Implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in rural schools: Perspectives from schools in Uthukela District

By

Mausley Barbara Sikhumbuzo Molefe

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Supervisor: Dr T.T. Bhengu

ABSTRACT

In responding to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in school going learners in South Africa and the need for continued access to education for boys and girls, the National Department of Education released the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy policy in public schools (DoE, 2007). This policy was intended to assist schools in their efforts to reduce the rate of learner pregnancy and in managing pregnancies when they occur. Therefore the purpose of the study was to explore the roles that the SMTs are playing in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools. The study also sought to explore the challenges the SMTs face when implementing the learner pregnancy policy and how do the SMTs overcome those challenges. It was hoped that the study would contribute to the body of knowledge and literature in the domain of the education management regarding experiences and strategies that school management uses to deal with issues of learner pregnancy.

The study fell within the framework of leadership and management and was located within the interpretive paradigm. A multiple case study approach to data gathering and presentation was used to allow for some breadth as well as depth of focus. The study was underpinned by two theories; Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and invitational leadership theory. These theories helped me to understand how the SMTs played the roles and why in certain ways when implementing the learner pregnancy policy considered direct and indirect influences of learners' development and how inviting their leadership is when implementing.

The study was undertaken in the Uthukela District in KZN Province, South Africa. The schools that I selected were rural combined schools. The areas around these schools were dominated by poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS pandemic and child-headed families. The research was only confined to three principals, three HODs for Humanities, one LO educator from each school and one member of SGB from each school. Data generation in this study involved semi-structured interviews which were the primary data generation methods, document reviews and observations which were the secondary data generation methods.

The findings from the study revealed that the SMTs promoted awareness of the policy to parents, educator and learners themselves. The SMTs were playing a role of supporting learners in schools whether pregnant or not in order to retain them. The SMTs organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns to help learners to make them aware of sexuality issues and the consequences of engaging themselves in sexual activities at an early age. The SMT respected the right to education for learners because they did not suspend or expel any learner due to pregnancy instead they supported those learners. However, the SMTs were experiencing more challenges whilst playing their roles which continued to increase learner pregnancies and drop outs of school due to pregnancy, like the influence of old Zulu tradition, unsupportive parents and negative attitudes displayed by both pregnant and non pregnant learners and even some educators themselves. Most of these learners were dropping out and most of them returning the following year because some could not catch up with the work done while they were absent. To overcome the challenges, SMTs had to promote peer education programme, involve all stakeholders and give academic support to pregnant learners during and after pregnancy. Recommendations to the Department included the following, support schools by involving learners themselves and the entire school community in the policy implementation and the learner pregnancy policy should also focus on boy learners.

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy,

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Mausley Barbara Sikhumbuzo Molefe, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

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Signed: ---------- Date----------

Mausley Barbara Sikhumbuzo Molefe

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

As the Candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.

Signed---------- Date----------

Doctor T.T. Bhengu.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

09 April 2015

Ms Mawley Barbara S Molefe 992241906
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Molefe

Protocol reference number: HSS/0283/015D
Project title: Implementing the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools: Perspectives from School Management Teams in Uthukela District

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 07 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/pk

cc Supervisor: Dr TT Bhengu
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
cc School Administrator: Ms B Bhengu, Ms T Khumalo & Mr S Mchunu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: singhsh@ukzn.ac.za / ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / mohunsh@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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DEDICATION

This doctoral thesis is specifically dedicated to my two daughters, Skahle and Emuhle for their unwavering love and support throughout my study. May this serve as an inspiration to each of them.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BEM	Boy Education Movement
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DSD	Department of Social Development
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FET	Further Education Training
GEM	Girl Education Movement
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Defiency Syndrome
HOD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
ISHP	Integrated School Health Programme
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LO	Life Orientation
LSA	Learner Support Agent
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NFS	New Feature Schools
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPS	South African Police Service
SASA	South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996
SCC	Second Chance Clubs
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of Kwazulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (RSA, 1996a) was adopted to bring about transformation in all sectors of the public service (Runhare, 2010). To achieve the said transformation, various policies and pieces of legislation were developed in order to give guidance to the people. For instance, Section 29 of the South African Constitution makes the provision of education a basic human right for all South African citizens. Therefore, everyone has a right to education including school going age learners who fall pregnant (Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; DoE, 2007). Learner pregnancy among school going learners is one of the social ills that have an effect both in the developed and the developing countries such as South Africa (Raj, Rabi, Amudha, van Teijlingen & Glyn, 2010).

The aim of this thesis was to explore the roles that the School Management Teams (SMTs) play in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in three combined (age-mixing) schools, that is, schools starting from Grade R to Grade 12. The schools that participated in this study were located in the poorest communities in the Uthukela District in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. There has not been much research done in South Africa concerning the roles played by the SMTs in implementing learner pregnancy policy in schools. Due to paucity of scholarship in this aspect, researchers and policy makers alike do not have adequate knowledge about how education of pregnant learners is promoted, and have no idea whether such learners are treated in a manner that is consistent with the policy on pregnant learners (Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009; Runhare, 2010). The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research topic and the research problem underlying this study. Further, the chapter outlines the purpose, the background to the study, the research rationale, the significance of the study; the research objectives and questions; clarification of key terms; the outline of methodology, as well as the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Purpose of the study

It is important that before I delve into the purpose and focus of this study I pay particular attention to why School Management Teams have to play a role in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy. Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) determined, in terms of Section 4.2 (d) (ii) of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998, clearly states that the SMTs should make sure that learners receive education that they deserve, that is, according to the policies provided by the Government. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the SMTs to ensure that learners are not discriminated against in schools so that they can complete their schooling regardless of their circumstances. To ensure that all learners have equal opportunities in accessing education, and also as a reactionary measure to address high rate of learner pregnancy in South Africa, the then Department of Education released the Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy in public schools (DoE, 2007).

The purpose of that policy was to help schools in their attempts to eradicate the rate of learner pregnancy and in managing pregnancies when they happen. Therefore, this policy attempts to ensure that SMTs have knowledge, skills and values to support pregnant learners (DoE, 2007). Furthermore, this policy is one of the learner pregnancy intervention programmes in order to ensure that learner pregnancy is minimised and to ensure that when girls fall pregnant while still attending school, continue accessing education and without discrimination. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore the roles that the SMTs were playing in the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools. The study also sought to explore the challenges that SMTs faced when implementing the learner pregnancy policy and how they overcame those challenges.

1.3 Background of the study

It was highlighted in the introduction that learner pregnancy is one of the social ills facing the country. A study conducted by Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) found that KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) was one of the provinces with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy

among school-going learners. In their analysis, the types of schools with high teenage pregnancy were those that were under resourced and combined. That implied that such school did not operate effectively because of lack of money and equipment. Based on their findings, they recommended that teenage pregnancy interventions within the school system should be targeted at combined schools as they constituted high risks groups (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). The vision of the Department of Education (DoE) in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is that of a well-informed and literate people, with knowledge, ability and training to perform well as advanced citizenry. In order to realise this vision, the mission of the DoE in KZN is to make available equitable access to quality education regardless of any differences between the people of that province (www.kzneducation.gov.za). However, the vision and mission of the DoE in KZN cannot be achieved if the high rate of learner pregnancy is not dealt with. According to Mngoma (2010), there was 21, 8% of girls who admitted that they were pregnant when interviewed in 2002. That figure went up to 25, 8% in 2008. Again in 2011, 3,7% of KZN girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy- the highest percentage in the country and during the same year, 4,5% of all teenage girls in South Africa fell pregnant (HSRC, 2013). There has been a remarkable increase in the rate of learner pregnancy in the past years since the policy was introduced in 2007, and we are still experiencing high learner pregnancy rates.

South Africa is a participant in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MGD) where the vision for Education For All (EFA) by 2015 is internationally acclaimed (UNESCO, 2005). This was done simple because there was high prevalence of gender inequality in educational access, completion and performance rates (UNESCO, 2004; Stromquist, 2005). The Millennium Development Goals (MGD) have a clause that is exclusively devoted to the principle of gender equality in order to enhance access to, and completion of education by girls and women at all levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2005). This means that any nation should eradicate all gender related disparities from both its education policy design and institutional programmes and practices in order to fulfil Education For All (EFA) (Runhare, 2010). MGD and EFA emphasise that girls who fall pregnant while still at school should be given an opportunity to continue with their education (UNESCO, 2004; Stromquist, 2005). That is the reason why South Africa joined the rest of the world in endorsing international conventions that seek to amend gender disparities in education to show their cooperation in the eradication of gender disparities in education

(Runhare, 2010). This means female dropouts rates at all levels of education especially due to learner pregnancy should be reduced.

At the legislative level, Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education. Section 4 (a) (i) and (ii) of the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) states that all education policies must be equipped towards the improvement and preservation of the fundamental rights of every person as enshrined in Chapter Two of the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a). More importantly, the right of every person to be protected against unjust treatment within or by an Education Department and the right to education for all learners had to be upheld. Learner pregnancy have many factors that cause learners not to complete their schooling, and these include poor academic performance, dropping out of school and a lack of involvement with school activities (Grant & Hallman, 2006). This implies that when a child falls pregnant, she is exposed to deprivation of this human right. Learner pregnancy compromises the quality of life as well as teaching and learning of learners. PAM determined in terms of EEA (RSA, 1998), mandates the SMTs to provide the professional management in the schools as part of their management functions. The South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, Section 20 (1) (e), on the other hand mandates School Governing Bodies to support the principals, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.

Furthermore, Section 3 (3.2) of the South African Council of Educators Act, No. 31 of 2000 (RSA, 2000) in the Code of Professional Ethics, stipulates that educators should guide and encourage each learner to reach his or her potential. This implies that SMTs should be able to handle pregnant learners in a manner that will allow them to perform to their maximum level regardless of pregnancy. According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009, p.80), "a systematic and more formalised system of support is required for those who do become pregnant". This means that the SMTs should design programmes of support for these pregnant learners which will in turn help them to reach their potentials.

The National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) describes the seven roles of a competent educator. One of the roles stated in this Act is that an educator has 'community, citizenship and pastoral care' responsibilities. This means SMTs should be able to handle pregnant learners by giving them the necessary support. I definitely agree with

Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013, p.757) that "the stakeholders at school who are parents, educators and more especially school management teams (SMTs) should have the know-how to manage and deal with teenage pregnancy". So, it is the duty of SMTs to create a common culture where leadership is equated with maximising the human capacity within the school through empowerment (Harris, 2004).This has implications for SMTs who only focus on professional functions and neglect their role of pastoral care to pregnant learners. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) concur with Ferguson and Woodward (2000) in their study, that if learner mothers continue with their studies after delivery and receive necessary support from schools, they can manage to complete their secondary education and further their studies in the tertiary institutions. However, it is acknowledged that South Africa has the positive policy measures for learner pregnancy (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009), but the capacity of schools to cope with this new challenge needs to established (Runhare, 2010).

1.4 Statement of the problem

SMTs are expected to implement this learner pregnancy policy in order to minimise learner pregnancy and to retain pregnant learners in schools without any form of unfair discrimination being against them. Even though there is this learner pregnancy policy, statistics for learner pregnancy is still on the increase and there is still high school drop-out rates due to learner pregnancy as discussed above (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). According to Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013), the problem of learner pregnancy requires the SMTs to possess critical skills that will help them in the management of learner pregnancy without interfering with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c). Furthermore, Masuku (1998) states that SMTs tend to use their personal experiences and common knowledge as mothers in an attempt to assist pregnant learners because they are not trained to deal with pregnant learners in schools. Moreover, the Action Plan to 2014-Towards the realisation of schooling 2025, states that the principal should make sure that teaching in the school takes place as planned, according to the national curriculum.

Contrary to policy expectations, it appears that members of School Management Team experience difficulties in implementing this policy on pregnant learners. SMTs are still faced with dilemmas of what to do when they encounter the problem of learner pregnancy in their schools (Sethosa, 2007). They do not seem to have the means of supporting these pregnant learners. They were never given training of necessary skills on how to deal with learner pregnancy in their schools (Sethosa, 2007; Deventer, 2008). This means that the SMTs should cater for the educational and welfare of all learners in their care. However, a study by to Majova (2002) states that the SMTs find it difficult to play different roles in trying to support learners who are pregnant. For this policy to be effectively implemented, SMTs should understand their roles and should work collaborately with other stakeholders as they are the drivers of the policy (Jansen, 2002).

In terms of Section 3 (1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996c), it is compulsory for learners from age seven up to age 15 years or Grade 9, whichever comes first, to access education. This is also the responsibility of parents to make sure that their children go to school and that the SMTs should not infringe that right for children. Expectations of the role of SMTs have undergone changes in recent years due to high teenage pregnancy in schools, which makes it interesting to explore the role played by SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools especially in age-mixing schools which are located in disadvantaged communities. That is done in order to make sure that all children receive education and are retained in schools throughout their completion.

The SMTs should put up to their shoulders that they encourage learners to stay at school. Being in school is taken as an intervention to prevent learner pregnancy (Furguson & Woodward, 2000). The National campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy (2010) concurs with the above position, saying that learner who always stay in schools are more likely not to fall pregnant than those that stay away from school. Therefore, the SMTs, in terms of the views expressed above, should encourage learners to attend school. Some SMTs are faced with dilemmas of exercising power, ethical issues, conflicting expectations of stakeholders and meeting the demands of the departmental policies. SMTs have a duty to manage learner pregnancy in their schools and they should ensure compliance of the learner pregnancy policy by implementing it in their schools (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). SMTs should make sure that parents are informed about this policy as many of them are not even aware of this policy.

SMT members, especially principals, are not expected to suspend learners due to their pregnancy status; some of them are not aware or ignorant of the policy. Although learners are guaranteed the right to education by the South African Constitution and the above policy too, this means these rights are not always realised in practice. Schools have to cope with the high rate of learner pregnancy which has implications for leadership practices of SMTs and the effectiveness of the school in providing quality education.

According to Jansen (2002), usually policies are put in place by policy designers while implementers and beneficiaries of those policies are lacking knowledge and power to execute the difference required. Given that the rate of learner pregnancy is still a concern for the Department because the rates are still high, through this study, I wanted to find out whether the SMTs were playing their role in implementing this learner pregnancy policy. Furthermore, the study sought to establish the SMTs' responsiveness in addressing learner pregnancy using this policy.

1.5 Rationale for the study

The rationale for undertaking this study has personal experience, professional experience and theoretical components to it. At present there are no studies done concerning the SMTs responsiveness in addressing learner pregnancy using this policy (Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2006; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009; Runhare, 2010). Before 1994, there were no rights in South Africa for everyone to access education, there were no policies which prevent the school from expelling pregnant learners. As I reflect back when I was attending secondary school in my times, when a learner falls pregnant while still at school, she was immediately expelled from school. There were no rights for everyone to have access to education; there were no laws and legislations which will prevent the school from expelling this learner. One of my friends was very intelligent at school but she fell pregnant and could not complete her secondary schooling. Today she is just a housewife who depends solely on her husband for everything in the house. If there were laws protecting her by then, she would have returned to school to complete her studies and could have become an independent woman. The higher the number of learners who became pregnant in the past, the higher the number of learners who were infringed the right of getting education which falls in the hands of the SMTs especially the principal by then.

According to Section 9 (4) of the South African Constitution, the SMT members in the past were unfairly discriminating the pregnant girls because boys who impregnated them continued with their studies.

After 1994, democracy prevailed, Section 29 (1) (a) of the SA Constitution (108 of 1996) stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education. This applies to everyone regardless of pregnancy or not. Furthermore, Section 9 (4) of this Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to be protected against unfair discrimination. Again the Department of Education released the learner pregnancy policy in 2007 to assist schools in preventing and managing learner pregnancies. However, a study done by Statistics South Africa and the Human Science Research Council (2013) found that one in every three girls will have a baby before the age of 30 leading in many of them leaving school which should not be the case after all these policies are in place. Learner pregnancy is still on the increase, schools are still discriminating pregnant learners and there are still some learners who are not returning to schools due to learner pregnancy which means schools are not complying with the learner pregnancy policy (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013).

Currently, I am working as an office-based educator under the component HIV/AIDS and LIFESKILLS. My job description involves implementing life skills programmes to eradicate the social ills (HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse) and the fight against these is way too far to be won considering recent statistics. I find it important to explore what the SMTs do to prevent and manage learner pregnancy. In 2010, Department of Education in KZN launched My Life My Future campaign to fight against teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS (www.kzneducation.gov.za). This campaign is under my component at work. We have introduced it to secondary schools and we trained peer educators to implement it. However, in my experiences with schools, SMTs do not stick to policies when dealing with learner pregnancy; they just use their common knowledge and personal experiences.

