 176

that the two learners who participated in this study, Siya and Kuhle, were actually taught about this in class while they were in grade 7. They had reportedly destroyed the material that they used in grade 7 to make space for the new material in the current grades.

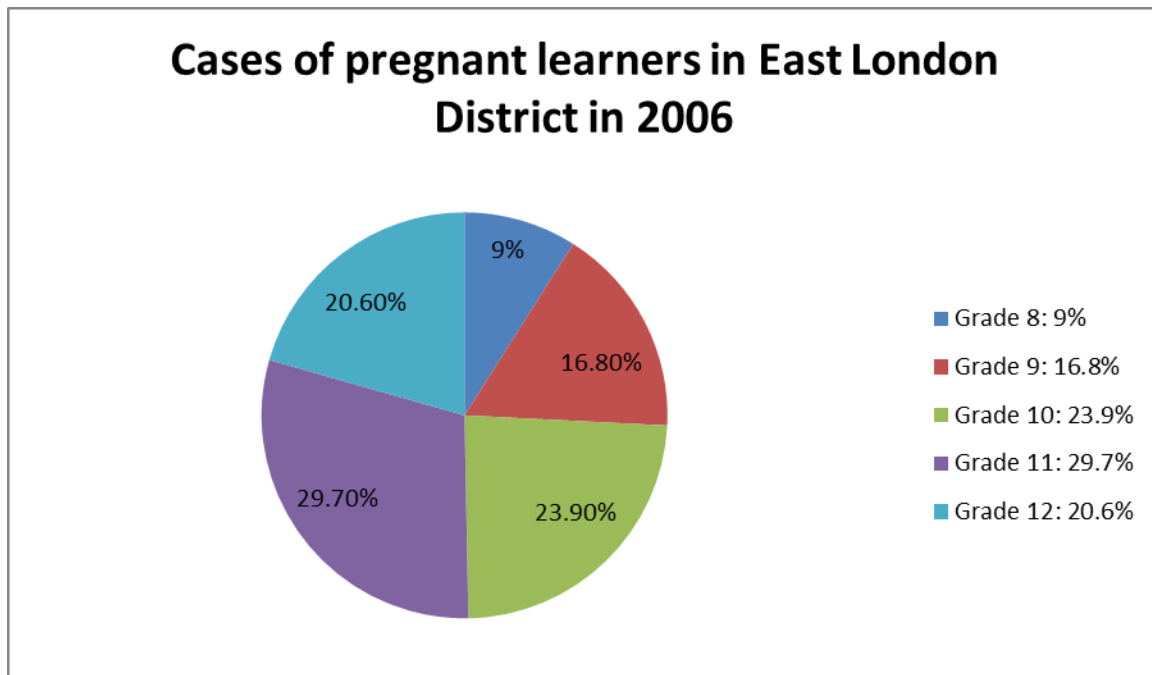
Since I have mentioned earlier that I had noticed a similarity between grades 8 and 10 Life Orientation syllabuses, I decided to look into the grade 9 syllabus just to compare it to the other grades.

As for the Life Orientation grade 9 syllabus, it has not been specified that learners should learn about teenage pregnancy and sexuality. However, one of the assessment standards in Learning Outcome 3: Personal Development was that a learner should be able to respond appropriately to emotions and challenging situations (WCED Online, 2002). Another assessment standard here was that the learners should critically discuss their own rights and responsibilities in interpersonal relationships (*ibid*). I think that these two assessment standards may have equipped the learners with skills to deal with sexuality issues, to be able to control their emotions, to be able to negotiate safe sex or abstain and also to know the consequences of engaging in unprotected sex. This in turn could prevent unwanted teenage pregnancy. Unfortunately, again, I could not prove that Siya, who is now in grade 10, was equipped with these skills. Still this showed me that there is some similarity between grade 7 and grade 9 Life Orientation syllabuses.

(iii) Analysis of the data from the Department of Education Annual Survey for 2006

At the beginning of this section on document analysis I had mentioned that I had wanted to get hold of current statistics on teenage pregnancy in the East London district. I was referred to the internet where I only got the statistics for 2006 and I decided to use them in this study. The findings are displayed in the pie chart below.

Chart 4.1 Shows the cases of pregnant learners in East London District in 2006



Source: Eastern Cape Department of Education Annual Survey (2006)

The highest rate of pregnancy according to the chart is in grade 11 (30%) followed by grade 10 and 12 respectively. It has been proven earlier that the learners in grade 10-12 should have obtained the skills to avoid or prevent teenage pregnancy in their Life Orientation grade 7 and 9 syllabuses (WCED, 2002). Literature reviewed has shown that, despite this kind of intervention, the rate of teenage pregnancy has not dropped to the satisfaction of the South African government (IRIN, 2007). A possible explanation could be the lack of reinforcement at home as it has been noted that parents do not feel comfortable discussing sexual matters with children (Runhare, 2010; Shaningwa, 2007; Ruppel, 2009). The same thing could have happened with Siya and Kuhle who allegedly failed to apply their Life Orientation skills to prevent pregnancy. Another explanation could be that the Life Orientation educators omitted the topics on teenage pregnancy and sexuality while presenting their lessons in class. In a study by Shaningwa (2007) it has been established that teaching sex education has been a problem in some schools as educators are not comfortable

with this topic. Most of the time there is disagreement over who should teach it (*ibid*). In the light of this information the possibility is that some schools exclude the topic deliberately.

However, the learners are not really victims in all this as it has been established that sometimes teenage girls get pregnant deliberately in the hope of securing their relationships with their boyfriends or because they just want to have a baby (HSRC, 2009). The HSRC (2009) has also established that some teenage girls do not get pregnant because they did not get proper guidance at home or at school. They get pregnant because they do not heed the advice of their parents and teachers (*ibid*).

In summary, the Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) Life Orientation syllabus ensures that the learner gets lessons on sexuality and teenage pregnancy. This is evident in the syllabuses for grades 7 and 9. There is no evidence in learners' books that they have received lessons on teenage pregnancy or sex education. This does not come as a surprise as the pregnant learner and the teenage mother are in grade 8 and 10 respectively; and the Life Orientation grade 8 and 10 syllabuses do not cover sexual education. The statistics on the Annual Survey of 2006 in East London districts have indicated that there is a high rate of pregnancy among the learners especially in grade 11 and 10. The next section will discuss the emotions that have been evoked during the interviews.

4.4.3 Emotions evoked during the interviews

This section discusses the emotions that some of the respondents evoked during the interviews. These could be categorised as anger, sadness, hopelessness, anxiety and frustration. The reason for recording the observed emotions is that I wanted to learn about things the participants were unwilling or unable to discuss in the interviews (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001 and Johansson, 2004).