There is still a need to for studies to be undertaken to particularly assess the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in schools (Runhare, 2010). This study therefore sought to explore the roles that the SMTs are playing in the implementation of learner pregnancy

policy. This study is therefore unique as it focuses on the international and national principles which emphasise that pregnancy should be prevented and also managed accordingly in order for all learners to access education and continue with schooling. Furthermore, the study should reveal in depth, the major challenges faced by SMTs and the coping strategies that the SMTs use in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study aimed to explore whether there is a gap between policy and practice and analyse the reasons if so. Little research had been done to look at the roles played by SMTs in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. The research that had been done in South Africa mostly has to do with statistics, causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Sethosa, 2007; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009; Macleod & Tracey, 2010; HSRC, 2011; Willan, 2013). We as researchers and managers, at various levels of the education department, did not have a clear understanding about how the SMTs handled issues of learner pregnancy in their schools as the prevalence rate was on the increase. Therefore, exploring their role benefited the Department of Education in filling the gaps considering implementation of the learner pregnancy policy especially in schools located in poorest communities. Therefore, the study contributed to the body of knowledge and literature in the domain of the education management regarding experiences and strategies that school management used to deal with issues of learner pregnancy.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the study contributed to reduction and proper management of learner pregnancy in schools by the SMTs. The strategies could be used by schools to educate learners on how to avoid risky behaviours which led to unwanted/ unplanned pregnancies. The study benefited the SMTs on how to manage learner pregnancy in their schools without interfering with the South African Constitution and SASA. Lastly, according to Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009), when reviewing leadership assert on South African studies, there was very limited South African leadership research base. Hence knowledge of how SMTs play their roles in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in South Africa was limited.

1.7 Research objectives

The Measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy aims to respond to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in school going learners in South Africa and continued access to education for boys and girls (DoE, 2007). In order to realise this aim, the following objectives have been identified:

- To explore the roles School Management Teams play in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?
- To explore the challenges the School Management Teams come across when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools.
- To determine how the School Management Teams overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

1.8 Research questions

In responding to the statement of the problem, the following research questions have been identified:

- What roles do the School Management Teams play in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?
- What challenges do the School Management Teams come across when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?
- How do the School Management Teams overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in schools?

1.9 Operational definition of key terms

This section describes the operational definition of key concepts and clarifies how these terms are used in this study. That means that the researcher do not just stop at what sources say these terms mean but move on to explain how these terms are used in the thesis.

1.9.1 Teenager

According to Collins English Dictionary (1998), a teenager is a person between the ages 13 to 19 years. Ncube (2009) defines a teenager as best understood in terms of the development stage of adolescence, where he defines adolescence as the period where puberty begins and ends in adulthood in the development of a human being.

1.9.2 Teenage pregnancy

Kanku and Mash (2010) define teenage pregnancy as the phenomenon whereby a teenage girl falls pregnant. The focus of this study is on teenage pregnancy which is about teenagers in schools. Therefore in the context of this study, I am making no distinction between learner pregnancy and teenage pregnancy because learners in schools that fall pregnant are also teenagers at the same time. Nevertheless, because the study focuses only on those learners who are attending school, the label 'learner pregnancy' has been applied throughout.

1.9.3 Educator

According to the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, an educator refers to anyone who has been trained to teach and educate other people especially learners at an education institution like a school or helps in providing education services or support services provided by education department. However, the term 'teacher' has also been used to refer to the educator, and no distinction has been made in the usage of the two terms in this study.

1.9.4 School Management Team (SMT)

School Management Team is a team that is comprised of the principal, deputy principal and Head of Departments (HODs) (National Education Policy Act 27, 1996). Categories of people accommodated in this definition are school principals, deputy principals and heads of department. However, in the context of this study, only school principals and heads of department (HODs) participated, and therefore, my definition is limited to them.

1.9.5 Life Orientation (LO)

Life Orientation (LO) is a learning area or subject that aims to assist and prepare learners with life skills to be able to survive in this changing and transforming society (Naidoo, 2006). This learning area develops skills, knowledge and attitudes that emancipate learners to be able to take correct decisions and to take suitable actions concerning various aspects of health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement and orientation to the world of work (DoE, 2002).

1.10 Demarcation of the study

The study was undertaken in Uthukela education district in KZN Province. UThukela District is wide and includes towns such as Ladysmith, Estcourt and Bergville. The schools that were involved in this study had been involved in the HIV/AIDS and Life skills training programmes and were considered to have high rate of learner pregnancy (EMIS, 2013). The schools that I selected for participation in the study were combined schools; they had four main phases of schooling, namely the Foundation Phase (from Grade R to Grade 3); the Intermediate Phase, (from Grade 4 to Grade 6); the Senior Phase, (from Grade Seven to Grade 9); and the Further Education Training Phase (Grade 10 to Grade 12) (DoE, 1997). The areas around these schools were dominated by poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS pandemic and child-headed families. The research was only confined to three principals, three HODs for Humanities, one LO educator from each school and one member of the SGB from each school.

1.11 Limitations

At present, I am an office-based educator at this District that I have selected. There were limitations in this regard concerning the issue of power. Participants may have told me what they believe I wanted to hear and they might perceive me as having more knowledge being a District official. I had to explain to them the intentions of my study and that they must see me as a researcher not in terms of position; that is, my own agenda was explicit. I used a venue chosen by them where they felt comfortable. Again, I have chosen to use rural combined schools, according to Wolpe, Quinlin and Martinez (1997) schools in South Africa are categorised into co-educational, single sex, specialist, former white and black, farm, rural or former home land and independent schools. Using the rural combined schools only is not a representation of all schools in South Africa, therefore I could not generalise findings from my study to all different schools.

1.12 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into nine chapters, and the content of each chapter is outlined below.

Chapter One

This is an introductory chapter which provides the overview of the study, including the statement of problem; the rationale; research questions as well as key concepts underpinning the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter covers a discussion of the international and local related research literature. The aim is to contextualise the study to be described using relevant literature. The literature review determines the nature and extent of learner pregnancy internationally and in South Africa.

Chapter Three

This chapter covers a discussion of the theoretical framework for my study. Theories relevant to the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy will be discussed.

Chapter Four

This chapter covers the research design and methodology used in this study. The methods that were chosen are discussed in details including the advantages and disadvantages for choosing those methods.

Chapter Five

This is the first data presentation chapter and it presents the perspectives of all categories of participants on the roles played by the SMT members in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in their schools.

Chapter Six

Chapter Six is the second data presentation chapter. This chapter focuses on the perspectives of the participants regarding the challenges experienced by the SMT members in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven is the last chapter that provides description of the themes. The chapter focuses on the strategies that were used by the SMT members in addressing the challenges they faced. The challenges faced were discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

Chapter Eight

This chapter attempts to move away from descriptions of what had emerged during the initial analysis to a theoretical discussion which focuses on explaining what happened. The chapter presents the emerging patterns from the data discussed in the data presentation and discussion chapters.

Chapter Nine

This chapter provides the findings of the study. The chapter begins by first presenting a synthesis of the study; thereafter, it presents the main findings of the study, using the research questions. Based on the findings made, recommendations are made for future research.

1.13 Chapter summary

This introductory chapter provided an overview of the study by introducing the reader to the focus, purpose, background, rationale for the study and significance for my study. I also provided the objectives, research questions, research design and methodology for the study. The structure of the chapters of the study was also provided. The next chapter deals with the literature reviewed on learner pregnancy.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING LITERATURE ON LEARNER PREGNANCY

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One the study was introduced by amongst other things, explaining key issues around the research topic and the research problem underlying this study. I then presented and discussed the focus of the study, the background to the study, the research rationale, significance of the study, the research objectives and questions, definition of key terms, research design and methodology and lastly I outlined the structure of the chapters of this thesis. In this second chapter, I present a comprehensive review of international and local literature on the topic under this study.

Hart (1998) defines literature review as a choice of information which is found in the form of published or unpublished documents on the phenomenon by which someone intends to study. This review has information, ideas, data and findings presented from other researchers that relate to the current study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) literature review is an assessment of information available on a specifically determined and revised phenomenon. This means, it is an inductive and analytic ideas and research findings from other researchers on the phenomenon under study. Literature review helps to justify the validity of a new study in terms of its value to the existing body of knowledge on the topic (Mouton, 2001). Furthermore Marshall and Rossman (2006) states that literature review links a study to a larger, continuous discourse in the literature, filling in gaps and expanding previous studies. Therefore, the literature review helped me to put this study within the existing literature and research and was able to determine gaps in existing knowledge.

According to van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012, p.108), “policy implementation is the process whereby policies are turned into practical measures and achievable outcomes”. Learner pregnancy policy gives direction to schools pertaining the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools. Therefore, the implementation of this policy is crucial as it has to do with the actions by individuals or groups that are directed at the achievement of

objectives set forth in policy decision (Cloete, Wissink & De Coning, 2008). According to Khalid (2001, p. 88), "implementation is a mechanism for the translation of policy into practice". This can be done by increasing commitment to the plan of action by those responsible for the implementation, which in this case is SMTs. Even though policies are formulated with good intentions but they are not always implemented in an unchanged way in practice (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012).

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the prevalence of learner pregnancy. It consists of a review of international and local literature on the issue of learner pregnancy and its management at school level. The aim is to acquire insight from this literature into an understanding of the roles played by SMTs in learner pregnancy policy in schools within the South African context and elsewhere in the world. This chapter presents relevant policies on learner pregnancy, perspectives on the challenges and consequences of teenage pregnancy focusing on school going learners and strategies to reduce and manage learner pregnancy in schools. Lastly the chapter presents the educational programmes available for pregnant learners and teen mothers in developed countries and developing countries especially South Africa as this study is based in KZN.

2.2 Prevalence of learner pregnancy

The phenomenon of learner pregnancy is escalating despite the existence of the policy on learner pregnancy (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). That is one of the motivating factors for me getting interested in exploring the roles played by SMTs in schools when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy. Research indicates that both developed and developing countries have continued to experience the problem of learner pregnancy. Therefore, learner pregnancy is still a concern for many countries in the achievement of the global goals of elimination of gender inequality by 2015 (UNICEF, 2004; Stromquist, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006).

Darrock, Singh and Frost (2001) in their study where they compared teenage pregnancy rates among four developed countries, point out that the USA had the highest teenage pregnancy rate of 22%. USA was followed by the United Kingdom (UK) with a rate of 15%, with

Canada following at 11%. Sweden was the lowest of them all with the rate of only 4%. The reason for Sweden to have the lowest rate of teenage pregnancy was that they were more open and liberal about issues of sexuality and reproductive health such as access to contraception, pregnancy termination and abortion services by teenagers (Arai, 2003; Hawkes, 2004). Arai (2003) found that societies that kept to traditional values on marriage and sex and did not give enough information on issues of sexuality and reproductive health; coincidentally, they were also the ones with the highest rate of unwanted teenage pregnancies.

Looking at the developing countries such as those found in the African continent, most of them have higher teenage pregnancy rates of over 15% (Jackson & Abosi, 2007). The studies on the African countries teenage pregnancy rates indicate that Mali had the highest teenage pregnancy rate of 45%, followed by Liberia with the rate of 35%, then Botswana with the rate of 24%, followed by Kenya and Togo, both with the rates of 21%, then Ghana with the rate of 19%, followed by Zimbabwe with the rate of 16% and South Africa with the rate of 15,7% (Jackson & Abosi, 2007; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). In their study Meekers and Ahmed (1999) found that up to 10% of school girls dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy in African regions.

While according to the statistics presented in the above paragraph suggest that South Africa is not the worst affected countries (15.7%), the prevalence of learner pregnancy differed from province to province. For instance, a study done by Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), indicated that KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is one of the provinces in South Africa with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in learners attending school. According to Mngoma (2010), there was 21, 8% of girls who admitted that they were pregnant when interviewed in 2002, and this went up to 25, 8% in 2008. Again in 2011, 3,7% of KZN girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy- the highest percentage in the country and during the same year, 4,5% of all teenage girls in South Africa fell pregnant (HSRC, 2013). A study done by Statistics South Africa and Human Science Research Council (HSRC, 2013) found that one in every three girls will have a baby before the age of 30 leading to many of them leaving school. Since learner pregnancy policy was introduced in 2007, we are still experiencing high learner pregnancy rates including school drop-out due to learner pregnancy which is also on the increase. This could indicate that there is a gap between policy and

practice; hence this study is focusing on the role played by SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2013) embarked on a study based on the prevalence of learner pregnancy in South African schools. The findings of that study indicated that learner pregnancy between 2004 and 2008 increased; also provincial trends indicated high learner pregnancy occurred in the predominantly rural provinces of KZN, Eastern Cape and Limpopo. Lastly, it was indicated that learner pregnancy was dominant in schools that were under resourced. That could be linked to a number of factors. These could include the lack of equipment, poverty, as well as schools which were age mixing (combined schools). Schools that were negatively affected by this phenomenon were also No-Fee paying and those located on land independently owned, normally called farm schools, (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010). Therefore, one of the reasons why I chose combined schools situated in deep rural and poor neighbourhoods was that such schools were regarded as high risk areas, and I thought that they would provide rich data (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009).

The following table indicates the number of learners who fell pregnant in KZN in the year 2013, 2014 and 2015.

NO	**DISTRICT**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
1	AMAJUBA	527	673	691
2	UTHUNGULU	1204	1245	865
3	ILEMBE	809	867	938
4	UMKHANYAKUDE	1658	1380	1689
5	UTHUKELA	456	725	702
6	PINETOWN	626	719	880
7	SISONKE	657	623	516

8	UGU	884	750	1200
9	UMGUNGUNDLOVU	1199	628	675
10	UMLAZI	1658	1110	1018
11	UMZINYATHI	888	603	685
12	ZULULAND	1120	890	742
	TOTAL	13726	11996	10601

Table 1: Number of learners who fell pregnant in KZN (Source: KZN DoE EMIS, 2015)

From the above table it is noted that the number of learners who fell pregnant have decreased in 2014, however, 11 996 is still too high. These figures are a concern to the KZN Department of Education with all these policies in place. This study focuses on the implementation of learner pregnancy policy by SMTs in schools. These figures indicate that the prevalence of learner pregnancy is still very high. This study explores the roles that the SMTs are playing in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

2.3 Consequences of learner pregnancy

The review of literature indicates that there are many consequences of learner pregnancy. These consequences do not only affect the concerned party, that is, a learner who is pregnant but they affect everyone around her such as her family, unborn child, father of the baby, the school and the whole community at large (Potjo, 2012). The educators who are teaching the pregnant learner as well as the learners in that class may be affected because they have to put up with mood swings, tiredness and so forth. The family of the pregnant learner has to adjust to the fact that there is going to be a new member in the family. Poverty in the community continues. Getting pregnant while still at school, may cause disruption (Macleod & Tracey, 2010) to learner's studies. Teenagers need to concentrate at school, and that becomes difficult when they are pregnant. This leads to many teenagers dropping out of school due to pregnancy (Sethosa, 2007; Potjo, 2012). Even though the Department of Education at national level introduced Measures for the Prevention and Management of learner pregnancy

policy, which is discussed in detail below, some teenagers do not return to school. There are many factors which cause the drop out; some teenagers do not have family members to take care of their babies while attending school. Due to poverty they cannot send their babies to child care facilities. Some parents may neglect the teenage mother's responsibilities arguing that they now have to take care of the baby (Kanku & Mash, 2010).

Furthermore, low birth weight in the teenagers' babies is one of the risky factors which contribute to the babies dying at a young age (Cameron, Richter, McIntyre, Dlamini & Garstang, 1996). The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2002) concurs with the above view and reports that there is lower birth weight among young babies which are born by young mothers. For a baby to grow in a healthy condition, it is recommended that mothers should breastfeed their babies for the early development of a baby but only to find that studies indicate that young women who get pregnant unintentionally do not breastfeed their babies (Chandra, Martinez, Mosher, Abma & Jones, 2005). In addition to low birth weight, babies born from teenagers are prone to be malnourished and they suffer from developmental problems (UNFPA, 2007). This is due to poverty experienced by some of the communities.

Macleod (1999, p.2) states that "adolescent mother, especially those who are under the age of 15 years, have a higher incidence of birth complications such as toxaemia, anaemia, hypertension, low-birth weight babies, prolonged and premature deliveries". These complications put teenage mothers at risk of losing their babies either at birth or during their first year of life (Boult & Cunningham, 1991). Bruckner, Martin and Bearman (2004) support the above view saying that teenage pregnancy poses a serious health risk for the baby. At the same time teenagers at this stage lack parental skills. UNFPA (2007) indicates there were more deaths due to pregnancy after delivery for teenagers aged 15-19 than those women aged 20-24. This is because of the three main reasons; teenagers who get pregnant mostly do not have financial stability, family support and do not know where and when they can get help. Again, teenagers do not attend antenatal care earlier in their pregnancies; they do that at a later stage. Lastly, there is poor quality of health service to these pregnant teenagers in their areas (UNFPA, 2007).

Another consequence of learner pregnancy relates to the father of the child. Teenage fathers are often absent in the lives of their children but they are an important part of learner

pregnancy (Miller, 2001). Therefore, the costs for the teenage father especially when they are still at school themselves pose so many challenges (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). Teenage mothers do not receive any support emotionally and financially from the teenage fathers. These teenage fathers are not emotionally prepared to be fathers and to take those responsibilities and also, they seem to be immature when it comes to their development (Spear & Cater, 2002). According to Kaufman, De Wet and Stadler (2009), sometimes teenage fathers deny paternity of their children out of fear of the reaction of their parents and the possibility of financial consequences of fathering a child. Therefore, teenage mothers have to take care of their babies alone without any father figure. However, Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) state that other teenage fathers had to take the responsibility of supporting the baby financially and neglect the caring role. Most of these teenage fathers had to leave school to look for jobs in order to find money to support their babies.

According to (Kirby, 2007), the most negative and costly outcomes of learner pregnancy is from one generation to another. Children born by teenagers are prone to negative things like dropping out of school, getting lower performance and records show poor levels of school attendance (Cassell, 2002; Kirby, 2007). In his study, Cassell (2002) discovered that when children were born by teenagers, 32% of them also had been pregnant before the age of 20 compared to 11% of those whose mothers delayed child bearing until they are beyond 20 years of age. In this way this goes from one generation to the other that is, mothers and daughters and sons too fall into the same trap just because of poverty which also increases the risk of behaviour problems (Hoffman, 2006).

Another consequence of teenage pregnancy is the one highlighted by Macleod (1999) that there is inadequate mothering, neglect, malnutrition and abuse. This is due to the age of the mother and the constraints caused by poverty. Teenage pregnancy also affects the community at large. Many families are experiencing unemployment. Some parents depend on government grants which makes it a burden for them to have another person added to the family. This could jeopardise the future of this baby in terms of financial stability (Sethosa, 2007). Teenage mothers are often psychologically and financially unstable. According to Popenoe (1998), providing social security to teenage mothers by means of social grant has become a burden to the state. It also damages the economy of the country and is a heavy load

to the tax payers too who have to continuously contribute to the well being of these teenagers by means of government social grants (Miller, 2001). This therefore contributes negative to the society at large.

Hoffman (2006), Kirby (2007) and Breheny and Stephens (2007) summarises the health and socio-economic consequences of learner pregnancy into four categories, that is, health, educational, economic and social consequences. The health consequences include things like risk of teenagers dying during delivery, babies dying during birth, babies having complications and having low birth weight. The educational consequences include learners dropping out of school, absenteeism, academic performance which is poor, not completing schooling, cognitive development and educational outcomes which are poor. The economic consequences include poverty, people dependent on others and joblessness or even low income jobs. Lastly, there are social consequences which include stigma and discrimination in the communities, unsupportive environment and abusive relationships.

2.4 The learner pregnancy policies

There are international and national policies in most countries on learner pregnancy which were developed in order to allow pregnant learners to continue with their studies. These were developed after realising that teenage pregnancy is one of the causes of inequalities in achieving educational access between girls and boys (Stromquist, 2005). The discussion starts with the international perspective on this issue and ends with the national policy perspective.

2.4.1 The international policy on educational rights for pregnant learners

Internationally, education is defined as a fundamental human right for every member of society (Dandet & Singh, 2001). The Millennium Development Goals (MGD) have a clause that is exclusively devoted to the principle of gender equality in order to enhance access to, and completion of education by girls and women at all levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2005). This means that education was given a priority and the right to education is one of the core human rights in the Education For All (EFA) of 1990 and the Millennium

Development Goals (MDG) of 2000. EFA and MDG have a provision of the principle of gender equity and the measures to strengthen access and complete schooling which is equal for all girls and women by 2015 (UNICEF, 2003). Therefore, all countries participating in the above had to show their commitment to the elimination of gender inequalities in education, South Africa included (UNICEF, 2004). This means that even pregnant learners have to be given an equal opportunity to complete their schooling. The six Education For All (EFA) goals were as follows; enhancing early childhood care and education, enhancing access to quality education which is free and compulsory for all females especially from disadvantaged background, make sure that there is access to life skills programmes to meet learning needs, meet 50% improvement in adult education, eradicate gender imbalances in education and refine all aspects of quality education for all by 2015 (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

Even though Goal Two emphasises that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, should by then have access to free and compulsory education, but the department had reports that shows that girls were still dropping of school due to pregnancy (Department of Basic Education, 2010). Achieving this goal is still a challenge because there are still learners who are dropping out of school due to pregnancy in our schools. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for 2015 were as follows: to eliminate poverty among our communities, attainment of primary education, encourage gender equality and emancipation of women, decrease death of babies, enhance maternal care services, tackle HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and lastly to make a bearable environment for everyone.

Millennium Development Goal (MGD) number Two focuses on achieving primary education for all. There are socio-economic factors which prevent learners especially girls from completing their schooling, like teenage pregnancy and poverty (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010). Their study has shown that girls tend to drop out of school earlier than boys due to pregnancy and other socio-economic factors. Therefore, this disturbs the learners from achieving this goal. Moreover, it seems as if girls are most vulnerable in achieving EFA and MDG. In trying to redress gender inequality in education and other spheres of life, one major objective of international conventions and declarations is to eliminate all forms of discrimination in human society (Runhare, 2010). According to Coulter (1999), Stromquist (1999) and Wilson and Decker (1999), international conventions on women rights focused on

the following educational concerns for women; encourage inclusive education and encourage access to mathematics, science and technology subjects to females, eradicate all forms of harassment against females and promote women into leadership positions and redefine traditional customs that could jeopardise access to education and promote career guidance to everyone.

The above mentioned principles especially, principle number one, gives the assurance that even pregnant learners must receive equal education like all other learners. It is in this regard that many countries abide by these principles and they had to design national policies that do not allow learners to be expelled from school due to pregnancy and that include South Africa (DoE, 2007). These policies helped these countries to achieve both the EFA and MDG goals of gender equality for all in education. Furthermore, in making sure that girls are retained in schools including pregnant learners as part of reality Vision 2030, which is focused towards a Learning Nation for Industrialisation and a better life to all, is based on the following six principles; everyone has a right to education, banning of corporal punishment in schools, promotion of reproductive health education in schools, the right to freedom of choice, supporting teen mothers to complete their schooling and respect for cultural and family values of individuals (Hubbard, 2012).

2.4.2 The national policy on educational rights for pregnant learners

In this section, I provide a brief outline of learner pregnancy policies from other countries, including both the developed and the developing countries before discussing policies involved in South Africa where the study was undertaken. Starting with the developed countries, taking a cue from international policies which were discussed above, Britain promoted education as a human right for everyone and introduced the law against any form of discrimination for women in their education system (Coulter, 1999; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). The British Education Act of 1994 states that everyone has equal access to education (Stromquist, 1999). This means that even the pregnant learners had an equal access to education (Runhare, 2010). Another country that adopted the policy on not allowing any form of discrimination against women in education was the United States of America (USA). In the USA, the right of pregnant learners to continue with their education was adopted and implemented in schools using two Acts (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). The Educational

Amendment Act of 1972, referred to as Title IX and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975 do not allow any form of discrimination against pregnant teenagers in schools (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). According to Montessori and Blixen (1996) and Burdell (1996), the following are main provisions of Title IX; all learners have the same rights and responsibilities including pregnant learners and teen mothers. Therefore, school activities should include all learners whether pregnant or teen mothers and policies to be developed to prohibit any form of discrimination in education.

According to McGaha-Garnett (2007), in the USA it is compulsory for teen mothers to attend school and they are fined when not attending. To help pregnant learners and those that have given birth, there are additional features to the statutory instruments. Those are things like adjusting timetable to suit those learners, on-site day care and health facilities, counselling services for all schools with pregnant learners and teen mothers (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Therefore, there is no excuse whatsoever of dropping out of school due to learner pregnancy. Moreover, in the Title IX, a pregnant learner is allowed to continue with attending classes as long as she is medically fit or until the eighth month of pregnancy. The pregnant girl is also entitled to relevant and consistent homebound tuition while she is away to deliver (Adler, Bates & Merdinger, 1985). Before this law was adopted only 18, 6% of pregnant and teen mothers graduated from high school. However, this increased to 29, 2% in 1975 and by 1985 the figure increased to 55% due to their policy (Burdell, 1996). This is evidence that the policy was implemented effectively and according to the roles and responsibilities given to schools. As this study explores the roles played by SMT members in schools to implement the policy on learner pregnancy, it is through observing that unlike in the USA where learner pregnancy and school drop-out due to pregnancy has decreased, in South Africa it is the opposite - numbers are still increasing. Although according to Runhare (2010), some policies that promote equal educational opportunities for pregnant learners were sometimes badly received by the communities due to negative traditional and conservative perceptions about giving social rights to pregnant teenager and teen mothers.

Moving on to the developing countries, some of the SADC member states such as Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa accepted the call for allowing pregnant learners to access education. Botswana was the first African country to commit itself by

introducing a policy which does not expel pregnant learners from school. According to Chilisa (2002), the policy states that the pregnant girl should stop attending school as soon as the pregnancy is made known and should come back to school 12 months after delivery. This policy was called re-entry policy and it was used to punish the girls for their bad behaviour (Chilisa, 2002). The following four provisions of the Botswana policy are outlined; a pregnant girl should leave school after the pregnancy has been discovered and return after 12 from delivery but to another school. Girls were allowed to write their examinations at least 6 months from the date of delivery and boys responsible for impregnating girls were also had to leave school and should return or write examinations with the approval of the Minister of Education (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi, 1996).

The Namibian policy states that a pregnant learner is allowed to continue attending school until she is advised by a medical practitioner to leave school and should come back to the same school within 12 months from the date she left the school but also on the advice of a social worker who will make sure that the baby is taken care of by a responsible adult (Hubbard, Munyinyi, Eggerman, Schulze-Allen, Carew-Watts, Holt, Coomer, Van Wyk, Schmidt, Zimry & Barth, 2008). After seeing that this policy was viewed as a punishment to the pregnant learner, in 2009, the Namibian cabinet developed and approved a new policy which states that pregnant learners can now remain at school until the eighth month and should come back to school immediately after delivery as long as the baby is in good health or else they can stay up to a maximum period of 12 months at home (Hubbard, 2012). The Malawian schoolgirl pregnancy policy is similar to that of Botswana and Namibia. The policy requires the pregnant learner to come back to school after at least 12 months of maternity leave from school (Hubbard, *et al*, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Looking at the Zimbabweans policy, Article 20(5) states that all parents are allowed to send their children to any school they like (The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). Therefore, it is evident that in Zimbabwe every child has a right to education inclusive of learners who fall pregnant still at school. Again, Article 23 (i) (b) states that no person shall be unfairly discriminated by any person while Subsection 23 (2) prohibits any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, tribe and place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or gender (The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 1980). Therefore, pregnant learners should not be discriminated against in any form whatsoever. The Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25.04 of 1996

Subsection 4(2) states that all children have a right to education. Moreover, Section 10 of the Zimbabwe Education Act states that all children have a right to be enrolled at any government school near to their homes.

The Government of Zimbabwe outlines various provisions that allow pregnant learners to continue with their education. Through the MoESC Policy (1999), pregnant learners have to be encouraged to stay in the school for as long as it is possible. A pregnant learner and a father of baby (if also a learner) can take up to 3months leave of absence from school and are allowed to write their examinations. After leaving to give birth, the young mother should return to the same grade she was before taking leave. This creates an opportunity for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling.

2.4.3 The South African policy on educational rights for pregnant learners

I am now moving on to the South African policy on learner pregnancy which is the one relevant for this study. This study explores the roles that SMT members played in the implementation of the policy on learner pregnancy in schools. Therefore, it is important to discuss the South African policy on the inclusion of pregnant learners in details.

Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution Act (RSA, 1996a) stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education. This clause protects everyone including pregnant learners from possible exclusion from education. This means that schools should assist pregnant learners to exercise this fundamental right to basic education. This Constitution also protects every person from being unfairly discriminated against. This means the rights of pregnant learners are guaranteed in the Constitution. Therefore, education should not discriminate against these learners in any form. Again, Section 9 (1) of the Constitution states that all people are equal before the law and should be given equal treatment and protection. Also, Section 9 (3) states that no one should be discriminated against due to race, gender, pregnancy, marital status. Therefore, the provision for pregnant learners to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy is mandated by the Constitution. However, available research findings indicate that girls are still dropping out of school due to pregnancy (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009).

The capacity of schools to cope with the challenge of ensuring that pregnant learners complete their schooling needs to the established (Runhare, 2010). Again, one of the aims stated in the Preamble of the South African Constitution is to make better the quality of life of everyone in the country and to give freedom for everyone to show their potential (RSA, 1996a). In Section 7(2) of this Constitution, the state is obliged to respect, protect and promote and to fulfil the rights of every citizen contained in the Bill of rights. The right to public health care services including reproductive health care has been given to all citizens as a constitutional principle of South Africa (RSA, 1996a). This means that the pregnant learners are included in the right to reproductive health care.

Section 4 (a) (i) and (ii) of the National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) says that all policies on education must be developed to advance and protect the fundamental rights of every person which is guaranteed in terms of Chapter Two of the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) and emphasise the right of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an Education Department and the right to education for every children which include pregnant learners. Again, Section 4(c) states that the policy shall be directed towards the realisation of equitable education opportunities and addressing the disparities of past inequality in education provision, including encouraging gender equality and the enhancement of the status of women.

Furthermore, the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996b) describes the seven roles of a competent educator. One of the roles in this Act states that the role of an educator is that of 'community, citizenship and pastoral care'. This means that the members of the SMT should be able to handle pregnant learners by giving them necessary support. I definitely agree with Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013) that all stakeholders and more especially the members of the SMT should have skills and should design a plan of action to deal decisively with pregnant learners to create a common culture through empowerment (Harris, 2004). This has implications for the SMT members who only focus on professional functions and neglect their role of pastoral care to pregnant learners. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) concur with Ferguson and Woodward (2000) in their study, that if learner mothers continue with their studies after giving birth and receive the necessary support from school, they can manage to complete their secondary education and further their studies in the tertiary institutions.

Moreover, Section 3 (3.2) of the South African Council of Educators Act, No. 31 of 2000 (RSA, 2000) in the Code of Professional Ethics, stipulates that educators should guide and encourage each learner to reach his or her potential. This implies that the SMT members should be able to handle pregnant learners in a manner that will allow them to perform to their maximum level regardless of pregnancy. According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), a well ordered plan should be organised to assist pregnant learners in schools. This means that the SMTs should design programmes of support for these pregnant learners which will in turn help them to reach their potentials.

Like in the South African Constitution, the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 protects the rights of every learner from any form of discrimination inclusive of pregnant learners. Looking at the Preamble of this Act, it states that schools should address disparities of past injustices in educational provision by eliminating racism, sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and not tolerating each other regardless of race, sex and gender as well as to protect and support the rights of all learners. This Preamble protects every learner, including pregnant and former pregnant learners from any forms of discrimination in schools. In Chapter Two of this Act, Section 3(3) states that schools should make sure that all the learners of school going age should be admitted to public schools in their provinces. While Section 5(1) states that a public school must not deny admission of learners and should give them their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating against them in any way whatsoever. Again, Section 5(9) states that parents are allowed to lodge an appeal if their children were denied admission to a public school. This Act is against any form of unfair discrimination and it ensures that the right for every learner to enrol at any school is not prohibited. This means pregnant learners should not be denied access to education; therefore, should be re-admitted to schools after giving birth.

Due to high rate of learner pregnancy in schools, the National Department Education initiated the policy on learner pregnancy to guide the schools on the prevention and management of learner (DoE, 2007). At the heart of this policy was the need to strike a balance between the right to education of pregnant learners with the right to care and support to new born baby (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). The then Minister of Education in South Africa clarified that all learners have a right to education including pregnant girls who are

school-going. Therefore, they need to be retained from school by allowing them to come back after giving birth (Pandor, 2007). This means that these policy guidelines are gender sensitive and seek to prevent any forms of discrimination. The policy guidelines recognise the responsibility and influence of the education system shares with larger community to prevent and manage learner pregnancy (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). These policy guidelines concentrate on the prevention and elimination of learner pregnancy and HIV infections in order to encourage learners to focus on learning and development of healthy sexual behaviour (Potjo, 2012).

According to Manzini (2001), the policy on learner pregnancy emphasises that pregnant girls are allowed to continue with their schooling during and after pregnancy. Such a provision helps pregnant learners in continuous school attendance. While these policy guidelines allow pregnant learners to take leave of absence for up to two years, in order to look after the baby, this is not obligatory (DoE, 2007). It is however, up to the affected learner and her parents to decide when to return to school after giving birth (Pandor, 2007; DoE, 2007). The reason for this leave of absence is based on the fact that no medical staff and child care facilities are available in the schools. But it is expected that the pregnant learners continues with their studies and do all school work that is assigned to them. These policy guidelines are divided into three sections, that is, prevention of learner pregnancy, the management of learner pregnancy and the recommended procedures to be followed when the learner becomes pregnant (DoE, 2007). The summary for the policy guidelines on prevention and management of learner pregnancy are as follows.