I will start with the observations I made while conducting an interview with one of the parents, Noxie. This is the only parent who attested to the ill-treatment of pregnant

learners by educators. When asked to respond to the question of how the pregnant learners were treated by educators, she started to frown and said, “*Woooo! Abo?*” (You are asking me about those people?). She said this with a negative attitude. She then looked through the window and put her hands on her hips and looked like she had lost interest in the whole thing. Right then I could guess the answer without her having to explain any further. I did not see this kind of body language again even when she voiced her disagreement on some issues during the interview. This left me wondering if she does not have issues with the educators as she is a member of the SGB, in which case nothing good about the educators could be expected to come from her.

When I interviewed Siya, she would often stop mid-sentence and looked like she was going to start crying. That is when I realised that the interview had re-opened old wounds. This is also why I offered counselling at the end of the interview.

Kuhle, the pregnant learner looked like she had everything going right for her according to her responses during the interview. However after the interview she broke down and cried openly. She assured me that everything was fine and that she was crying over nothing. The way I saw it I felt that there was something that she was not telling me. Maybe the interview had touched on some sensitive issue even though she had kept a straight face during the interview. Kuhle had mentioned towards the end of her journal that she had given birth to her baby and that she was struggling with the baby. I had also noticed that her school uniform was old and torn in some places even though she was in grade 8. I am including this information because everything that the observer believes to be worth noting should be included (Johansson, 2004). She was supposed to have a school uniform that was still in good condition as grade 8 is the entry level at her school. To me that showed that her family might be struggling financially. She had also indicated in her journal that she wished someone would take the baby away so she can concentrate on her studies. When she was crying maybe she was thinking about how she was going to support the baby as her boyfriend had reportedly asked her the same question when she told him about her pregnancy. These are just assumptions that are based on my

observations and I may be wrong. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) have stated, the weakness of nonparticipant observation is that the observer is detached from the situation and so relies on his or her perceptions which may be inaccurate.

This brings me to the conclusion of the section on the discussion and analysis of the findings. The next section will be the conclusion of this chapter on the presentation of the data and the discussion of the findings.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the different opinions of the research participants on various themes as indicated in the introduction section of this chapter. There were different perceptions on the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. A number of issues were emphasised, such as the way the pregnant learners were perceived and treated by the educators, parents and other learners. There were also different opinions on whether they should be supported academically and whether the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools should be kept or stopped. The issue of challenges posed by the mainstreaming policies on the leadership and management of the school was also widely discussed and different opinions were expressed.

The analysis of the findings was discussed and literature was used to back up some of the arguments that came up during the analysis. When analysing the findings, each research question was discussed separately and all the themes that emerged from each research question were analysed.

The next chapter explores the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The problem that prompted me to undertake this study was stated in Chapter One. The background to the study was presented and this led to the statement of the research questions. Chapter Two presented the review of literature that could be used to support the arguments that came up in this study. Chapter Three looked on the overall approach, paradigm and design of this research. Chapter Three also consists of the methods that were used for collecting data which include semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations. The sampling followed to select the research site and the research participants. The size of the sample was also discussed here. Chapter Four is where the actual data from research was tabled and discussed. After that it was analysed so as to make sense of what was being said by the participants.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical overview and reflection of the study. Even though I used a small sample of participants, it allowed me to engage with them at length in meaningful conversation to probe more deeply in order to understand their personal perceptions, experiences and opinions. The interaction with them at a personal level helped me to identify and make meaning of their responses in relation to my study. As I present the critical overview of this study and reflect on the main findings, I have drawn conclusions from the data and then made some recommendations. I have looked at the lessons learnt from this study and limitations to this study. I have also made some suggestions for future research on the basis of this study.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

5.1 Summary of the findings

5.2 Conclusions drawn from the study

5.3 Suggestions and recommendations

5.4 Limitations of the study

5.5 Lessons learnt from the study

5.6 Recommendations for further study

The next section discusses the summary of the findings that have emerged from this study.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This section is a summary of the findings or themes that emerged from this study. The main research question and the three sub-questions have been used to guide the discussion below.

5.1.1 A summary of findings that address the research question: What are the school stakeholders' perceptions of the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in the two selected secondary schools?

What has transpired from these findings is that all parents and educators who participated in this study were aware of the existence of the policy that allows for mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. All these respondents also indicated that they are not familiar with the contents of this policy since none of them has seen it. These are the same respondents who are supposed to implement the policy at school level. An implication of this is that the policy was never discussed in SGB meetings. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Runhare

(2010) whose study established that the parents in the SGB never discussed the mainstreaming of pregnant learners policy with the members of the SMT in their meetings. The rest of the respondents, which includes six learners, stated that they were not aware of the existence of this policy.

When asked to comment on the policy some of the respondents saw the policy as a good move on the part of the government while the others saw it as a bad thing.

There are also respondents who noted that the policy has both good and bad sides. The respondents who saw the policy as a good thing indicated that it gives the pregnant learners a second chance in their education and also that the pregnant learners have a right to education. Those who were against the policy cited fear of premature labour within the school premises, the negative influence of pregnant learners on other learners, and cultural issues.

There are respondents who feel that the policy should be stopped and that the pregnant learners should not be allowed in school. Others feel that the policy should be kept so as to allow pregnant learners to continue with their schooling.

5.1.2 A summary of findings that address the research question: How are pregnant learners perceived and treated in the selected schools?

The majority of the respondents believed that pregnant learners were treated well by the educators. This means that there was no discrimination against them as a result of being pregnant. They were treated in the same manner as other learners who were not pregnant.

Only one respondent attested to the ill-treatment of the pregnant learners by the educators. Educators who show this kind of treatment towards pregnant learners justified this by saying they are retaliating for the bad behaviour and negative attitude of pregnant learners themselves (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). However, not all

educators treated the pregnant learners badly as some of the respondents have attested.

On the issue of the treatment of pregnant learners by their parents, including older people in the community, six respondents felt that pregnant learners were treated unfairly by their parents and the older members of their community. The reasons put forward are that once a girl becomes pregnant she is regarded as an adult by the members of the community and, as such, she should learn to take care of herself and not rely on the support of her parents. Also, the pregnant learner must stay at home away from other learners. Studies have shown that some parents punish the pregnant girl by withdrawing their support (Chigona and Chetty, 2008; Runhare, 2010). Some respondents reported that the treatment received by pregnant learners from the parents differs from parent to parent. Some parents will treat pregnant learners well while others will not. There are parents who reportedly treat pregnant learners well. This means that they do not discriminate against them. This is because some parents understand that pregnant learners need to be supported academically so that in the end they will be able to support their babies (Runhare, 2010). Educated girls can be financially independent and not depend on social grants and abusive men to take care of their babies (*ibid*).

Some respondents felt that pregnant learners are treated unfairly by other learners. It has been noted that they are ridiculed and teased by other learners. Chigona and Chetty (2007) point out that in South Africa there are no strong policies to deal with any mockery, teasing and marginalising of teenage mothers in school. These offensive comments may affect the teen mothers in a negative way and they may be forced to drop out of school (*ibid*). It has also been noted, though, that the treatment of pregnant learners differs from learner to learner.

Other respondents indicated that the pregnant learners are treated in a good way by other learners. It has been shown that some learners show sympathy towards pregnant learners as they feel that these learners have learnt from their mistakes (Maseko, 2006 and Shaningwa, 2007).

This study has shown that culture and traditions have an influence on how the pregnant teenagers are treated by their families and the community.

All parents in this study have indicated that pregnancy of an unmarried woman is unacceptable in their communities, especially since these girls fall pregnant at a very young age. One of the reasons for this is that teenage pregnancy is seen as an immoral behaviour and, as such, a pregnant girl is not supposed to be seen in the company of other girls who have never been pregnant. Teenage pregnancy is regarded as a shame in African culture (Runhare, 2010). The dress code of pregnant learners is another thing that is a concern to the community. According to cultural values of Africans, a pregnant woman is not supposed to wear tight-fitting clothes (Runhare, 2010). The school uniform, therefore, does not comply with these rules and this causes the pregnant learners to be ridiculed by some members of the community.

5.1.3 a summary of findings that address the research question: What are the stakeholders ' views on supporting the pregnant learners, and why?

With regard to this issue two themes have been identified. The first theme is the respondents' views on whether the pregnant learners are supported by the educators, parents and other learners. The second theme is whether the pregnant learners deserve academic support from educators, parents and other learners.

Most respondents have indicated that pregnant learners do get support from educators, parents and other learners. This support can either be in the form of extra classes, looking after the baby when the parenting learner is at school or even peers staying behind after school to assist the pregnant or parenting learner.

On top of looking after the babies while teenage mothers are at school, the parents also advise their pregnant daughters on what to do in case of emergency while they are at school. Chigona and Chetty (2008) have also noted that pregnant learners

need tremendous support from their parents on how to cope with physical pressures that come with being pregnant.

It has been reported that other learners supported the pregnant learners and teenage mothers by staying behind after school to help them to catch up, or by taking formal tasks to the learners who are on maternity leave. The respondents have also noted that the educators support pregnant learners and teenage mothers by offering extra classes for them.

Only one respondent indicated that the pregnant learners do not get enough support from the educators, parents and other learners. The rest of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of any kind of support that the pregnant learners and teenage mothers receive from others.

Most respondents have felt that pregnant learners deserve academic support from the educators, parents and other learners. These respondents felt that the future of the pregnant learners cannot be thrown away because of one mistake.

The rest of the respondents felt that the pregnant learners do not deserve any kind of support from the educators, parents and other learners. They feel that pregnant learners only have themselves to blame for their pregnancy since they allegedly had low morals.

5.1.4 A summary of findings that address the research question: What are the leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions on mainstreaming of pregnant learners?

Five themes that emerged in response to the above research question have been discussed below.

(a) Respondents' views on the challenges faced by educators while teaching a pregnant learner.

In responding to this issue the educators cited two challenges, namely, the behaviour or attitude of pregnant learners and not knowing what kind of punishment to administer to a pregnant learner when a need arises.

All educators reported that the pregnant learners are generally cheeky, grumpy and lack discipline. The educators also reported that usually there is no problem before pregnancy; this behaviour manifests itself after pregnancy. Some of the educators felt that this negative attitude could be a defence mechanism. Maybe the learners do not want to be asked about the pregnancy or they are frustrated and they take it out on other people.

Other educators also noted that this attitude depends on who is pregnant as some pregnant learners' attitude and behaviour is the same as that of other learners.

Punishment of the pregnant learners when the need arises has also been reported to be a difficult thing to do. This is because the educators have fears of harming the pregnant learner or her unborn baby. All in all, none of the educators interviewed indicated that they did not have a challenge while teaching a pregnant learner.

(b) Respondents' views on whether the presence of pregnant learners in class affects other learners

Most respondents have indicated that the presence of pregnant learners in class affects the concentration of other learners. Some respondents complained that the pregnant learners go in and out of the class because they have to attend to emergencies that are related to pregnancy. Some of the educators noted that the other learners, because they are curious, have a tendency to use their spare time trying to get information about pregnancy from the pregnant learner. This is valuable time that could have been used for constructive things.

However, there are respondents who indicated that this depends on who is pregnant, meaning that the presence of one pregnant learner in class may affect the other learners while in some cases it may not. They reported that there are pregnant learners who make sure that their pregnancies do not affect their daily activities at school, while others will make their pregnancy an excuse for not doing their group work. In this case they end up being a burden on other group members.

(c) Respondents' views on the academic performance of pregnant learners

The majority of respondents have reported that generally the academic performance of pregnant learners and teenage mothers drops after their pregnancy. Some of the reasons put forward for this are tiredness due to pregnancy, their absenteeism from school, and not having enough time to focus on their studies because of the demands of the baby.

However, both the pregnant learner and the teenage mother stated that their academic performance was good when they were pregnant. The pregnant learner stated that hers has even improved since she got pregnant although she does not know how that happened. The teenage mother indicated that her academic performance was good when she was pregnant and before that. Things started going downhill only after the baby was born. She attributes this to the demands of the baby. She found it hard to balance motherhood and being a learner.

(d) The educators' views on assisting learners on maternity leave

All the educators are against this. Educators do not see themselves teaching learners who are not within the school premises. Amongst other things the educators cite the lack of time and the impossibility of that task as they also have a responsibility to other learners. They said they are not home-based educators and they would rather give extra classes to the learners who are at school than catering for those who are at home.

(e) Respondents' views on the challenges posed by the policy on the school management team (SMT)

The majority of the respondents felt that the policy poses a challenge for the SMT as people who have to ensure the smooth running of the school. The main challenges that were cited were the extra workload of the educators caused by the presence of pregnant learners in school, having to convince the educators to assist learners who are on maternity leave, and the concern that educators do not have midwifery skills. There are respondents who felt that the policy does not really pose a challenge on the SMT. This is because sometimes the pregnant learners reportedly go on maternity for a maximum of one week only and their absence, in this case, is not that different from other learners.

The next section discusses the conclusions drawn from this study.

5.2 Conclusions drawn from the study

In order to understand how the school stakeholders perceived the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, the views of educators, SGB parents and learners were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The data collected at the two sites was compared and reference was made to relevant literature on the topic.

What has transpired from this study is that the policy on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners was not well understood by some of the school stakeholders. This is evident through the admission of all the educators and parents who participated in this study that they were aware of the existence of the policy but had never seen the actual document containing the policy. This indicated that they were not aware of what is entailed in the policy.