Prevention of learner pregnancy

The Department of Basic Education still emphasises that learners should be taught abstinence and the consequences of engaging themselves in sexual activities. Again, emphasis is put on educating learners to take decisions that will not harm their health and will not disrupt them in achieving their education. When learners engage themselves in sexual activities, they usually engage themselves in unsafe sex which could lead to them getting sexual transmitted diseases and falling pregnant. Another reason is the impact HIV/AIDS and learner pregnancy have on the future of these learners. Prevention measures shall be done by the schools in providing Life Orientation to the learners. Life Orientation subject should be taken seriously

for its success on behaviour change of learners and therefore suitable and well qualified educators should be employed to teach this subject. In the guidelines, it is stressed that parents should be involved through school governance and that schools should develop the code of conduct, with specific strategies to prevent learner pregnancy (DoE, 2007).

Management of learner pregnancy in schools

The Department of Basic Education encourages schools to adopt an inclusive approach to education for the management of learner pregnancy in order to strike a balance between the needs of the pregnant learners and the school, educators and other learners in the school. The schools should deal with all the cases of pregnant learners in a confidential manner taking into consideration the needs of these learners. The schools should encourage school attendance during and after pregnancy to promote education. The schools should prohibit any form of unfair discrimination against the pregnant learners. Schools should take precautions against any discrimination, hate speech, harassment and name calling and jokes that might destroy the self-esteem or break confidentiality of pregnant learners (DoE, 2007).

Procedures recommended when pregnancy occurs

The pregnant learner should ensure that she informs a responsible educator in the school about the pregnancy. The responsible educator should inform the SMT and send the pregnant learner to the health facility in order to be sure of the pregnancy and delivery date and must keep those records. The school should make sure that the pregnant learner receives counselling and guidance services and refer them to the relevant stakeholders if they do not have those skills. The school should take measures in dealing with discrimination of pregnant learners and to handle complaints (if any), in an appropriate way. Again, schools should extend academic support by giving and monitoring the pregnant learner's school work during the period she has broken away from school to deliver or care for the baby (DoE, 2007).

However, having these policy guidelines for the pregnant learner, the Department indicates that pregnant learner should be prepared that the community might not readily accept and support their situation because of society's values (DoE, 2007). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school governance to advocate this learner pregnancy policy to the

parents. The measure responsibility of the parents and guardians of pregnant learners is to assist with child care so that the learner can continue with her schooling. According to Jansen (2002), policy is important in guiding action, but the policy alone without implementation strategies and political will, cannot change things no matter how well crafted it may be. The issue of concern in this study is not on how well the policy was crafted to provide access to education for pregnant learners but on how the members of the SMT played their role in the implementation of this policy. The problem of the high learner pregnancy and school drop-out rates due to learner pregnancy was still increasing as discussed above.

2.5 The role of School Management Teams in learner pregnancy policy implementation

First and foremost, the role to be played by the SMT members in the implementation of this policy is to ensure that it is implemented in a planned, systematic way (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). According to van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012), there are three stages that need to be followed in order to implement this policy effectively. The first stage is the development of particular guidelines that need to be followed which includes priority determination. In this learner pregnancy policy guidelines are given to the schools and they were discussed in the previous sections. The second stage is the translation of the original policy into practical measures that should involve issues such as human resource provision, work procedures and organisational arrangement. The third stage deals with the leadership of an enabling nature, that will ensure that corrective action and review may come about during implementation.

The school officials as well as members of the SMT and SGBs must have implementation details available in writing so that all the role players involved in the implementation process know what is required from them (DoE, 2007). The success of the implementation of this policy depends on the SMTs who have to provide motivation and resources for the implementation. According to Levin (2001), policies convey intentions and policy implementation can only be understood in terms of the actors' intentions. Therefore, the role to be played by the SMTs is to show good intentions of the policy to the entire school environment. Again, the SMT members should be able to sell the policy to everyone who will be affected by it, including the educators, the learners and the parents (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). These scholars further say that the stakeholders must be convinced of the

value of this policy before they will accept it. Therefore, the SMT members should be involved in the consultation with the entire school community. This will help them to achieve the intended goals of the policy which in this case is to prevent and manage learner pregnancy. Therefore, commitment as well as, the skills to implement this policy is needed from the SMT members. Molale (2005) states that in South Africa all the attention is directed at the formulation of policies rather than at indicating how the policy will be practised in order to achieve the outcomes.

Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), determined in terms of Section 4.2 (d) (i) of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998, states that SMTs have to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislations, regulations and personnel administrative measures as prescribed. Again, Section 4.2(ii) of the same Act states that the SMTs should ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies. Therefore, they are the ones to guide schools in policy matters. According to Heystek (2004), the principal as a member of both SMT and SGB must make sure that there is a balance between the government and parents' expectations when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. This means that it is the responsibility of the SMTs to ensure that this policy must be contextualised and formulated in accordance with local conditions and practices.

Another role and responsibility of the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy is the effective communication (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). The SMTs should take all stakeholders on board to explain the intentions, aims and objective of the policy. They have the responsibility to communicate this policy in such a way that this learner pregnancy policy is functioning effectively (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). In their study, van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012) found that the educators say that there are many ways that the SMT members can use to communicate this policy to all stakeholders. These include circulars, workshops and different kinds of meetings. Therefore, the SMTs should cascade information about this policy to educators and parents through meetings and circulars. By so doing they will be able to get commitment from different role players.

The crucial element in policy implementation is the ownership of the policy (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). The SMT members should make it a point that other stakeholders are

involved by consulting them continuously and communicating effectively with them so that they will feel responsible and accountable for this policy to be successfully implemented. Moreover, the SMT members should be capacitated on continuous basis with school management skills. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Department to train the SMTs so that they can keep abreast with current thinking and practice in order to implement polices effectively. But it is the responsibility of the principal to play a leading role in developing other members of the SMT on the relevance and importance of this policy (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012).

The SMTs should provide an enabling environment for the entire school community to do their work in line with the policy (DoE, 2011). This will show them that they have the support from the SMT members. At the same time, the SMTs should know that even though they gave responsibilities especially to the Life Orientation (LO) educators to act on their behalf during the implementation of the policy, they are still accountable for everything. This means that the SMTs should give guidance and direction whenever a pregnancy occurs in schools. Again, the SMTs should inform and consult all stakeholders especially parents in an open and transparent manner regarding this policy (DoE, 2011). This will help the SMTs to work effectively with the parents in the implementation of this policy as we know that some cultures do not approve of learners going back to school after pregnancy. They consider this Act as having a bad influence on the other learners (Sieger, 2007). According to Chohan and Gina (2009), a strong support and availability of adult care-giving for a baby is required for a teenage girl to be able to return to school. Therefore, if the policy implementation is not effectively communicated, the stigma associated with learner pregnancy could evoke harsh responses from the community as it is the responsibility of the parent of the pregnant learner to assist with child care (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002).

Another role of the SMT is to provide good school environment that supports pregnant learners which could give those learners a sense of belonging (Khalil, 2008). In doing this, it will motivate learners to return to school after giving birth. Good interpersonal relationships at school serve as a measure of social support that could positively influence teenage mothers' academic performance and future aspirations (Khalil, 2008). The SMTs should ensure existence of enabling environment by promoting a climate of understanding, mutual respect and equality for the implementation of this policy. They must put in place appropriate

mechanisms to deal with any complaints of unfair discrimination (DoE, 2007). Furthermore, the role of the SMT is to ensure that the learners' right to education is not infringed. They should make sure that there is no unfair discrimination of any form against pregnant learners. The implementing of learner pregnancy policy in schools may help to decrease drop-outs rates due to learner pregnancy in schools and it is hoped that it will encourage teenage mother to continue with their schooling (DoE, 2007). The SMT members should make services of advice and counselling to the pregnant learners available in schools concerning motherhood and parenting (DoE, 2007). Again, they should provide academic support during the period of break from school from delivery (DoE, 2007).

The SMTs should communicate clear and consistent messages that all learners should abstain from sexual activities (DoE, 2007). They should be told about the risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases and getting pregnant. Also, the fact that there is an impact that HIV/AIDS and learner pregnancy has on their future aspirations. This could be done through LO lessons by LO educators. According to Reddy, James and McCauley (2005), the SMT members should select LO educators carefully in order to facilitate proper implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. They should be able to support and advice learners on sexuality issues.

Again, the role of the SMT in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy is to show commitment to the goals, causal theory and methods of the policy. According to Cloete and Wissink (2000), commitment refers to how willing policy implementers are in doing their duty. Therefore, the SMTs should provide sufficient resources for the implementation to takes place effectively. As this policy has been decentralised to schools, the SMTs should provide more resources for this policy to be implemented effectively by the entire school community. In addition to the roles of the SMTs, there are key pillars that could help in the prevention of learner pregnancy like parent school partnerships, exposing learners to academic skills, supporting communities in job seeking and job creation, youth involvement and networking with organisations in the community (Sapa, 2013).

Lastly, the SMTs should ensure that resistance is minimised (Brinkerhoff, 2001). They need to create and nurture networks and partnerships for co-operation and co-ordination. This should be done since all stakeholders need to be involved in implementing this policy. This

means that the SMTs should have strategies that will help them to deal with resistance to the policy. They are required to obtain feedback that can be used to make adjustments and corrections to be able to review interventions done (Pieters, 1998). They should be accountable in all activities done during the implementation process. The policy guidelines outlined the roles and responsibilities of the SMTs in schools but my main concern is about how the SMT members play their roles in the implementation of these policy guidelines.

2.6 Challenges in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy

There are many challenges in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy which could jeopardise opportunities for pregnant learners to complete their studies and achieve their educational goals. These challenges include inadequate child care and health services, displacement from home, inadequate transportation system between school and child care centres, inflexible school timetables and policies on absenteeism, social discomfort at school, spousal pressure to drop from school and seek full-time employment for the baby, insufficient financial and material resources for baby care and school fees, and negative societal and school attitudes (Weigand, 2005; Richter & Mlambo, 2005; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). According to Weigand (2005), all of the above problems are, in most cases, compounded by the fact that pregnant learners have been found to be one of the marginalised groups that have not yet gained power for self-advocacy on their own concerns.

There are many other policies that are adopted by the Department of Basic Education that deal with learner pregnancy but these policies are not easy for the SMT members to implement as they are not properly trained in them. There is a lack of clear understanding of these policies (Potjo, 2012). When learner pregnancy occurs in schools, some principals face a challenge of handling a pregnant learner (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). They end up violating the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act which allow learners to have access to education irrespective of whether they are pregnant or not. Moreover, there is a lack of adequate resources or facilities to deal with learner pregnancy in schools (Sethosa, 2007). Therefore, the SMT members are left with few options (if any) to deal with learner pregnancy. For an example, when a learner goes into labour at school, no nurses are on standby to take care of the learner (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). Also Mpanza and Nzima (2006) agree with the views expressed above, saying that in the case of

emergencies there are no school nurses who are skilled to deal with those learners, and counselling and first aid kits are not provided to these learners. This makes it difficult for the SMTs to handle pregnant learners in their schools.

According to studies done by Richter and Mlambo (2005) and Miller, Cur, Shanok and Weissman (2008), the first pregnancy, especially the unplanned type, among teenagers, resulted in stress, depression, low self-esteem and identity diffusion. A study of pregnant teenagers revealed that teenagers who fall pregnant end up performing poorly at school and are affected emotionally. The teenagers do not get support from the father of the baby and her family and end up suffering emotionally (Richter & Mlambo, 2005). This could affect the well-being and health of the baby and also the pregnant teenager's perceptions about life and schooling in particular (Runhare, 2010). Again, this depression and low self-esteem is caused by premature limitation to social freedom, sudden and heightened responsibility and social dislocation from other teenage peers as the pregnant girl is expected to leave the social context of adolescence to become a parent (McGaha-Garnett, 2007; Miller, Cur, Shanok & Weissman, 2008). According to Richter and Mlambo (2005) and Miller, Cur, Shanok and Weissman (2008), pregnancy related depression among teenagers was found to occur from the immediate social context due to relational ruptures with parents or guardians, father of the baby, stigmatisation and abusive situations in the immediate family and community at large.

Furthermore, the SMT members lack training in dealing with the learners' sexuality issues (Francis, 2010). According to Bhana, Clowes, Morrell and Shefer (2008), principals have not received training and skills to deal with pregnant learners but they are forced to promote learner retention by encouraging pregnant learners to come back to school after giving birth. They then become uncomfortable in dealing with pregnant learners. Moreover, it is found that socio-economic factors, gender inequalities, poor school environment and performance result in pregnant learners dropping out of school (Grant & Hallman, 2006; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). The findings from a study by Grant and Hallman (2006) discovered that not enough social and economic opportunities and family responsibilities and education gender inequalities on girls and women, drop out is not only caused by pregnancy but also by undesirable school experiences, poor academic performance, and approval of early motherhood. McGaha-Garnett (2007) concurs with the above saying that other learners perform poorly even before falling pregnant. Most teenage mothers that dropped out of

school were found to have a pre-pregnancy school history of grade repetition, temporary withdrawals, poor attendance, poor class participation and achievement and disruptive behaviour (Grant & Hallman, 2006; McGaha-Garnett, 2007).

Poor social support systems within both the school and the home can also be the reasons why some pregnant girls drop out of school. Learners who felt rejected at school were found to develop low self-esteem, to lack motivation to learn and had a high likelihood of dropping out of school even before getting pregnant (Lloyd & Mensch, 2006; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Furthermore, there are indications that the lack of parental and spousal support is one determinant variable which determines whether a pregnant girl continues with her education or drops out of school after delivery (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). McGaha-Garnett (2007) also found that most teenage mothers who dropped out of school did not get support from their parents. This was found to be happening because parents took too long to accept the new condition of their daughter, to the extent that they would not give enough financial, material and child care support for the girl to adequately meet school attendance requirements (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Because pregnancy happens within a socio-cultural context, it can happen that society makes a distinction between a normal and a teenage pregnant girl who can be taken as violating the social rituals by becoming pregnant (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Therefore, the SMTs, the educators, other learners and parents might hold certain culturally informed script about women sexuality and marriage, which could contradict the provision of formalised school services to pregnant learners. This could create a limitation to teen mother's right to education. This means that if schools, especially the SMT members come up with their own cultural beliefs, it could ruin these pregnant mothers' education. According to Geronimus (2004), in some conservative cultural groups, parents can withdraw social and material support to a pregnant girl who is not married. Therefore, pregnancy should be viewed as socially defined, and that there are underlying socio-cultural factors that could influence how education stakeholders perceive and treat pregnant learners and teen mothers (Runhare, 2010). This poses a big challenge in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The above challenges should be considered when coming up with both policy framework and implementation strategies on educational programmes that seek to accommodate the needs and concerns of pregnant learners and teen mothers (Runhare, 2010).

2.7 Educational programmes for the implementation of learner pregnancy policy

The challenges that schools experience when implementing the learner pregnancy policy can be addressed by responding to policy provisions that mandate pregnant learners to continue with their schooling even after delivery. Schools can also offer school based programmes that will accommodate all learners including pregnant learners (Runhare, 2010). Since this study also focus on how SMTs deal with challenges they experience in the implementation of this policy, in the next section I present an overview of educational programmes that can be offered to pregnant and teenage mothers in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

2.7.1 An overview of educational programmes offered in developed countries

In this section I provide an overview of educational programmes that are offered to pregnant and those that have been delivered in developed nations. In the developed countries like USA, there were educational programmes which were named Second Chance Clubs (SCC) and New Feature Schools (NFS) (McGee & Blank, 1989). These are special programmes located out of the formal school premises. McGee and Blank (1989) further say that these programmes were special in two respects; firstly, these programmes are initiated and established by well-wishers in the non-formal education system. Secondly, they are concentrated more on social, emotional, health and human development issues rather than on academic and career development (McGee & Blank, 1989). The curriculum of these programmes focuses on aspect such as contraception, pre and post-antenatal care, baby care, child development and good parental methods. But when school-based child care centres were established at special schools, informal networks by staff and service providers resulted in agitation and efforts for the inclusion of pregnant learners and teen mothers at formal schools, so that they could benefit from academic tuition (McGee & Blank, 1989). The SCC had an objective of preventing subsequent pregnancy but it was noted that besides that objective, it also assisted by minimising the negative impact of adolescent parenting on both the teen mother and the baby (Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2000). It was observed that special schools were initially established as a bridge by which pregnant and teen mothers could find

their way back into the formal school system. According to Key, Barbosa and Owens (2000), the major activities of the SCC include meeting with learners who had babies as a group to discuss parenting skills and career guidance with the help of social workers, availing medical care services, counselling services for learners during pregnancy and after birth, giving psycho-social support through home visits and lastly, promote academic, career, health, financial and material needs of pregnant learners and those that have given birth.

Another type of similar education programme in the USA for pregnant learners and teen mothers was New Feature Schools (NFS) (Weiner, 1987). The new feature in these schools is that they were initiated with the full participation of the community and therefore operate on the basis of school and community partnership. Like the SCC, the NFS put less emphasis on academic and career education because teen mothers could spend a lot of time seeking services away from school. Some NFSs offer various on-campus specialist services such as residential care for pregnant teens, parental and infant health care, top-up tuition and flexible schedules that allow pregnant learners and teen mothers to attend regular classes (Weiner, 1987). The above programmes do not offer curricula school programmes.