There seemed to be a feeling among some of the participants that the policy is too accommodating and could cause school indiscipline, an increase in teenage

pregnancy and a decline in the standard of schools. Because of this, some of the participants felt that the policy should be kept. On the other hand, there are participants who felt that as much as the pregnant girls have erred, they deserve to be given a chance in education; as a result, these participants feel that the policy should be kept.

The study showed that while participants seemed to understand that pregnant learners had a legal right to education, most of them were opposed to the mainstreaming of these learners in public schools, mainly because of traditional and cultural beliefs on teenage pregnancy and on being an unmarried mother. It also transpired from this study that the educators, who are supposed to be policy implementers at the school level, did not always meet their responsibilities according to policy directives because of cultural inclinations.

Some school stakeholders felt that pregnant learners should not be allowed in schools in case they influence other learners who may end up copying their behaviour. They felt that the pregnant learners should stay at home until they give birth to their babies. This was viewed as a punitive measure to discourage other learners from sexual misbehaviour.

The study also found that the parents and other members of the community equated motherhood with adulthood regardless of one's age. This has resulted in some of the parents deciding to withdraw their support for their pregnant daughters. One of the reasons for withdrawing the support was that the pregnant girl should now start to learn to be independent as she was now an adult. It has been noted, though, that some of the participants do believe in offering support to the pregnant learners and teenage mothers.

Some educators and learners maintained that pregnant learners cause a disturbance in class and that could have a negative effect on other learners. Other educators were also complaining about the negative attitude of the pregnant learners and their high rate of absenteeism which resulted in their poor academic performance. Educators indicated that this behaviour only manifested itself during the period of

pregnancy; before that there usually was no problem with the learner. It has been noted, though, that not all pregnant learners behave in this manner.

From this study it seems like the educators are not sensitised about the challenges of teaching pregnant learners. This could cause the educators to view the policy in a negative way. It has also transpired that the educators have not been trained on how to deal with pregnant learners and the emergencies that come with being pregnant.

The following section will make suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

5.3 Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the findings of this study I have come up with a number of recommendations that, in my opinion, will benefit and strengthen the relationship between the school stakeholders and the pregnant learners.

There is evidence that the policy is not well understood and therefore not effectively implemented. This shows that there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation tools, and also a lack of intervention from those in authority. There is a need to educate all the school stakeholders about the policy and the rights and responsibilities of each and everyone involved to ensure that the policy is consistently applied and effectively implemented.

This study has established that there is a need for parents, educators and learners to come to terms with the needs of pregnant learners and teenage mothers who decide to continue with their schooling; and to learn how best they can respond to them. The above school stakeholders should be encouraged to be supportive in order to help pregnant learners to overcome the challenges they face. The stakeholders need to work towards identifying strategies on how best they can support pregnant learners and teenage mothers to realise their dreams and become fully responsible and organised learners.

In order to assist pregnant learners and teenage mothers to fulfil the demands of school work, the stakeholders have to come up with strategies to accommodate these learners in a variety of ways. The stakeholders, in this case, include those who were singled out for this study and also other professionals in the Department of Education, like social workers, nurses, district officials and psychologists.

There is a need for teenage fathers to be sensitised about their responsibilities to their children and also about being supportive to the mothers of their children. Studies have shown that the fathers of the babies are often uncommitted to their responsibilities (Shaningwa, 2007). The absence of the baby's father further disadvantages the baby because the mother struggles to support her baby without any assistance from the father. The support does not have to come in the form of finance only because most of the time the babies' fathers are themselves teenagers who are also struggling financially. Teenage fathers can take turns with the teenage mothers in looking after the baby when one of them has to do school work.

Since some of the stakeholders in this study have indicated that the pregnant learners and teenage mothers are struggling with their schoolwork, the schools must see how best they can accommodate these learners in their extra class schedules. The schools should also not expect these learners to participate in extramural activities. I would also like to emphasise counselling and guidance as one of the necessary forms of support that pregnant learners need during their stay at school and when they decide to continue with their studies after giving birth to their babies.

Learners need to be advised to disclose as soon as possible that they are pregnant. This will allow educators enough time to plan different ways of support. This is only possible if there is mutual trust between the educators and the pregnant learners.

Since the educators are faced with the challenge of pregnant learners, they need to equip themselves with skills that meet the needs of pregnant learners so that they are able to handle the challenge in different ways. The Department of Education should work together with the Department of Health in conducting workshops that will equip the educators in basic midwifery skills.

As it has been established that some educators omit sex education in their lessons, my recommendation is that educators should take sex education seriously. Prevention of teenage pregnancy would be better than solving a problem of having to deal with pregnant learners.

The next section discusses the limitations to the study.

5.4 Limitations to the study

I am aware of four limitations to this study. These limitations are discussed below.

Firstly, the two secondary schools that were sites for this research are situated in the East London District of Education which has a total of eighty six secondary schools. The East London District is further divided into twelve circuits, each with its own Circuit Manager. The two schools in this study are in two of these twelve circuits. Again this makes it hard for the results of this study to be generalised to all schools or all circuits.

Secondly, the schools which were used in this study, including the community in which they are found, consists of a population that is a hundred percent black. This means the cultural views that were discussed here are those of African culture only. These may not be valid in a school where the population consists of mixed races as is the case in former Model C schools and schools that are in predominantly coloured townships.

Thirdly, the principals of the schools were not interviewed and only one educator in this study was a member of the school management team (SMT). Including the principals and more SMT members in this study may have shed some light on the issues, such as the existence or implementation of learner pregnancy management policies of their schools, the challenges posed by these policies and the performance of pregnant learners and teenage mothers, as indicated by the promotion schedules.

Lastly, the translation of some of the IsiXhosa words or phrase into English posed a challenge as sometimes the meaning would be lost in translation.

The next section discusses the lessons learnt from the study.

5.5 Lessons learnt from the study

In this study I have noted from the journals written by the pregnant learner and the teenage mother that teenage pregnancy is a very lonely journey. The emotional support which they so much need is lacking most of the time. These learners have mentioned that when they were pregnant they lost friends and they also lost the support of their boyfriends. It has transpired from this study that teenage mothers are struggling with motherhood. That is why the support from their families, friends and boyfriends would be welcomed.

I have also learnt that most of the time the only person who seems to be a victim in teenage pregnancy is the girl child. People seem to be turning a blind eye on boys who are responsible for these pregnancies. The study has revealed that, whilst pregnant learners have a right to education, most participants felt that pregnant learners should not be allowed in schools because that disturbs the learning atmosphere due to cultural beliefs and values. There have also been stereotypes as some learners have indicated that the presence of a pregnant learner in class makes the other learners to feel sleepy all the time. Both the pregnant learner and the teenage mother have indicated that they have learnt from their mistakes and need to be given a second chance to continue with their studies by being allowed to stay in school throughout their pregnancies.

What I have also learnt from this study is that the policy makers seem not to have, or fail to use, the tools to assess whether the policy has achieved what it was set out to achieve. The reason I say so is because the educators in this study have indicated that they do not know what exactly is entailed in the policy and yet the educators are the ones who should be implementing the policy at school level. After sixteen years of the policy being in place, the educators are still faced with the challenge of not being capacitated. They have expressed their concern that they have not received any professional training or counselling on how to handle and manage issues related

to learner pregnancy. This could be one of the reasons some of the educators have a negative attitude to the mainstreaming policy. The study revealed that the two schools which were the research sites in this study were generally inadequately equipped to deal with psycho-social challenges that pregnant learners and teenage mothers usually encounter. That is why it is recommended that educators should attend development courses where they will be equipped with skills like basic counselling for pregnant learners and teenage mothers.

What this study has also revealed to me is that the parent component of the SGB does not play its role effectively in school governance as they do not question the changes that are taking place within the school. I say this because they have indicated that they are aware of the existence of the policy on learner pregnancy management but it was never discussed in their meetings at school. The same applies to the educators who are aware of the existence of the policy but have never thought of looking it up, and yet they report that teenage pregnancy is a challenge in their schools. This tells me that some educators do not bother themselves with documents that could make their teaching effective.

The next section discusses the recommendations for further study.

5.6 Recommendations for further study

This study focused on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. It did not look into the mainstreaming of teenage fathers. It did not look into how the teenage fathers are perceived by the school stakeholders, how they were treated by the other school stakeholders, what challenges they faced being teenage fathers and also being learners at the same time, and if they received academic and emotional support from the educators, parents and other learners. For these reason I think studies need to be made on the mainstreaming of teenage fathers.

Most studies on teenage pregnancy, including this one, have focussed on areas and schools where the majority of the population is black. For instance this study was conducted in township schools where all the learners, parents, educators and the

community is Black. As a result the findings on this study are based mainly on African perceptions. Since the policy on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in schools is meant for all learners in South Africa, irrespective of their race, I feel that a similar study to this one should be conducted in schools where the other races are in the majority so as to compare the findings.

This study was limited to two schools in the East London District only. There is a need for the same study to be conducted in all the districts of the Eastern Cape to see if there are similarities and contradictions. This could help the policy makers when doing a review on the policy.

Three of the four educators who participated in this study were all post level 1 educators. I think studies similar to this one should also include the principals and other members of the school management team. This could give us more information as to what challenges are posed by the presence of pregnant learners in schools and also the challenges posed by the mainstreaming policy on the smooth running of the school.

The next section discusses the conclusion to this chapter.

Conclusion

In view of the observation that the mainstreaming of pregnant learners may pose challenges, this study has been investigating the perceptions of the educators, learners and parents in mainstreaming of pregnant learners in selected schools. Since the research participants have contributed their own perceptions regarding this issue, the findings have provided increased insights into the perceptions held about the issue of mainstreaming of pregnant learners which is of so much concern globally.

To ensure effective implementation of the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools, all the school stakeholders should be well informed about it so that they know what is expected of them. The fact that the

school stakeholders are not really aware of the contents of this policy could be the reason some of the stakeholders have a negative attitude towards the pregnant learners. The ridicule, prejudice and stigma that the pregnant learners sometimes experience at the hands of some of the stakeholders may affect their vulnerable self-esteem. If the pregnant learners are to continue learning in regular schools then professional counselling should be readily available to them so that they can withstand this ill-treatment.

It is unfortunate that some educators do not understand the pregnant teenagers' situation as learners; and that they are expected to perform and behave just like any other learner in their respective classes. This may not be in line with the South African Schools Act of 1996 which classifies pregnant learners as children with special needs. The educators themselves are in need of guidance or sensitisation with respect to how they can encourage and support pregnant learners and teenage mothers academically. Educators also need to be capacitated on how to deal with pregnant learners and how to handle the emergencies that may result from pregnancy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: Ntombikayise S. Mahlambeni

I write to request your consent to interview your child about his/her **perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I am a student at the University of Fort Hare and the research is in fulfilment of the degree Master of Education.

Participation in this research will be entirely voluntary. The participants in this research will be free to choose not to participate. Should they choose to participate, they are free not to respond to any question they do not wish to respond to, or can withdraw at any time without the consequences of any kind. The participants will remain anonymous in the study and the raw data from interviews will remain confidential.

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Fort Hare I now invite you to complete the form below as an indication of your voluntary acceptance for your child to take part in this research:

I.....
voluntarily give consent for my child to participate in the study researching **the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I fully understand the procedures of the study as explained to me. I am aware that my child is under no obligation to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences to him/her.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

DATE

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: Ntombikayise S. Mahlambeni

I write to request your consent to interview you about your **perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I am a student at the University of Fort Hare and the research is in fulfilment of the degree Master of Education.

Participation in this research will be entirely voluntary. As a participant in this research you will be free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you are free not to respond to any question you do not wish to respond to, or can withdraw at any time without the consequences of any kind. As a participant you will remain anonymous in the study and the raw data from interviews will remain confidential.

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Fort Hare I now invite you to complete the form below as an indication of your voluntary acceptance to take part in this research:

I.....
voluntarily consent to participate in the study researching **the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I fully understand the procedures of the study as explained to me. I am aware that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences to me.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

DATE

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: Ntombikayise S. Mahlambeni

I write to request your consent to interview two educators and three learners in your school about their **perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I am a student at the University of Fort Hare and the research is in fulfilment of the degree Master of Education.

Participation in this research will be entirely voluntary. The participants in this research will be free to choose not to participate. Should they choose to participate, they are free not to respond to any question they do not wish to respond to, or can withdraw at any time without the consequences of any kind. The participants and the school will remain anonymous in the study and the raw data from interviews will remain confidential. This research will not in any way affect the tuition times and other programs of the school.

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Fort Hare I now invite you to complete the form below as an indication of your permission for the two educators and three learners to take part in this research:

I.....
voluntarily give permission for two educators and three learners in my school to participate in the study researching **the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in secondary schools**. I fully understand the procedures of the study as explained to me. I am aware that the educators and the learners are under no obligation to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences to them.

SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

DATE

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

1. The learner pregnancy policies in South Africa allow the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?
2. How do you feel about the presence of pregnant or parenting learners in public schools?
3. Does your school have a policy on learners who could fall pregnant while at school? If yes, what in your opinion are its strengths and weaknesses?
4. From what you have observed,
 - (a) How do educators treat pregnant learners?
 - (b) How do other learners treat pregnant learners?
 - (c) How do parents treat pregnant learners?
5. In your opinion do you think it is better for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling throughout their pregnancy? Or do you think they should stay at home until they give birth? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Do you think pregnant and parenting learners deserve support academically from parents, educators and other learners? Why?
7. Have you noticed any change in the performance of learners after they got pregnant? Please explain.
8. In your opinion, does the presence of pregnant or parenting learner in your school/class affect other learners? Please explain.
9. The policy on management of learner pregnancy requires the teachers to assist the pregnant learners with their school work while they are on maternity leave. What are your views on this?
10. What challenges does this pose on the school management team?
11. What challenges, if any, have you come across while teaching a pregnant or parenting learner?
12. How do you compare the behaviour or attitude of pregnant learners and other learners in terms of discipline?

13. If you had your way, would you say the policy should be kept or stopped? Give reasons for your answer.

14. Is there anything else you want to share with me on the subject?

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

1. The learner pregnancy policies in South Africa allow the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?
2. How do you feel about the presence of pregnant or parenting learners in public schools?
3. From your observations and from what you have heard,
 - (a) How do educators treat pregnant learners?
 - (b) How do other learners treat pregnant learners?
 - (c) How do parents treat pregnant learners?
4. In your opinion do you think it is better for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling throughout their pregnancy? Or do you think they should stay at home until they give birth? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Do you think pregnant and parenting learners deserve support academically from parents, educators and other learners? Why?
6. What are your community's cultural customs and practices about a pregnant girl?
7. In what way do such customs and practices affect the education of a pregnant and parenting learner?
8. If you had your way, would you say the policy should be kept or stopped? Give reasons for your answer.
9. Is there anything else you want to share with me on the subject?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN PREGNANT

1. The learner pregnancy policies in South Africa allow the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?
2. How do you feel about the presence of pregnant or parenting learners in your school/ class?
3. From your observations,
 - (a) How do educators treat pregnant learners?
 - (b) How do other learners treat pregnant learners?
 - (c) How do parents treat pregnant learners?
4. Do you think pregnant and parenting learners deserve support academically from parents, educators and other learners? Why?
5. In your opinion do you think it is better for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling throughout their pregnancy? Or do you think they should stay at home until they give birth? Give reasons for your answer.
6. From your observations, what are some of the difficulties pregnant and parenting learners are facing in school generally when they decide to continue schooling? Give reasons for your answer.
7. Is there anything else you want to share with me on the subject?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PREGNANT LEARNER AND THE TEENAGE MOTHER

1. The learner pregnancy policies in South Africa allow the pregnant learners to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?

2. When you look back,

(a) What was it like to be at school before you got pregnant?

(b) When you were pregnant, what was it like?

(c) What is it like being at school now?

3. From your experience,

(a) How did the educators treat you when you were pregnant? Explain with example. How did this make you feel?

(b) How do other learners treat pregnant learners?

(c) How do parents treat pregnant learners?

6. What do you think the school community should do in future to support pregnant learners?

7. Has there been any changes to your school performance after you got pregnant or after giving birth? If yes, how

(a) Academic Performance (home work; tests; tasks etc).

(b) Extramural activities

(c) Social life

8. What are some of the difficulties you are facing in school generally now that you decide to continue or stop schooling when you got pregnant? Give reasons for your answer.

9. Is there anything else you want to share with me on the subject?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX H

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Shows the learner pregnancy rates per province from 2004 to 2008	1
2.1 Shows the pregnancy rates (per 1000 women in specified groups) by age	14
2.2 Shows cases of pregnant learners in Eastern Cape Districts in 2006	16
2.3 Shows the percentage of South African teenage girls (15-19) who have ever been pregnant	18
3.1 Shows the distribution of respondents in the sample	58
4.1 Shows the profiles of the parents	74
4.2 Shows the profiles of the educators	75
4.3 Shows the profiles of learners	76

LIST OF CHARTS

4.1 Shows the cases of pregnant learners in East London District in 2006	131
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SAMPLES OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

BAFO (Educator in School A)

ME (M): Good afternoon Sir.

Educator (Ed): Good afternoon Ma'am.

M: How are you today?

Ed: I'm fine and you

Me: I'm fine thank you. Today we are going to have our interview as per our appointment. The questions will be based on the interview schedule that I gave you the first questions is that the learner pregnancy policy in South Africa allows the pregnant learner to continue with their school until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?

Ed: I do not agree with the policy because what would happen in the case where the learner would go on labour while she is in the classroom. The teachers have no midwifery skills. That could have fatal results.

M: How do you feel about the presence of a pregnant learner in the public schools?

Ed: To me that is immoral. It sets a bad example for the learners that are still young because they might find it "cool" and copy this behaviour.

M: Does your school have a learner pregnancy policy management policy?

Ed: In the past we used to have our own policy where the learner was allowed to stay at school for the first six months of the pregnancy and then stay away for the remaining three months until she gives birth.

M: Why were pregnant learners given a three months maternity leave?

Ed: This is because we were trying to avoid cases where a learner might give birth prematurely; we wanted to make sure that when that happens, she will be at home. After the Department of Education introduced their policy we decided to do away with ours and comply with the policy from the Department.

M: In your opinion what are the strengths and weakness of this new policy?

Ed: This policy from the Government promotes immorality and promiscuity because the learners see nothing wrong in falling pregnant while still at school. They end up having children while they are still children themselves. Then the government crowns this by giving them the child support grant.

M: From what you have observed, how are the pregnant learners treated by their parents, educators and other learners.

Ed: Educators treat the pregnant learners just like any other learner because the educators are so conversant with the learners' rights. And the learners do not give pregnant learners any problems & I think it is because of the information and skills that they got from Life Orientation lessons.

M: What about parents and other older members of the community? How do they treat pregnant learners?

Ed: It seems like the parents have accepted the learner's pregnancy and their rights according to the policy. They let their children come to school even on the 8th months of pregnancy and even at 9th month.

M: In your own opinion do you think it is better for pregnant learners to continue with their school throughout their pregnancy. Or do you think they should stay at home until they give birth?

Ed: If I had my way, I would say let's go back to our old policy which allowed the learner to stay for 6 months and go on leave for the remaining 3 months. It is not ethical to see a pregnant learner amongst other learners.

M: How was the school able to tell when a learner is in her 6th month of pregnancy?

Ed: At that time we had a committee comprised of teachers, where duty was to handle the issue of learner pregnancy. The teachers would then look at the pregnant learners prenatal clinic cards and then would remind the learner when her time at school is up.

M: Do pregnant learners get support academically from their parents, educators and other learners?

Ed: On the part of educators and learners I can say they do get support because school programs continue as a normal for everybody at school. Secondly, the teachers understand the constitutional right of the learner and know that they have to be at school until they decide to go.

M: Do you think these pregnant learners deserve this support?

Ed: I don't think so.

M: Why?

Ed: The support should go hand in hand with good morals/ethics. Once a learner discovers that she is pregnant, she should immediately stay at home and focus on her pregnancy. My concern is that we need to raise the standard of morals.