Moreover, there is another educational programme which has been found to be more beneficial to pregnant women and teen mothers than the above supplementary programmes. That is the inclusive curriculum programmes. According to Burdell (1996), the learners who attend these inclusive curriculum programmes attend them in the place of normal classes but separately from normal classes even though these classes are equal. They are termed inclusive because they offer a wide range of accredited courses and special services for pregnant learners and teen mothers only. According to Key, Barbosa and Owens (2001), when conducting a comparative evaluation of SSCs, participants and non-participants to determine if there was any difference in their rate of repeat pregnancy over a period of three years. The results indicated that SSC participants recorded only 6% repeat pregnancy compared to 37% of their non participant counterparts. This study seemed to indicate that SCC programmes are valuable (Key, Barbosa & Owens, 2001).

2.7.2 An overview of educational programmes offered in African countries

This section provides an overview of educational programmes in African countries that assist in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. In African countries education programmes remain focused on the academic development. It is emphasised that pregnant learners and teen mothers should be fully included in all the learning activities in the schools (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard, Munyinyi, Eggerman, Schulze-Allen, Carew-Watts, Holt, Coomer, Van Wyk, Schmidt, Zimry & Barth, 2008). They indicated that it is only the principle of eliminating discrimination that is addressed without going any further to providing extra assistance or interventions to the condition of pregnancy or parenting. Unlike in the USA's supplementary curriculum where the teen mothers take such courses as separate, non-accredited general education subjects, African countries take courses like learners' knowledge on parenting skills, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy prevention in LO subject together with other learners who are not pregnant (Runhare, 2010).

Most of the African countries, their education programmes are not formalised to provide extra support to pregnant learners during the period of absence from school, when the pregnant learner is away for delivery (Runhare, 2010). But in Cameroon, it is different because the pregnant learners' educational programme is organised and it is compulsory for all pregnant and those learners who have just delivered their babies to attend those lessons (Hubbard, *et al*, 2008). Therefore, school-family partnership cannot be overemphasised. What transpires in the literature is that comprehensive studies to assess the implementation of school girl pregnancy policies in Africa have been undertaken in Botswana and Namibia (Chilisa, 2002; Hubbard, *et al*, 2008). These studies focused on the structural and social justice, relevance and legal implications of the policies. This study differs from these others in that the focus is on exploring the role played by SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

2.7.3 Educational programmes offered in South Africa

Educational programmes offered for pregnant learners and teen mothers in South Africa are important to this study as it is based in South African schools. Many researchers indicate that in a democratic South Africa, pregnant girls are allowed to continue with their education for

as long as their medical conditions allows them to do so (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Hubbard, *et al,* 2008). But at the same time it has been highlighted that no medical assistance will be rendered by the school to both the pregnant learner and the new born baby (DoE, 2007). South African's learner pregnancy policy clearly specifies the kind of academic support that must be given to the pregnant learner during the period of absence from school for the delivery of a baby (DoE, 2007).

According to Ventura, Mathews and Hammilton (2001), there is abundant scholarship about strategies that can be used to prevent learner pregnancy. For instance, comprehensive sexuality education programmes should be introduced in schools which will also deal with issues of access to reproductive health care. This is further stated by Kirby (2007) that the introduction of sexuality education proved that learners can suspend sex for a later stage and that they are encouraged to engage in safe sex. According to Majova (2002), values, attitude and beliefs about sexuality are enhanced and perceived by learners in a positive way through a comprehensive sexuality education programmes. These intend to help the learners to develop healthy relationships and good interpersonal skills. According to Rosen, Murray and Moreland (2004), a comprehensive sexuality education encourages the learners to abstain from sexual activities and help them to withstand peer pressure which can lead to learner pregnancy. Life skills education programmes assist learners to postpone involving themselves in sexual activities; be faithful to one partner and use safe sex like condoms to those sexually active (Goldman & Bradley, 2009).

South Africa introduced life skills programmes in schools in order to facilitate the learners' knowledge of HIV, improve their healthy relationship skills and that was done by enhancing learners' communication and decision-making skills and to create a positive mindset about people living with HIV and AIDS (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). The National Curriculum Statement which was introduced to schools provided this comprehensive life skills education as part of Life Orientation (LO) subject which was made compulsory to all learners from Grade R to Grade 12 (DoE, 2003). This gives strength to the curriculum as it promotes sexual and reproductive health programme to deal with learner pregnancy in schools.

There are many other programmes which are introduced for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy. According to Matlala, Nolte and Temane (2014), the Department of Basic Education together with Department of Health introduced the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) which is being implemented in schools where health education is done including the combination prevention strategy and sexual reproductive health. This education is presented by health nurses who are allocated to the schools. Again, a multi-sectoral approach to addressing social challenges affecting the learners including learner pregnancy and HIV/AIDS are amongst the strategies used. All stakeholders involved in the education of the learners from all sectors work together. Another strategy is community dialogues and social mobilisation which contribute in addressing social challenges affecting the learners since parents are part of the stakeholders (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014).

Furthermore, peer education programme is used as an approach where learners educate each other and network with other stakeholders in order to tackle sexual and reproductive health issues and indicate causes in teenage sexuality and risk behaviours (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). According to Speizer, Magnany and Colvin (2003), peer programmes generally select learners which are of similar age as others who will role model good behaviour and advocate sexual related issues. In South Africa there are guidelines which determine the development, implementation and evaluation of peer education (Deutsch & Swartz, 2002). There are four roles of peer educators determined in the guidelines which include; educating learners in a structured manner, showing good example for healthy behaviour, assist other learners with social problems and direct them to relevant stakeholders and lastly advocate awareness campaigns for learners.

Evidence of peer education implementation suggests that if this programme is well developed there is ability to impact on self-esteem, confidence and resistance of peer pressure for both participants and peer educators (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). Therefore, educational programmes available in schools are important for this study as they indicate the role played by SMTs in the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools. An Article from Sowetan Live, Sapa (2013) gives a summary of all the educational programmes available in schools which also includes pregnant learners and teen mothers as follows;

Curricular programmes

The Department of Basic Education introduced Lifeskills subject which deals with the development of learners in a holistic way at all levels of child development. Learners acquire knowledge, skills and values to help them to achieve their full potential considering their physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social development. Again, learners acquire Lifeskills that help them to be independent citizens who are responsible. Lifeskills focus on three areas, that is, Personal and Social Well-being, Physical Education and Creative Arts (DoE, 2002). Personal and Social Well-being covers the issue of Learner pregnancy and HIV/AIDS (Sapa, 2013).

Education support programmes

The Department of Education also introduced learner transport to learners living far away from their school. No-Fee paying school policy was instituted in order to support learners from disadvantaged contexts. This means that the parents of these learners are exempted from paying school fees and there is also school nutrition programme for learners to get one healthy meal a day at school. These programmes assist learners in achieving their goals and to complete their schooling regardless of poor socio-economic background (Sapa, 2013).

Career counselling

The Department of Basic Education also introduced career guidance to the learners in order to help them select relevant subject packages that will help them to achieve their goals. The careers exhibitions are organised for Grade 9 and Grade 12 learners. These learners even receive psycho-social support from district office officials (Sapa, 2013).

HIV/AIDS grant

The Department of Basic Education again introduced Lifeskills HIV/AIDS sexuality programmes in schools which focus on sexual and reproductive health education and co-curricular activities based on HIV/AIDS coping skills. Peer education is amongst the programmes that deal with social ills in schools including learner pregnancy (DoE, 2011).

However, Sapa (2013) states that the Department once again involved all stakeholders like sister Departments, NGOs, religious and traditional leaders in dealing with social ills in schools as it is mindful that it cannot combat these social ills alone and that these are also a concern for everyone. These educational programmes are important for this study as they provide insights about the roles that SMT members play in implementing learner pregnancy policy.

2.8 Chapter summary

In South Africa especially KwaZulu-Natal, learner pregnancy has become one of the most crucial and challenging social problems. In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the views and research findings from various sources such as books, research articles and policy documents on issues pertaining to learner pregnancy and its management at schools level. This chapter commenced by providing a brief overview of the prevalence of learner pregnancy in South Africa and the role that is played by SMT members in that. The aim was to acquire insight from the literature into an understanding of the roles played by SMT members in implementing the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in schools within the South African context and elsewhere in the world. This chapter presented relevant policies on learner pregnancy from developed and developing countries including South Africa; perspectives on challenges and consequences of teenage pregnancy focusing on school going learners, as well as strategies used to reduce and manage learner pregnancy in schools.

Lastly, the chapter presented some educational programmes that are available for pregnant learners and teen mothers in developed countries and developing countries especially South Africa. In Chapter Three, which is the next chapter, I present and discuss the theoretical framework that informed the lens through which analysed the data that was generated in the study. Since I sought to explore how SMT members played their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy, the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and invitational theory (Barth, 1991), are proposed and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES FRAMING THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, a review of literature on learner pregnancy, as well as empirical studies that have been conducted on this subject, was discussed. These studies focused on international and South African learner pregnancy policy landscapes. The review explored existing knowledge and research conducted in developed and developing countries. In particular, attention was given to studies conducted in South Africa which is the national context within which the three case study sites were situated. I positioned the study in terms of the value it adds to the identified knowledge gaps. In addition, this chapter outlines, discusses and provides justification for the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this research.

A theoretical framework includes the examination of discipline-based literature related to issues relating to learner pregnancy (Creswell, 1994). According to Camp (2001), theoretical framework of a study is really the abstract interpretations of the researcher which are formed before a research is undertaken. Camp (2001) continues to say that no researcher, even in qualitative research where there may not be a hypothesis to prove, would begin a study without any assumptions. Such assumptions or pre-conceptions should however, be informed by a theory or a theoretical framework (Merriam, 1998; Camp, 2001; Radhakrishna, Yoder & Ewing, 2007). A theoretical framework guides the researcher in giving meaning to every stage and the related aspects of the study. It gives the big picture of the study, rational explanation of the relationships in related factors of the study, directs study objectives, data gathering and research findings. Therefore, studies that seek to explore and explain a phenomenon should be positioned within a relevant theoretical perspective (Merriam, 1998; Camp, 2001; Vithal & Jansen, 2003; Radhakrishna, Yoder & Ewing, 2007). Thus, theories are formulated to explain and understand the relationships between various phenomena.

Since this study sought to explore the roles played by SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy, I chose Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and invitational

leadership theory. The choice of the two theories was based on the belief that they would help me understand how and why the SMTs played the roles in the ways they did. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory is useful in the interpretation of human actions and the invitational leadership theory (Purkey & Novak, 1996) is useful in terms of explaining leadership qualities. Ecological environment, unique to each individual's situation, is seen as a series of nested and interconnected structures and needs to be considered when implementing the learner pregnancy policy by SMTs in schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Again, invitational leaders serve a deeper, more powerful and catalysts for such values as excellence, caring, justice and faith (Purkey & Novak, 1996). Such values are useful in providing insights about how SMTs relate with other stakeholders when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools. In terms of invitational leadership, SMTs need to be inviting to all stakeholders involved in the implementation. Therefore, the next section explains how these theories were found to be relevant and applicable for the interpretation of the issues that I sought to explore on this topic.

3.2 Choosing and positioning the study into the theoretical framework

The major question that this study sought to explore was what roles do the SMT members play in implementing the policy of learner pregnancy in schools? It also sought to explore the challenges they faced when implementing the learner pregnancy policy as well as how do they overcame those challenges. Most importantly, the study sought to understand why the SMTs enacted their implementation the way they did. In conducting the study, I took cognisance of the fact that South Africa had a policy on guidelines for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools (DoE, 2007).

However, while such policy framework is congruent with the international standards on education as a fundamental human right and the goal of gender equity in education, I based this study on the assumption that social, cultural, family, religion and lived experiences of the learners could influence policy implementation. Again, school leadership itself could influence how policy is implemented in schools. I conducted the study being cognisant of the fact that implementation of learner pregnancy policy could be affected by the stakeholders' historical and socio-cultural existence. The study therefore was premised on the intepretivists

epistemological paradigm to knowledge generation, which posits that human action is constituted by meanings which are socially and culturally constructed (Anderson, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Drawing from the discussion presented in the paragraph above, I did not take it for granted that just because there is an official policy guideline on learner pregnancy prevention and management, the SMTs at these schools had a uniform approach to policy implementation. Using the intepretivists approach to knowledge generation, I approached data generations, interpretation and analysis on the premise that there are multiple meanings and realities, which originate from people's socio-cultural historical existence (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). More details on this paradigm are found in the next chapter. I have already highlighted that this study was informed by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and invitational leadership theory. Using the ecological systems theory in this study highlights the inclusive approach used for effective involvement at intrapersonal, interpersonal, community institutional and societal levels in addressing the challenges SMTs experience in playing their roles in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Again, to study learner pregnancy from an ecological systems point of view, the focus is not merely on the child and her immediate natural setting, but it is also on where the child is interacting with various factors and in the entire environment as well (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

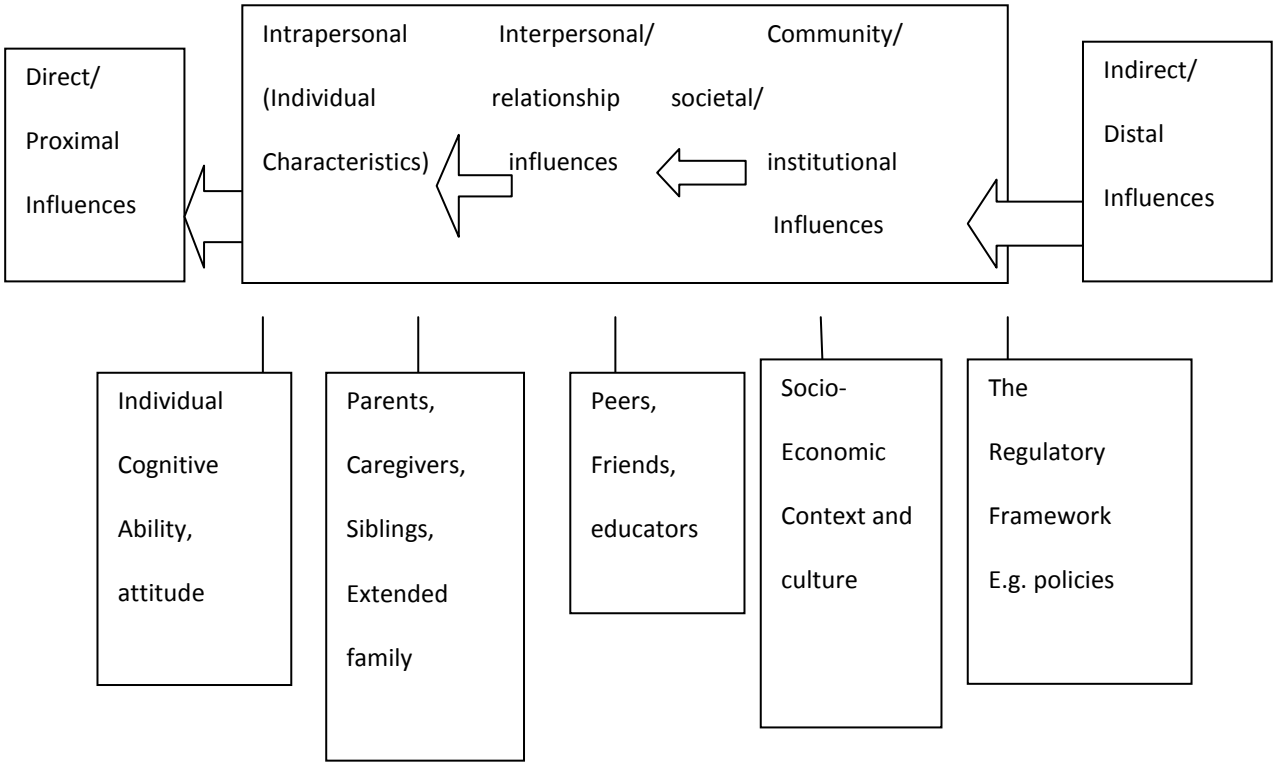
By using invitational leadership theory, this study highlights the need to clearly differentiate and describe the attributes that define successful and effective leadership in terms of facilitating collaborative working with other stakeholders such as educators, parents, learners and community members. Invitational leaders are generally known for their ability to improve interactions among stakeholders and that is one of significance factors for successful implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Therefore, this theory provides strategies for making schools more inviting in order to implement learner pregnancy policy effectively (Purkey & Novak, 1996).

3.3 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

An ecological systems theory underpins the framework was deemed relevant for this study because it acknowledges that human behaviour is not only as a result of single, individually determinable factors which are inherent factors only. It acknowledges that the behaviour of

human beings is also affected by physical and social environments such as schools and public policy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological systems approach to development originated on the hypothesis that there are multiple sources of positive and negative effects in an individual's life emerging from the family, schools, communities and societies in which we live, work and play. These sources range from straight forward influences which are called the proximal influences such as individual beliefs and attitudes to more indirect ones which are called the distal influences such as socio-economic factors and public policy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Even though the effect of distal factors on individual behaviour is sometimes mediated through more proximal factors, they are nonetheless powerful factors of behaviour. Each level of influence, from direct to distal, has the potential to either increase the risk or offer protection. I have applied this ecological systems model to help me to explore and understand how SMT members address learner pregnancy issues as part of the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Also it helped me to understand development challenges which lead to learners opting to get pregnant while still at school.

The direct and indirect influences are shown in the diagram below:



Source: Bronfenbrenner (1979)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory does not only indicate a framework for determining and discovering the characteristics that have an effect on the development of a child. This theory does not only highlight the issue of powers within the child as an individual and the microsystem that have an effect on the development of a child. But this theory also identifies a child's communication network. That is, a child's real environment and the how the individual and exterior powers have an effect on the development of a child. This theory also emphasises the procedures and dynamics of these procedures that might have an effect on the development of a child. Bronfenbrenner's model, especially the proximal or direct procedures within a child's microsystem stimulate or prevent firmness and change during the child's development in his or her lifetime (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the ecological natural setting of each and every child as an individual is taken as a sequence of integrated and nested structures (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The interior structure is the child as an individual. Bronfenbrenner (2005) emphasises that a child as an individual acquires initiative and personal characteristics which are developmental that call and hinder commitment in maintained and complicated ongoing interactions with his or her natural setting. The other nested structures in a child development range from the closest to the distant environment. The individual microsystem of a child is the proximal setting, that is, the plan of activities, roles and social relations that the child has experienced in his or her natural setting involving other people with particular attributes and other beliefs (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

The rest of the other nested structures in a child's development are not on a child as an individual but are also important in the child's development. The action of development that takes place within the microsystem of a child's development is explained and restricted to the beliefs and practices of the mesosystem in the nested structures. This second nested structure which is the mesosystem includes the layout of the distinctive culture of a particular society. The exosystem which is the third nested structure includes the effect of the environment that do not involve the child development directly but affect the child indirectly so. The last nested structure is the macrosystem which is not close to the child as an individual but can affect the child negatively and this refers to cultural teachings and rules of the society

(Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The following section will describe Bronfenbrenner's structure of the environment in details.

3.3.1 The microsystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the first system that a child comes into contact with during his or her development is called the microsystem. There are structures that are part of this system such as family, school, neighbourhood, as well as other systems to which the developing child is closest and has a direct contact with (Beck, 2000; Paquette & Ryan, 2001). In this microsystem level the relationships a child has is influenced in two opposite ways, that is, towards the child and away from the child (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The microsystem takes into consideration the factors such as the level of education of the parents, and this is viewed as having an influence on learner pregnancy in my study. This system also takes into consideration things like the attitude of educators in schools and those of the SMTs and their ability to deal with issues of learner pregnancy prevention and management in schools.

The body of a human being is part of the microsystem in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach. The body impacts on the other parts of the microsystem which means it is the support system of life. To understand and interact with the environment, people used the body and it is flexible to do that function. For the child to develop properly, the body should be in a good health status. To establish how effective the different subsystems in the body operate and the effects of the environment features, it is important for a child to have good health. In spite of countless dangers people interact with in their environment, they have to protect the body from getting hurt and make sure that it is in good working order as the body is their life support system. Keeping the body of a child who is still developing healthy is important to help in the educational outcomes. The threats, disorders or diseases that can have a negative effect on the child's development and the potential to learn must be kept away from the child for the development to takes place (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Anything that can harm a child like malnutrition, broken bone or mental state can cause a child to have barriers to learning (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). So as hormone changes in teenagers can cause disturbances in the child's learning process. Therefore, the body as a life support system

should be kept healthy because it can affect the mind and its potential to process facts collected together (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The biology of the brain in a developing child is part of the microsystem in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach and is very important. Just like the body of a child, the brain of a child also needs to be kept healthy because it has a big effect on the frequency and quality of development of a child in all areas. Almost everything that is happening starts at the brain since all senses and motor operations are based in the brain (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). If it happens that there is an injury to the brain or a disease, these can cause harm to the functioning of the brain and many developmental strain. Trauma is one of the contributory factors of brain injury so as other diseases while other disorders in the brain can be hereditary. Again other factors to brain injury which can cause mental retardation are environmental or caused during prenatal care. Besides the physiological causes of brain related issues, there are psychological and pharmacological factors that can affect a developing child like depression, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy which affect mostly the teenagers and these can have serious effects on learning and behaviour of a child (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The emotions are part of the microsystem in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach. There are many theories which focused on the psychological study of emotions to find out what cases them, why people have them and how they develop. Plutchik (1980) thinks that you can get emotions both in humans and animals and that emotions arise from the expansion processes and have an adjustive task to endurance. Emotions include things like acceptance, anger, anticipation, disgust, joy, fear, sadness, and surprise. Gardner (1999) states that for memory purposes, emotional processing or coding is important. The memories that are easy to recall are allied to strong emotions. In Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, emotions are important to the development of a child and are found within the family. As the child grows the variety of emotions also grow and that involves the effect of the environment which is developing. These include culture and other outside influences that can affect the development of emotions like fear of strangers, shame, and intimate love (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

The cognitive system which includes the emotional and biological system is part of the microsystem in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach. When babies are in the womb of their mothers, they begin to use their sensory capabilities to collect information (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). They do this by recognising, feeling and collecting information. The function of the brain then is to process this information in order to describe the world they are in and their real environment. The ways in which people's cognitive capabilities develop are in stages. Piaget and Erikson (1978) emphasise the nested environments that Bronfenbrenner (2005) mentioned which can be seen as the physical structure related to these stages. The baby who is still an infant is in the sensorimotor stage; its whole world is the microsystem and the most immediate part of the mesosystem. Then when the baby starts to develop the language, she moves to preoperational stage which is mesosystem. Then moves to concrete operational stage when she/he enters the school and these have a more direct influence on the child. Then the baby moves to formal operational stage with higher cognitive capabilities which is the exosystem and even the macrosystem.

Gardner (1999) describes a model that justifies that people manage knowledge and information in different ways in his multiple intelligence theory. The multiple intelligences as cognitive subsystems are part of the microsystem in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach. In his multiple intelligence theory, he explains that if each type of intelligence generates its own understanding of the events that makes up the stimuli we receive, then the total understanding is affected by the sifting results of these intelligences (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

There is no direct method of observing a person's mind, therefore many theorists observe the behaviour of a person and commented on the link between environmental components and the behaviour of a person. When observing a person, they discover how that person react to stimulus and how the person shows that he or she learnt something from that occurrence and its repetition which is termed classical conditioning (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The behaviour is related to the environmental event, and when an event repeat itself, the way a person reacts is recalled and replayed. In the bioecological system, the more the richness of the environment in the microsystem is, the better the chances of the effective development of the child. The family settings like the mother-child, father-child, and father-mother pairs are seen as the basis of the early microsystem and can be seen as being most influential at that stage of

development of the child because both parties develop together (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Much of a child's behaviour is acquired in the microsystem, though as the child ages; the other, more distant systems will have increasing influence. Interior systems like emotional systems and the biology of a child also have consequences on the behaviour of a child. Families can confirm that sickness can affect the behaviour of a child; these include prolonged sickness or a physiological abnormality. Variety of behaviour can be as a result of stress, depression, and grief. As the cognitive system develops, it can have a counteracting influence as opposed to emotional and even biological factors. The more grown up a child the more he or she will be able to exercise social rules and customs to the behavioural influences of emotion and learn to counteract for and even value biological differences as the cognitive system develops (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

3.3.2 The mesosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994) the mesosystem involves connections and processes that are happening between two or more environment holding the child who is developing. The mesosystem concentrate on the combinations between microsystems of the child who is developing. It also involves the interaction between the school and child's home. The mesosystem impart the relations between the structures of the microsystem of a developing child (Beck, 2000).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that the family is the closest, the strongest, long lasting and the most influential part of the mesosystem. Through the input and behaviour response within the family, there are effects of the family that spread to all features of the child's development which includes language, nutrition, security, health, and beliefs. The learners in our schools represent their families and are their product. For educators to understand their learners they need to consider a great variety of family systems. Due to so many things in our changing society, the families do not represent the original families where the mother had to stay at home to look for children and the father working. Currently we have single parent families, generation skipping families and non-traditional families. Divorce is the most influence that has changed family environment in our society. Divorce can have an intense effect on the development of a child because the child has a split family life and had to adapt to this situation on his or her own. Again the divorce not only affects the child it also affect the

community and society as a whole because as divorce spread the social attitudes change and there are changes in the way the family is perceived by the society. As much as divorce affect the community also the schools becomes affected by the changes in a divorced family (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

Another crucial issue for a child positive development are the relations a child develops in school. Children spend most of their times in school, therefore the relations they develop are valuable. Again to some of these children, it is their first time developing relations besides those of their immediate family which is a link assisting the child to develop cognitively and emotionally. Bronfenbrenner highlights the importance of these bi-directional interactions with caring adults in the child's life. The uncertainty and unforeseeable current family life are seen as the most disastrous influence to a child's development (Addison, 1992). This disastrous influence may flow over to affect the school as some children do not have regular correlations with significant adults in order to enhance their development. According to the ecological theory the lesser the relations in a child immediate family, the lesser the chances of the child to have instruments to explore other parts of the mesosystem. If the children do not get the attention in the immediate family, they tend to look in inappropriate place to be noticeable. The schools specify these deficiencies as anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline, and inability to provide self-direction and affect learning and teaching in schools (Addison, 1992). It is the duty of the schools to provide support for solid, long tern relationships to learners who do not get the necessary attention in their families. They should provide support and make conjuceive environment to show care for learners. Schools should work towards the realisation of Bronfenbrenner's ideal of the creation of public policy that relieves the work and family disagreements (Henderson, 1995). This system is very important in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in schools. Caring schools can be able to implement learner pregnancy policy effectively.

Looking at the relations of religions to the child who is developing, it is taken as a source of moral and ethical values. The families vary in the way they believe in their religion. To some families religion is just informal like observing major holidays but to some their religion is to important that it dominate everything about them from the way they dress to the food they eat. Sometimes even the educational policies like learner pregnancy policy clash with their region like in the evolution as opposed to creation debates. In these cases, rather than seeing

any moral and ethical issues, we see influence of the scientific theory against the religious beliefs. Few would dispute that the basic concepts of most established religions are similar in the areas of morals and ethics. Separating the details of each religion, you can see that all of them have basic principles which are nearly the same like love, respect, tolerance, and honour. The above examples are what the schools should administer to learners and a curriculum based on these principles would strengthen the positive values encountered from their religion and their families (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). This level shows whether the learner pregnancy policy is conflicting with learners' religions or not. Also the roles that the SMTs play when implementing the learner pregnancy policy should instil positive values to learners.

3.3.3 The exosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the exosystem involves connections and processes that are happening between two or more environment in which one of them does not hold the child who is developing but the incidents affect the developing child indirectly. The incidents happening in this system seem to influence the child's development but the child is not actively involved in them (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). According to Beck (2000), the structures at the exosystem interact with the structures in the microsystem which tend to affect the child's development. Parents' working environment is one of the examples of the exosystem. Most of the parents in rural areas work far from their homes and some find jobs in urban areas and leave children alone. This means they do not find time to be with their children to guide and support them during their development including assisting them to make informed decisions about their sexual behaviour. This could lead to girls taking the wrong decision and getting pregnant still at school. School should interact with learners' parents but sometimes it is very difficult when they are not available because they are working far away. This system is important for this study because it can provide insights about the frustrations that the SMT members experience while trying to implement the learner pregnancy policy in schools by trying to work hand in hand with the parents of these learners.

The relationships provided by the adults to the child for positive development are found in the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that the bio-ecological systems theory

embraces the notion that such bi-directional relationships can form the basis for a child's cognitive and emotional development. Structures of the exosystem like community, society, and culture, are the ones that give the support for these bio-directional relationships. The structures give the values, material resources and conditions within which these bio-directional relationships function. But as time is goes on, there are now failures in the structures of a mesosystem of a developing child. The parents spend less time with their children because of the work that demands them to be out of or far away from their homes. Because of the collapse happening in the structures of the mesosystem, there is a need for the structures in the exosystem to give the main relationships to the developing child. People who have the same concerns need to be provided to parents by the communities who will operate as resources and provide support emotionally to them. Again to motivate families to interact among themselves, communities should also provide child care, parent employment, and other programmes (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

Furthermore, resources should be provided by the society in which the child lives in order to enable structures of the mesosystem to grow which could assist the child to develop positively (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). For families to operate society should make the surrounding to function by providing societal values, legislation, and financial resources. The examples of provisions to be provided by the society could be duration of an employees' workday and laws governing the rights of families and how to treat the children. All these are created by societal customs and family values (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Financial level of economic safety which is provided by the government as an allowance programme is the biggest contribution to the welfare of the families. An example that made a collapse in the mesosystem relationships at the society level is the introduction of technology. As much as there are measures taken to protect the physical environment from the damage cause by technology but nothing has been done to protect the societal environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Our economy has moved from an industrial model to a technological model, yet the society still relies on the factory work ethic. Parents are expected to work a schedule that move around the factory whistle – even though they may work in a high tech office. It is in the best interest of our entire society to persuade for political and economic policies that support the importance of parent's roles in their children's development. We need to promote societal attitudes that value work done on behalf of children at all levels: parents, teachers, extended family, mentors, work supervisors, legislators (Henderson, 1995).

The culture is somehow affecting children through imparting beliefs and customs that parents got from other structures in the mesosystem and exosystem. This culture dominates beliefs concerning religion, school, family, and community life (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Cultural values are transferred by generation to generation via these structures which in turn are received by the developing child. Cultural beliefs have the ability to affect all Bronfenbrenner's systems because these beliefs are deeply held in the communities and they become the foundations for a child's sense of self (Seifert, 1999). South Africa is a country which has different cultures which represents identity of different people living in it. One society is represented by different people who keep their cultures; ethnic, religious, and national. The way the most influential culture convey conflicting messages to families of other cultures can cause difficulty in identity to other children (Seifert, 1999). The cultural message of dogma support that is available for families in the most influential culture can be one of cultural objections for families of minority cultures. Community, society and culture are relevant in my study as the schools are implementing the learner pregnancy policy under these circumstances mentioned above. If these are ignored they can influence the learners in a negative way and frustrate the SMTs when playing their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

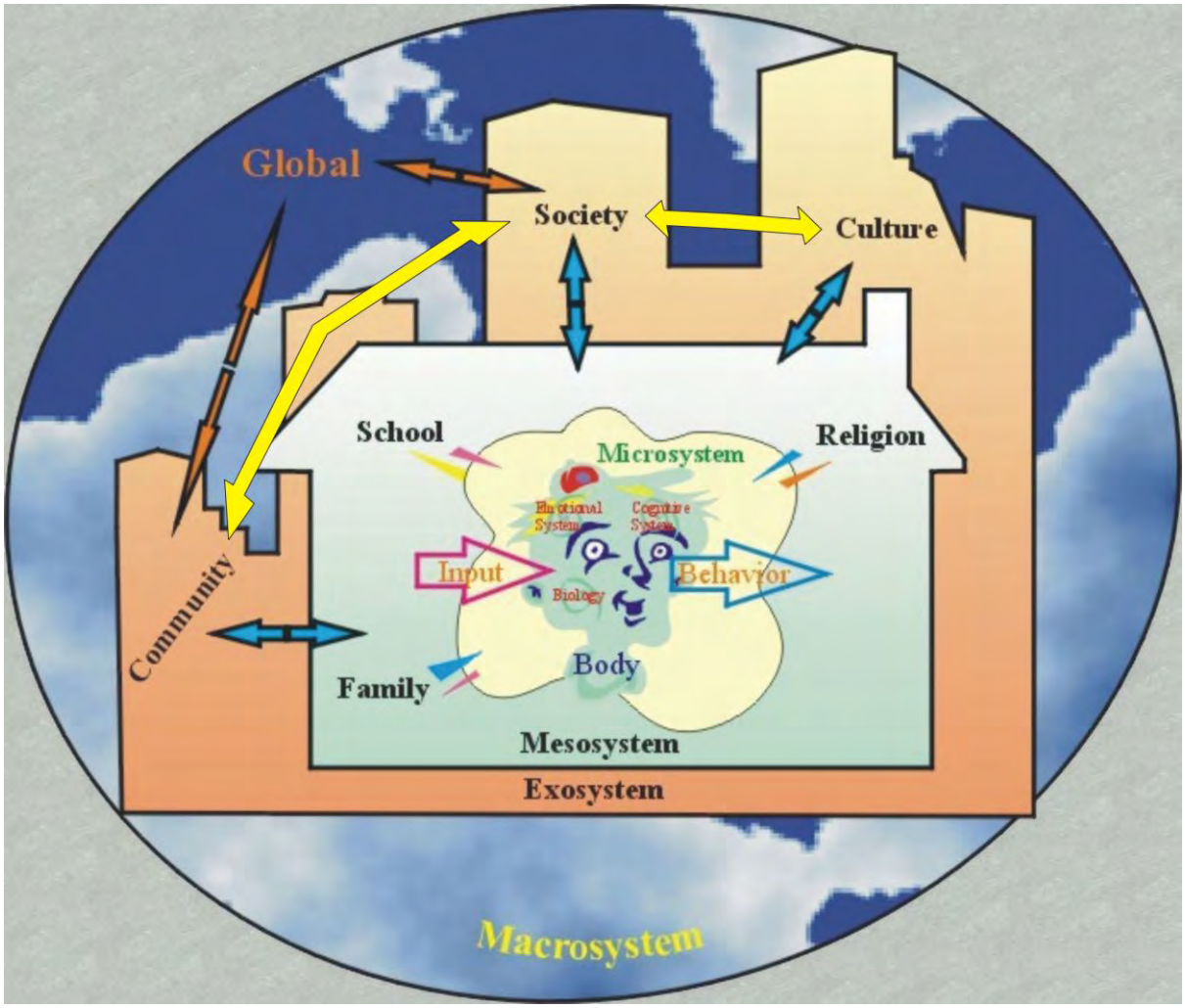
3.3.4 The macrosystem

The macrosystems are the most influential model of micro- meso- and exosystems features of a given culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This system is found in the outside part in the child's development and is made up of cultural values, norms and beliefs systems (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The effects of the principles defined by macrosystems have a strong effect on the interactions of all other structures. So, if the culture of the community believes that it is merely the responsibility of the parents for bringing up their children then that culture will not help the parents with resources to raise their children which could in turn have influence in the structures in which those parents operate. This also affects the context of the child microsystem because of the parents' incapacity to carry out this task alone (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

International influences on developing children are not just restricted to ecological and health issues, but economic influences are much more responsive to international incidences than they were in the current past. There are changes in employment opportunities which came as a result of offshore competition which can have a direct influence on a child's family when the money earned is reduced (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Communities can experience enormous economic tensions when a local business closes, or moves to another country where they can benefit themselves financially. These incidents can have a negative impact for school funding and also affect the developing child's family (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The economic influences results in causing more poverty especially in rural communities because many people lose their jobs and become unemployed. Some people are even forced to leave their homes and look for jobs in the cities. Developing children end up growing alone without the adult figure.