M: Have you noticed any changes in the performance of the learners after they get pregnant?

Ed: Yes, there is a lot of change. Firstly, they are absent from school most of the time. Maybe they are attending the prenatal classes, I don't know. Because of this there's a drop in their academic performance.

M: In your opinion, does the presence of pregnant or parenting in your school / class affect other learners?

Ed: Yes, it does affect them. The learners know what is right or wrong. When they see the body shape of another learner changing, they will look at the teacher to see what she/ he have to say about that. There are many learning areas which have lessons in safe sex. To me, it means the pregnant learner has ignored all the advice and information given to her. So what the teacher has taught her was just a waste of time.

M: Then how does that affect other learners?

Ed: Because the other learners' know everything about pregnancy, they always have a fear that something may happen to the pregnant learner while she is in class.

M: Have other learners ever voiced out these fears, or is it just your assumption?

- Ed:** No, it is just my assumption. But you can see from their facial expression that they do have fear.
- M:** The policy in management of learner pregnancy requires the educators to assist the pregnant learners with their schoolwork while they are on maternity leave. What are your views in this?
- Ed:** To me that is unreasonable. Firstly, I am qualified to be a classroom based educator not a home-based educator. Secondly, there is no budget allocated for the educator to go and teach the learner at home. I don't know the learners' background and I don't know what to expect there. At school, we have programs to run the school. Then it means the school has to draw a new timetable to cater for that learner. Secondly, there has to be transport arrangements, because how else am I supposed to travel to the learner's home? I don't even know whether the child has suitable furniture at home to ensure that good teaching and learning take place. There is also the time factor. I am supposed to teach that child for one period only and then move to the next class. How am I supposed to do that when the child lives about 10km away from school?
- M:** You have already touched on my next question, but I would like you to give me more if you can. What challenges does this pose on the SMT? Especially the fact that the learner on leave have to get their lessons at home?
- Ed:** As I have said earlier this means every time a learners is pregnant the SMT have to sit down and draw a new timetable so as to accommodate this learner. I have already mentioned the time constraints, the furniture, & transport that are going to be needed for that.
- M:** Since the pregnancy continues in learners and their absenteeism continues, how does the SMT deal with all this stress, which will affect the school results of the day?
- Ed:** On average, our learners go on leave for months and the challenge is that they also do not report the reasons for their absenteeism even to the SMT. They just disappear.
- M:** What challenges, if any have you come across while teaching a pregnant or parenting learner?
- Ed:** The challenge is that they do not listen or do not want to listen. For example this week, a very young learner in grade 8 class broke her water in the middle of the lesson. The teacher had to organise a transport to take her to the clinic because the teacher's have no skill of dealing with kind of situation.
- M:** How do you compare the behaviour or attitude of pregnant learners and other learners in terms of discipline?
- Ed:** Let me start at the beginning of the school day. These pregnant learners have a tendency of coming late at school. They are also grumpy and drowsy in the classroom.
- M:** so this only happens after pregnancy, and not before?
- Ed:** Yes. Especially in the advanced stages of pregnancy.
- M:** Now, if you had your way, would you say the policy should be kept or stopped?

Ed: I would say it should be stopped because it promotes unethical behaviour, immorality, and teenage pregnancy. Mind you, these young learners are the future of the nation.

M: Now we have come to the end of our interview is there something you want to share with me in the subject?

Ed: I would like to make a proposal that the government stop giving out the child support grants. This promotes teenage pregnancy and the spread of STIs. This has a negative socio-economic impact as the tax payers' money is used to foot the bill and there is also this high rate of HIV and AIDS.

M: Thank you for your participation in this research.

MALBI(Parent from School A)

Me (M): Good afternoon Sir.

Parent (P): Good afternoon Madam.

M:How are you today?

P:I'm fine thank you. And how are you?

M: I'm fine thank you. Now we are going to have our interview session as per our appointment. Before we begin let's have an introduction. If you remember long ago pregnant learners used to be expelled in school. These days we see pregnant learners continuing with their schooling throughout their pregnancy. This is because the South African government has introduced a policy that allows for the pregnant learner to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?

P: The way I see it this policy has both good and bad side. The good thing about this policy is that the child does not lose tuition time even though she is pregnant. She does everything just like those learners who are not pregnant. The bad thing about this policy is that the pregnancy of one learner affects the other learners at school. The other learners might see this pregnancy as a good thing and then have a desire to be pregnant too.

M: Have you ever seen the policy?

P: No, but I heard somewhere about its contents, Don't remember where.

M:How do you feel about the presence of the pregnant learners in public schools?

P: If I had my way I think it is best for the pregnant learner to stay at home until she gives birth. If we allow one learner to continue with schooling, the next time we check we would see an increase in the number of pregnant learners. The future of our children will be compounded if we continue with this.

M:You have already indicated that you wish for the policy to be stopped or to be revised. From your observation how are pregnant learners treated by their parents, educators and other learners?

P: Most teachers do not accept or feel comfortable with the fact that the pregnant learners are allowed to continue with their schooling because they say this is putting a strain in them. The teachers have to do nurse's jobs on top of their own job. Teachers are accountable for anything that might happen to a learner while she is still within the school premises. The teachers feel that the policy has added in their current workload.

M: As a parent who is an SGB member, have the teachers ever complained that the policy gives them problems?

P: Yes, although the teachers are aware of this policy and what is required of them, they voice out their opinions about this policy.

M:Then how do they treat pregnant learners in school?

P: They treat them well because they know they are protected by the policy.

M:How do you other learners treat pregnant learners?

P: They tease pregnant learners and make fun of them. They say bad things about them.

M:Like what?

P:Like saying she bit more than she could chew, or she was selling her body or she has reaped what she sewed.