3.3.5 The chronosystem

The chronosystem is the system with which emphasis is on the notion of time as it makes a connection to the developing child (Beck, 2000). The chronosystem covers difference and stability not only in the features of the developing child but also in the environment as well (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Paquette and Ryan (2001) explain that components within this system can either be internal or external. This means that it can be those happening within the developing child like the timing of puberty or those happening outside of the developing child like the transition to democracy in South Africa. As children grow they may respond in different ways to environmental changes and may be more able to ascertain more how that change will affect them. Bronfenbrenner's structure of the environment is important in this study as it describes the child's development in details and that should be considered when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools. It helps the SMTs to know their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy and may also help them to overcome the challenges they face when implementing this policy. The diagram below explains Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.



Source: Paquette and Ryan (2001)

3.4 Invitational Leadership Theory

An invitational leadership theory is another theory that frames the analysis of the data produced for this study. Purkey (1992) proclaims that invitational leadership theory is where gathered hypothesis that seek to explain an event and to present a way of purposefully ordering people to realise their relatively limitless capability in all areas of valuable human venture. The purpose of invitational leadership theory is to tackle the whole worldwide of human existence and chance and to make life of people more thrilling, fulfilling and reinforcing practice (Purkey, 1992).

According to Burns (2007), the invitational leadership model is an inclusive outline that includes many essential components needed for the success schools these days.

Contemporary school leaders such as the SMTs in my study, have to go further on doing their everyday duties like budgeting, making schedules, dealing with learner behaviour and furious parents (Burns, 2007). Bolman and Deal (2002) argue that the responsibilities of the SMTs do not lies only in answering every question fully, taking correct decisions, doing budgets, abiding by the rules and making sure that teaching and learning is taking place. But their role is deeper, strong, and long lasting because they are models and agents of important values such as excellence, caring, justice and faith.

Invitational leadership model consists of the values of excellence, caring, justice and faith (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). The leadership model that is caring and ethical in nature is strongly supported in the literature (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Grogan, 2003; Halpin, 2003). This is relevant for the study because it focuses on issues of learner pregnancy policy which needs to be taken care of and not implemented haphazardly. The issue of learner pregnancy indeed needs a caring leader and is ethical in nature. Grogan (2003) describes this invitational leadership as leadership which is premised on caring about people you serve. Therefore, invitational leadership demonstrates a type of model where caring is a fundamental element of its primary principle and a basic belief system (Burns, 2007). Halpin (2003) emphasises that social capital in the leadership model is referred to as the capability of the leaders to work together with people for a common motive. Invitational leadership shows elements of caring for others and supporting the attempts made by other people. Therefore, for the SMT members to be able to implement the learner pregnancy policy in their schools, the element of caring is vital and should be able to invite others when playing their roles in this implementation.

Purkey and Siegel (2003), in their invitational leadership theory and model development, strived to combine leadership qualities, values and principles in order to invite success from all stakeholders who showed interest. Purkey and Siegel (2003), in their book titled *Becoming an Invitational Leader,* described the invitational leadership model as a model which moved from stressing that leaders should control and dominate people to having leaders that concentrate on connectedness, cooperation and communication. These are the roles that apply to SMTs when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in order to achieve success. The invitational leadership model is described as a model which invites all leaders working together with their stakeholders to prosper in everything they do (Purkey, 1992; Purkey &

Novak, 1996; Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005). According to Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001), invitations are displayed when leaders communicate messages to their subordinates to inform them that they capable, responsible and valuable. Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) further say that these messages by leaders are communicated through involving several people and also through organisational policies, programmes, practices and physical environment.

Invitational leadership theory has a greatly distinctive and ethical element included within the establishment of the model (Burns, 2007). Stillion and Siegel (2005) proclaimed that invitational leaders operate to institute an environment where subordinates are able to reach their goals and capacity while engaging in the shared vision and mission of the entire group. I concur with them because members of the SMT in schools need to share vision and mission of the school with all stakeholders in order for everyone to share ownership and be able to achieve their goal. This will help them to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively and to avoid many challenges of unsupportive stakeholders. Invitational leadership purposefully makes positive physical places to work and sets policies that show the positive attitude of the leader and show trust and respect among subordinates (Stillion & Siegel, 2005).

3.4.1 Four principles of invitational leadership theory

Invitational leadership theory is made upon of four basic assumptions or hypotheses that illustrate invitational leaders (Burns, 2007). These assumptions or hypotheses are optimism, respect, trust and intentionality. Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) explain these assumptions as follows; optimism refers to faith that people have devoted to the capacity for growth and development. Respect refers to the identification of an individual worthiness in each person. Trust refers to dealing with self-assurances in the potentials, honesty and responsibilities of everyone. Intentionality can be described as resolution to deliberately act in a way that will assist you in reaching and carrying out the goals set (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). Stillion and Siegel (2005) define intention as knowing our set goals as well as knowing how we intend to reach those goals as it makes it clear and gives a route to do the work.

The four assumptions are taken as the key values to invitational leadership theory where optimism is taken as a basic component of invitational leadership. Gardner (1990) states that a key role of an invitational leader is to retain hope in people. Stillion and Siegel (2005) describe optimism of a leader as someone who takes problems as opportunities to show capabilities and perceive what seems to be impossible as merely being difficult. Considering learner pregnancy policy implementation as a challenge, the characteristics of optimism could prove to be a key component to success for schools. Stillion and Siegel (2005) insist that optimistic leaders accept both the challenge and the opportunity, anticipating the positive results. The SMT members and other stakeholders need to experience positive outcomes that the value of optimism may bring.

The second fundamental component of invitational leadership is respect. The value of respect is one of the most inherent needs of all human nature (Purkey, 1992). Purkey (1992) states that people have the abilities and are extremely useful and responsible and should be duly treated. Respect in other people indicates a fundamental belief in the value of the workers, the learners, the parents and the leaders' worth. Demonstrating respect to companion school community members lead to an inviting, comprehensive workplace where a variety of people are the standard and every person can prosper (Stillion & Siegel, 2005). Respect is an important factor for the SMTs in the current study as they need to show other stakeholders that they value their potential when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. If they do not respect each other, they may never achieve good results when implementing this policy.

The third fundamental component of invitational leadership is trust. The value of trust is closely linked to respect. Purkey and Siegel (2003) describe trust as having self assurance in the potential, honesty and responsibility of people. Trust is a critical component of invitational leadership that contributes to the success of a school as an organisation. According to Lencioni (2002), trust falls into the heart of a cohesive team which is focusing on working together as opposed to insufficient trust which is an obstacle to the development of that team. With lack of trust, teamwork is not worth considering at all (Burns, 2007). Like in respect, SMTs cannot work with other stakeholders in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy without having to trust them. Therefore, building trust is a critical element for any successful SMTs to possess.

The last fundamental component of invitational leadership is intentionality. According to Stillion and Siegel (2005), in order for us to be successful in what we do, we need to know what our goals are and be clear about how are we going to go about achieving them. For schools to be successful, they need to develop and keep precise and clear intentions to enable growth in the organisations, in my case the schools (Burns, 2007). Purkey (1992) proclaims that intentionality can be of a huge value for educators and other stakeholders, for intentionality is a continuous reminder of what is truly significant in human service. Invitational leaders are deliberately intentional in their work and their efforts of working with all stakeholders. Therefore, the SMTs' role is to make sure that all stakeholders are given clarity and direction when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in their schools.

3.4.2 Five areas of invitational leadership framework

Within invitational leadership theory, Purkey and Siegel (2003) suggest a framework with five areas through which school leaders can become invitational leaders. These scholars argue that the focus on five areas can assist in contributing to the success of the school. These five areas constituting this framework are places, policies, programmes, processes and people. Purkey and Siegel (2003) believe that these areas provide schools with the formation of a positive school climate and eventually a healthy and successful school. The character of a school is perceptible to viewers (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). This is more noticeable if the environment is unproductive, meaningless and lifeless or if the environment is warm, thrilling and loaded with characters of everyone who occupy the school (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). Purkey (2002) attests that places are the most easily seen components in any environment, and therefore, they make it easy to change them. Places also present the chance for instant development. Places are visible; they are crucial in advancing success positively as well as more willingly run aspect of a school image. Therefore, the SMT members need to change the image of the school in order to promote a positive climate and a healthy and successful school. Such healthy and successful school can also be seen in the successful implementation of learner pregnancy policy in a place which is characterised by warmth and excitement.

The second area of framework is policies. The area of policies is another component of success or failure in invitational leadership. Invitational leaders must ascertain whether their school policies are there to limit, enclose and restrain all originality in people or whether they

make positive and creative opportunities for the school (Fowler, 2004). Successful school policies and those that hold a positive school culture are created to promote and attempt to find win-win outcomes. Covey (1989) states that a win-win scenario is a mentality that continuously looks to gain mutual interactions between humans. Therefore, schools that form such policies attempt to create a collaborative rather than a competitive place (Burns, 2007). These policies may include learner pregnancy policy which is intended to assist schools in their efforts to reduce the rate of learner pregnancy and in managing pregnancies when they occur. This policy ensures that the SMT members have the knowledge, skills and values to support pregnant learners (DoE, 2007). Furthermore, this policy is one of the learner pregnancy intervention programmes in order to ensure that learner pregnancy is minimised and to ensure that girls access education and are retained in schools without discrimination.

Another component of the invitational leadership framework for success and failure of the organisation is the initiation of appealing programmes (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). Most of the times school leaders are the ones getting blamed for providing few alternatives and options in programmes offered in schools (Burns, 2007). According to Hansen (1998), in schools, learners sense a feeling of being not invited in the programmes that are available due to the fact that they always feel disregarded. Learners feel that leaders do not care and do not encourage them to take part in school activities. When the learners receive their reports at the end of the quarter or year, there are no remarks about participation in school activities and even absenteeism is seldom noticed by educators. Hansen (1998) further describes these learners' experiences as neglect and feels that their participation in school activities is not necessary and important to the educators. Schools that hold a positive school culture seems to show great attempt in providing learners with a range of innovative and appealing programmes (Witcher, 1993). Highly academic subjects taught by excellent educators assist the school to increase the effectiveness of the educational programmes as well as lift the quality of academic performance (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). Learner pregnancy policy also includes the prevention of learner pregnancy. Therefore, the SMT members need to involve all learners in different activities so that they will all feel invited and show the learners that they care for them. That positive school culture will enhance the opportunities learners to achieve at their best and save them from unwanted pregnancies.

Another component of the invitational leadership framework for success and failure of the organisation are processes (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). In most of the schools, the process of taking part is restricted to giving learners a deal on a take it or leave it basis (Cleveland, 2002). Some leaders wish to be assumed as leaders in charge; therefore what they say goes (Cleveland, 2002). But invitational leaders involve all stakeholders in making decisions processes as much as possible in order to initiate successful school culture (Burns, 2007). According to Hansen (1998), participation, collaboration and cooperation are characteristics of schools that are reported to hold positive school climate where decision making processes are promoted. In these schools, learners are also involved in decision making processes; they are encouraged to openly express their views and the notion of taking responsibility for actions taken is promoted. The practice of consultation before taking any decision promotes a positive climate in a school and learners feel that there is nothing that is done about them without them. Therefore, the role of the SMTs here is to ensure proper consultation before implementing the learner pregnancy policy to learners in the school.

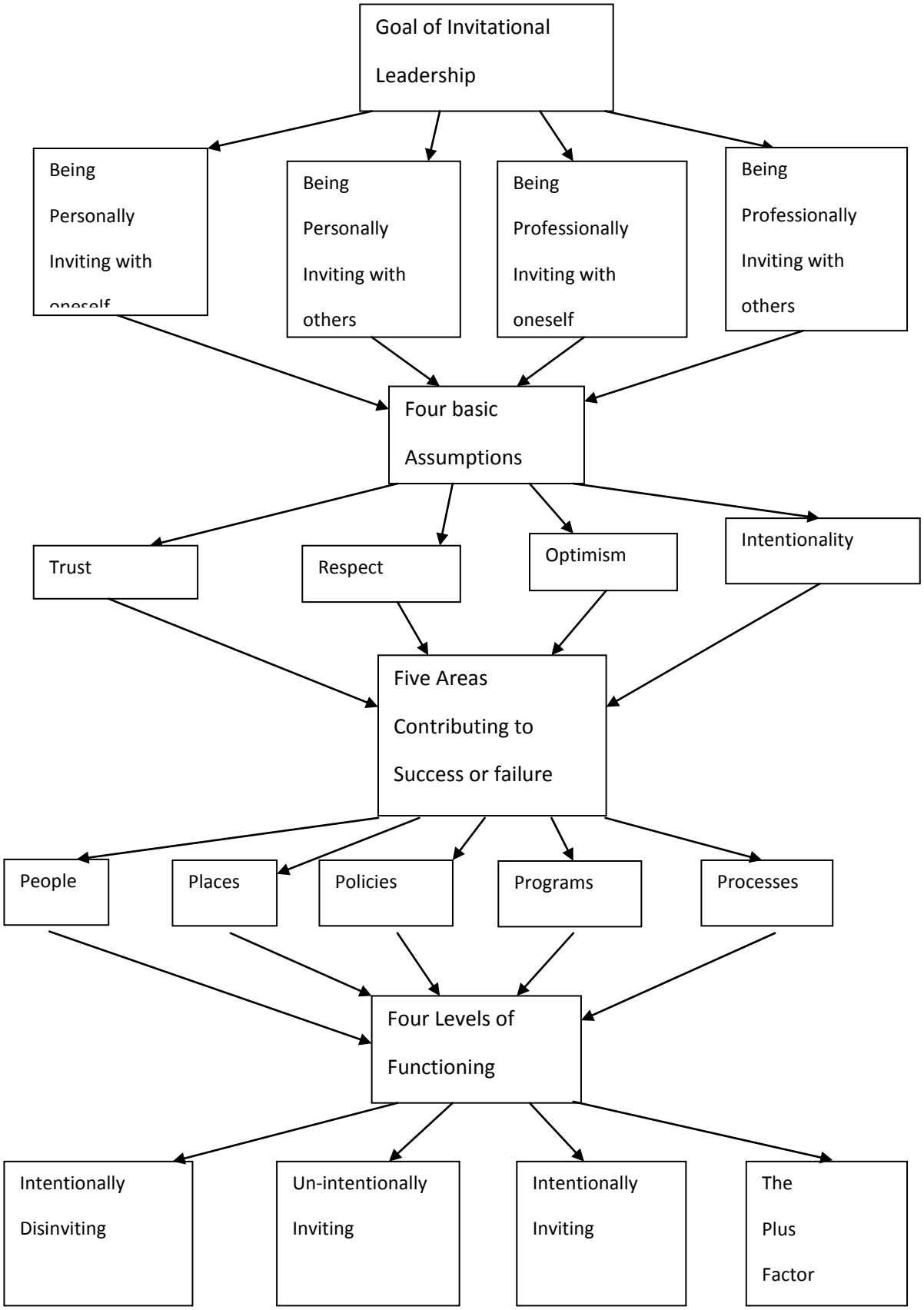
The final component of the invitational leadership framework for success and failure of the organisation is the aspect of people (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). People are the most vital component that consists of the school and its many features for the leaders to assist them in developing a successful school (Burns, 2007). This element of people gives assurance in making a difference in positive school culture creation. Hansen (1998) affirms that you can achieve effective change if you invest in people. When you incorporate people in activities that need collaboration and positive outcomes, you increase chances of assisting the individual persons to be part of an effective team (Burns, 2007). This is an excellent way of initiating a more positive work and learning environment to these people. It is crucial to give people the appreciation that they deserve (Hansen, 1998). Both the educators and the learners like to be recognised and appreciated for the job well done at school in order to be motivated to do more (Halpin, 2003). This fact is a basic requirement of all humanity (Halpin, 2003). The members of the SMT know that they cannot implement learner pregnancy policy alone without involving people. This study explores whether they do play that role of engaging everyone in the implementation and at the same time appreciating the job well done by people.