- M:** How do parents and other members of the community treat the pregnant learner?
- P:** Parents differ when it comes to the way they treat pregnant learners. Some parents have an understanding that the learner became pregnant because she did not get proper guidance when she reached puberty stage, other parents criticise the child and write her off, as in good-for-nothing person. When a child gets destructive criticism she may be tempted to get pregnant again because she knows that she is regarded as immoral person anyway.
- M:** From your observation do these pregnant learners get support academically that will help them cope with being a mother and a learner at the same time? Do they get support from their parents, educators and other learners?
- P:** They don't get enough support from any of the people you have mentioned. People need to be educated about teenage pregnancy so that they know how to deal with it.
- M:** Do you think the pregnant and parenting learner deserve support academically from parents, educator and other learners?
- P:** Yes. They deserve support because we cannot just throw their future away no matter what these girls did. People should learn to look for solutions instead of focusing on the problem. This could also help other learner not to find themselves in the same situation as the pregnant learners.
- M:** What are your community cultural customs and practices about a pregnant girl?
- P:** Pregnancy of a girl is unacceptable in our community especially since these girls fall pregnant at a very young age. As much as this is unacceptable I feel that the blame should not be put on pregnant girls only. Because the community should also have people who will be role models for these girls. These are the people who should be growing these girls and give them proper guidance. It is said that prevention is better than cure. The community did not have measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and ridiculing the girls after pregnancy has occurred will not solve anything
- M:** How do these custom & practices of the community affect the education of a pregnant learner?
- P:** They are very disturbing to pregnant learner. The child will see herself as a failure in everything she does, she will then end up giving up her dreams of a brighter future.
- M:** You have indicated earlier that you wish for the policy to be stopped. Why do you feel that way?
- P:** If it is not stopped, then it should at least be revised.
- M:** Why?
- P:** Because the policy makers have shifted the burden of being responsible for the pregnant learner to the teachers. The teachers are the ones who have to deal with the pregnant learners, this is adding in the workload of the teachers which is already too much. In every school there should be caregiver and health workers who are there to guide the learners in issues like pregnancy.
- M:** Is there anything else you want to share with me on the subject?
- P:** One way to curb the problem of teenage pregnancy is for the government to introduce extramural activities in the communities. These could help the teenagers to use their spare time in constructive things. The reason why they engage in sexual activities is because the teenagers have too much free time in their hands. If the government can introduce more activities where the teenagers can participate, they will always be busy and don't have time to focus on things that could result in pregnancy.

M:We have come to the end of our interview. Thank you for your time and participation.
P: Thank you.

KUHLE (Pregnant Learner in School B)

Me (M): Good afternoon.

Learner (L): Good afternoon Ma'am

M: How are you today?

L: I'm fine thank you Ma'am. How are you?

M: I'm fine thank you. We are going to start our interview as per our appointment.

Before start I would like to remind you that we will not use real names of people or school in this interview, I am going to begin with the introduction. If you remember long time ago pregnant learners in South African Schools used to be expelled.

Nowadays we see pregnant girls like you continuing with their studies. This is because the South African government has introduced a policy that allows a pregnant learner to continue with their schooling until such time they feel unfit to do so. What are your comments on this?

L: I see this as a right, some pregnant learners are afraid of coming to school and they are also ashamed.

M: Why do you say the policy is good?

L: Because pregnant learners used to be expelled whereas they had intentions of continuing with schooling until they give birth.

M: How was it like at school before you fell pregnant, and how is it like now that you are pregnant?

L: Before I got pregnant life was good and I had many friends, but now I only have one friend. Other learners gossip and they look at me like they are seeing a pregnant learner for the first time. When I am approaching other learners or passing by I can see that they are gossiping about me.

M: How do educators, learners and your parents or member of the society treat you now that you are pregnant?

L: Learners in my class treat me well. They would even make sure that the in our class is kept closed so that I do not get cold. Others even offer to carry my schoolbag when I come to school or when I go home. The teachers encourage me but not to drop out of school as they say I have a good potential as a learner and because of that I have vowed not to drop out of school.

M: And how do your parents at home treat you?

L: They treat me well and they advise me on what to do or not do now that I am pregnant, they also encourage me to continue with schooling. Sometimes I would joke and say I am thinking of dropping out of school, just to see their reaction. They would be shocked by what I am saying and promise to "kill" me should I stop going to school.

M: And what about the older people in the community?

L: They treat me well. For instance when they see me walking around in the streets at night they would tell me that a pregnant woman is not supposed to walk around at night as she would be harmed by "evil spirits".

M: Tell me about your school attendance. Is it the same as before or has it changed now that you are pregnant?

L: It is not the same. Sometimes I just don't feel like waking up in the morning for school, I end up not going to school.

M: If you don't go to school sometimes it means that you miss some lessons and you will fall behind in your school work. Is there any kind of support that you can receive from your parents, educators and other learners to help you to catch up?

L: Yes. In my class there is a learner who is my friend. She makes sure that she brings me tasks and other school work when I am absent.

M: And at home?

L: When I have been absent my parents would force me to go to my classmates to borrow some books so I can do my school work.

M: What about the teachers?

L: When I come to school the next day, the teachers would ask me to do the work that I had missed. Sometimes they would ask other learners to bring me the tasks so I can complete the at home.

M: Do you think pregnant learners deserve this support?

L: Yes I feel that I need to be given another chance. I want to finish my studies

M: How do you feel about the presence of a pregnant learner in school?

L: I know what we pregnant learners did was not right but I still feel that we need to be given another chance. For instance ever since I became pregnant I tried to be a good learner and also tried please both my family and the teachers in every way. As I possible said earlier my performance at school improved. I performed well than when I was not pregnant.

M: Should pregnant learners be allowed to continue with their schooling?

L: Yes, they should be allowed to continue with their schooling. I feel sorry for those pregnant learners dropped out of school because they were pregnant. If you leave school and stay at home until you give birth, by the time you come back to school you will be far behind in your work and you might even fail at the end of the year. I also intend to remain at school until the day I go on labour.

M: What do you think should be done by the community, i.e. educators, learners and parents, to assist or support pregnant learners?

L: Sometimes a pregnant learner feels lonely and unloved. Others even contemplate suicide. The members of the school community can help by telling pregnant learners that they are still loved, they are special and are welcome here at school even though they are pregnant.

M: Are there any changes in your school performance now that you are pregnant? You have already said that you miss some of the lessons.

L: When I saw my report card for June Examinations I was shocked because I had performed very well, I could not believe it was me.

M: Why do you think your grades have gone up now that you are pregnant? What do you think happened?

L: I don't know. I have been asking myself the same question.

M: Don't you think you are working harder than before?

L: No. I don't know what happened.

M: Tell me about extramural activities. Do you still participate now that you are pregnant?

L: Yes I do. Sometimes I forget that I am pregnant and want to jump up and down.
Sometimes my parents would call me to order and tell me that since I am pregnant I am not allowed to do some of the things I used to do.

M: Are there any changes in your social life?

L: My friends support me, but since I got pregnant I only have a few friends.

M: What are some of the challenges that you are facing generally that you decided to continue with your schooling despite the fact that you are pregnant?

L: Sometimes I would go to school only to find that I am mood. I would not feel like talking to anyone, I would not feel like writing. Even teachers who came to teach bore me to death.

M: So it's just a feeling you have, no one is trying to make you things difficult for you?

L: No.

M: In your opinion should the policy be kept or stopped?

L: It should be kept. For some of us getting pregnant was mistakes we still want to go to school.

M: Well, we have come to the end of our interview, Is there anything you want to share with me on the subject?

L: No, nothing.

M: In that case I think we have finished. Should I want to ask more questions or want some clarity I will contact you. Thank you for your time and participation.

L: Thank you Ma'am