Creating good relations in an organisation is another aspect of meeting the needs of the people (Lencioni, 2002; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). The creation of positive relations is a fundamental part for schools to be successful. Kelly, Brown, Butler, Gittens, Taylor and Zeller (1998) postulate that all children need to have a school that has leaders who are inviting; a school that is academically challenging and safe for everyone. The general atmosphere of the school and quality of education are intensified as the school promotes coherent relations among its members, that is, learners, parents, educators and leaders.

Purkey and Siegel (2003) describe the five areas of invitational leadership model and refer to it as the "five Ps". These "five Ps" refer to the way the leaders should use to invite all stakeholders professionally in their schools. The "five Ps" are extremely important in invitational leadership for their distinct and united effect (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). Purkey and Siegel (2003) declare the significance of the "five Ps" when indicating that the merging of these "five Ps" provides an almost boundless number of opportunities for invitational leaders to tackle holistic culture of any organisation including schools. Incorporating the "five Ps" in the organisations helps in making the invitation leadership a distinctive and comprehensive leadership model (Stillion & Siegel, 2005). The concept map below has been included to indicate the connection between the four basic assumptions and the "five Ps" of the invitational leadership model. This invitational leadership concept map has been used to analyse the data for my study.

Invitational leadership concept map

INVITATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Source: Burns (2007)

3.5.1 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I outlined the two theoretical frameworks that I used to make sense of the data, namely Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and invitational leadership theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory takes into account the communication network of an individual child and the external influences in a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This theory helped me understand the child's development in the context of implementing the learner pregnancy policy as it can affect the child in a positive and also a negative way. Therefore, this policy should not be taken for granted. Again, Schmidt (1997) states that invitational leadership theory and practice is made up of practical reality and is a helpful version that one can use to show element of caring for oneself and others in ways that are reliable. Caring and authentic behaviours and principles on the part of the SMTs as leaders could prove significant in preventing and managing learner pregnancy.

Since the study explored the role played by SMT members in implementing the learner pregnancy policy, I also needed to understand the challenges they faced when implementing this policy and how they addressed those challenges looking at the ecological systems levels, principles and areas contributing to success and failure in invitational leadership theory. The next chapter provides a detailed account of the design and methodology that I used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the theoretical frameworks that informed the study, namely Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and invitational leadership theory. This chapter presents and provides justification for the use of the research design and methodology that I adopted for the study. In this chapter I begin by describing the paradigm; the research design and methodology that was used in conducting this study. I show how the research design of the study unfolded by describing its location, as well as, the sampling method used. I then present a discussion on access issues and after that I describe the data generation methods that I used to answer the research questions and how the data was analysed. The rationale for using each method is also discussed. Lastly, I discuss the issues of trustworthiness and the issues of ethical considerations as well as limitations of this study.

4.2 Research paradigm

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. This is because interpretivist researchers focus on actions which may be thought of as behaviour with meaning (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This paradigm puts emphasis on individual meaning that people attach to their actions and experiences. Therefore, the work done can only be worthwhile to us as individuals when we are able to establish the reasons why people do the way they do things when they share that knowledge or skills with us (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) also state that to maintain the truthfulness of the situation being explored, attempts are made to get inside the person so that you understand from within that person. That is the hallmark of interpretive paradigm, and in the context of this study, it helped me to reflect on the viewpoints of the participants who are directly involved in implementing this policy rather than the viewpoint of the observer. I have done this by digging deeper into understanding the actions of the SMTs in implementing the

learner pregnancy policy. This helped me to get thick descriptions of the contextualised behaviour and situations of what really is happening in schools to prevent and manage learner pregnancy.

Furthermore, Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) describe interpretive researchers as people who want to understand the emotions, knowledge, social situations as they happen in the real world and therefore need to study them in their real environment. Looking at the research questions you can see that they are interpretive in nature as they allow me to explore the SMTs roles in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy, the challenges they face when implanting this policy and to determine how they overcome those challenges.

According to Neuman (2000), interpretive paradigm is described as the well planned analysis of a collective group of important operations through the use of direct and reviews which are detailed in the real environment so that you reach an understanding and be able to interpret how people generate and retain their collective environment. Wellington (2000) concurs with the above saying that in the interpretive approach the one who is observing makes a difference to the one being observed and that the reality is a human creation. Therefore, I considered the participants' views and their interpretation of their roles in the implementation of the measures for prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in their schools, which helped me to explore their perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insight into the situations that is happening in schools. This means I sought to understand the roles of the SMTs through the eyes of the participants.

4.3 Research design

This section deals with processes and procedures that were used in answering the research questions. Different scholars have different conceptions of what research design is. There are scholars who define research design as the strategy, construction and a plan of formulated investigation so that you will be able to get answers to research questions and be able to eliminate any discrepancies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Again others concur with the above by saying that a research design is a general strategy or a plan of how the researchers intend to conduct the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Creswell, 2009; Leedy & Omrod,

2010; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). What these scholars are saying is that the research design involves the procedure that the researcher is going to follow like how the data is going to be generated and how the data is going to be analysed. Then there is another group of scholars who define research design as focusing on the purpose of the research, paradigm, context, research techniques to generate data and analyse data (Bailey, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Drawing from the above discussion, I can say that a research design 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 study (Runhare, 2010). This means that all the elements of a selected research design should be relevant to the particular topic being investigated. A relevant and clear research design should therefore postulate the sources of data, data gathering instruments, procedures and types of data, data interpretation and analysis that are employed in order to answer the stated research questions (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). In the context of this research, I used the concept of research design as the overview of the processes and procedures that I employed in order to explore the role played by the SMT members in implementing learner pregnancy policy in their schools.

In the next section, I discuss how the major elements of the research design which is a qualitative case study were contextualised in order to respond to the research questions of this study. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding individuals or groups and how they ascribe meaning to a social or human problem, which in this case is learner pregnancy.

4.4 Methodology

The study is based on a qualitative research tradition and is exploratory in nature. Therefore, I decided to engage in qualitative research because it would help me to explore, describe and interpret the personal and social experiences of my participants (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative research offers insight into complex, multiple and ever-evolving truths (Mann, 2003). According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), the primary emphasis of

qualitative research lies on how meaning is constructed and shaped. This has helped me to understand a small number of participants from the perspective of their own view in order to get rich and detailed information about the roles that the SMT members were playing in the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in their schools.

Furthermore, a qualitative research tradition is a way of investigating and interpreting the meaning of individuals or group that belong to a social or human situation (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) further says that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to produce data that is holistic, contextual, descriptive and in-depth. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) concur with the above view and state that descriptive studies want to determine the nature of and how things are.

Moreover, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that qualitative research studies have one or more characteristics. First, qualitative research is description; this is where the study reveals the written accounts of people, objects or events. Second, it is interpretation; the study enables the researcher to explain the meaning of a particular situation, and develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the situation and discover the problem that exists within that situation. Third, it is verification; they allow a researcher to certain the accuracy of assumptions, claims or theories within the real-world contexts. Last, it is evaluative; qualitative research provides a way through which a researcher can assess the effectiveness of particular policies, practices or innovations. This qualitative study was mostly characterised by the descriptions and interpretation of the SMT members' implementation of learner pregnancy policy from their own perspectives.

I adopted a multiple case study approach and tracked three rural combined schools that were located in three poverty-stricken communities in the Uthukela District in KZN. The case in my study is the SMTs implementation of learner pregnancy policy in the three combined schools. The reason for choosing a multiple case study is that such case studies allow for some breadth as well as depth of focus (Rule & John, 2011). The study was a descriptive multiple case study in the sense that it sought to present a complete description of how SMTs in these schools in terms of how they implemented learner pregnancy policy. According to

Creswell (2002), a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system and in the case of this research the SMTs, educators and SGBs constituted a bounded case that was also limited to the rural communities' context.

Stake (2000, p.437) describes a case study as "both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry". Therefore, using a case study in this research enabled me to do an in-depth and intensive enquiry into how and why the SMT members carry their roles in a certain way when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. Yin (2009, p.18) concurs with the above saying a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Moreover, Rule and John (2011, p. 4) define a case study as "a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge". Again they describe descriptive case studies as the studies that "seek to develop a rich, thick description of a phenomenon". I therefore chose descriptive multiple case study because there were three case studies constituting one study, and it helped me to find the nuisance by probing deeper and intensively into exploring these roles that SMTs play in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in their schools.

Moreover, there are strengths and weaknesses of case studies. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), case studies are strong in reality, they grab distinctive characteristics that were not going to be found when using larger scale data for an example surveys, and these distinctive characteristics are the ones who can help us in understanding the phenomenon. But there are also weaknesses in case studies. One of them is that the findings may not be generalisable; they are not easily open to reviewing, but they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective and lastly, they can create problems of observer bias even though attempts may have been made to address these weaknesses through reflexivity process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Despite the weaknesses which I am aware of, I opted to adopt multiple case studies as they follow the interpretive paradigm which means seeing the situation through the eyes of the participants.

4.5 Location of the study

The study was undertaken in Uthukela District in KZN Province. UThukela District encompasses the following towns and surrounding areas; Ladysmith, Estcourt and Bergville. The schools that participated in the study had been involved in HIV/AIDS and Life skills programmes, and were considered to have a high rate of learner pregnancy (EMIS, 2013). The schools that I selected for the study were known as combined schools, starting from Grade R up to Grade 12. The areas around these schools were characterised by poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS pandemic and child-headed families.

4.6 Sampling method

I employed purposive sampling where the key participants who that would provide rich information were selected in order to obtain relevant data for the study. The concern for the purposive sampling is to acquire in-depth information from people who are in the position to give it (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) say that purposive sampling is the process of selecting information rich cases for an in depth study. Implied here is the notion of selecting participants that will best help the researcher in understanding the problem and answering the research questions (Creswell, 2009).

Through purposive sampling, three rural combined schools principals, three HODs for Humanities (HODs responsible for Life Orientation subject), four LO educators from each school and four parent members of the SGB were selected. I was involved in training these schools for the HIV/AIDS and Life skills programmes to help mitigate the negative effects of social ills in the lives of the schools. Access to the district was easy because I was familiar with it and had worked with various stakeholders who served as participants in the study. According to Creswell (2002, p. 482), fieldwork means that "the research gathers data in a setting where the participants are located". Therefore, I was able to reach my participants easily as I am based in this District. Furthermore, Life orientation (LO) is a subject that was introduced by the Department of Education to deal with the issues surrounding teenage sexuality, pregnancy and HIV and AIDS (DoE, 1997). For the above reason, LO educators

were selected to participate in the study. Again parents through School Governing Bodies (SGB) are mandated to participate in the school decision and policy-making process (Republic of South Africa, 1996). For the above reason, parents from the SGB were selected to participate in the study.

Moreover, the strategy that I employed in purposive selection was selecting schools that were in the top 30 schools with high learner pregnancy in the district (EMIS, 2013). Another strategy was selecting schools that were categorised as combined schools and faced similar challenges in terms of socio-economic factors like poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS pandemic and child-headed families. According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), the types of schools with high teenage pregnancy are those schools who are poorly resourced, located in the poor neighbourhoods as well as schools which are age mixing (combined schools). Lastly the characteristic that I employed was selecting schools that had participated training for dealing with issues of HIV/AIDS and Life skills Programmes.

In 2016, Dukuza H. had an enrolment of 1798 learners, 51 educators, 8 SMT members and 13 SGB members and 17 learners were pregnant in 2015. Ngwadi H. had an enrolment of 1664 learners, 53 educators, 7 SMT members, 15 SGB members and 19 learners were pregnant in 2015. Mamponjwane H. had an enrolment of 800 learners, 27 educators, 5 SMT members and 7 SGB members and 18 learners were pregnant in 2015.

4.7 Accessing research sites

Access is a key issue and is an early factor that must be decided in research; therefore, researchers need to ensure that access is not only permitted but also in fact, it is practicable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). After permission had been granted from the provincial Department of Education (Appendix 1) and the ethical permission was granted from the University which is found on (page v) of this thesis, I contacted school principals of all three schools telephonically and made an appointment to meet with them individually. This was done because principals are the gatekeepers in the schools. So, in order to gain access to them, I needed to talk to them to be able to gain access to the target group (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, the aim of the meeting was to introduce the research project and also to give the principals the letters requesting permission to conduct the research in their

schools (Appendix 2). Another aim for meeting the school principals was to explain the research topic and the procedure for data generation. The letter from the Department of Education was shown to the principals. The principals agreed to the research by signing and attaching the school stamp to the letters. Another appointment was made for the researcher to meet with the other categories of participants. I met with the participants although I had to wait for SGB meetings to be conducted in these schools in order to talk to SGBs who are parents. Informed consent letters were completed (Appendix 3). The dates were set for the data generation.

The interviews with all three principals ran smoothly and were conducted during working hours in their respective offices. They all lasted about one hour. Then on the same day to all schools, the interviews were conducted with the HODs, also in the principal's office and again, the interviews lasted for approximately one hour. Another day was set for educators and members of the SGB. Individual interviews were conducted with educators but in Dukuza H., I had to wait for an educator to have free period before the interview. In Ngwadi H, the researcher had to reschedule the appointment because the educator was absent from school. In Mamponjwane H., everything was in order. Coming to the interview for SGBs, it was very difficult to get parent representatives in the scheduled dates in all schools. Dates were rescheduled several times to be able to get them. Finally the researcher managed to get them all. The interviews for educators and SGBs lasted for an hour and they were done in the principals' offices. All participants agreed to be tape-recorded.

4.8 Data generation methods

Data generation is a systematic approach to gathering information from a variety of sources to get a complete and accurate picture of an area of interest (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Therefore, data generation can be regarded as a process by which the researcher gathers the information needed to answer the research problem (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Again Creswell (2009) defines data generation as the theory and methods used by researchers to create data from a sampled data source in qualitative study. Due to the study being a qualitative case study research, I used a combination of individual semi structured interviews, documents reviews and observations to generate data. The reason for the use of different data

generation instruments was to get an in depth information from different participants. Therefore the study involved the multiple forms of data generation which is called crystallisation.

4.8.1 Individual semi-structured interviews

According to Creswell (2009), interviews are adjustable, are "flexible, repetitive and consecutive, not something that you need to prepare upfront and keep it for future use. There are three main advantages of semi structured interviews; firstly, interviews are good in the earlier phase of the study because they give comprehensive details of the phenomenon. Secondly, they allow a full understanding of ideas and beliefs. Lastly, interviews allow an interviewer to be relaxed because it is just like a conversation between the two people in a relaxed atmosphere (Creswell, 2009). As it is the case with all data generation methods, there are limitations again in using individual interviews. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.349) argue, individual interviews are take a lot of time, prone to biasness, may be inconvenient to participants responding, interview fatigue may interrupt the interview process and it is difficult to be anonymous. Another limitation is that the principals, HODs, LO Educators and SGB members may have said things that they thought I wanted to hear. I acknowledge that I may have shown bias in my tone of voice and gestures, but I tried to be as professional as possible in all my interviews.

Individual semi-structured interviews with principals of each combined school were done using the interview schedule for principals (Appendix 4). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the interview is an adjustable instrument for data generation which enables all kinds of communication to be used, that is, verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. Again, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define semi-structured interviews as a prepared guide which allows open-ended conversation and where further probing can be undertaken. Each principal preferred to be interviewed in his own office. In their consent form they allowed me to record the interview process. Therefore, all interviews were captured using a digital voice recorder to ensure accuracy. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), the use of voice recording adds to data truthfulness because each transcription from voice to written script contain a one to one word correspondence between what was said and what was written.

After every interview I replayed the audio-recorded conversations in order remind myself about key items in the discussion, and also to immerse myself in the data.

Again individual semi structured interviews with HODs for Humanities from each school were done (Appendix 5). Semi structured interviews were used because they allowed the participants to express their views in their own terms unlike structured interviews where questions should be asked in a particular order (Cresswell, 1994). Therefore, the interview schedule was used as a set of guiding questions during the interview but there was space to ask further questions for clarity or for follow-up purposes.

Furthermore, the individual interviews with LO educators from each school (Appendix 6) and other individual interviews with parent members of SGB in each school (Appendix 7) were done to generate more data. Including LO Educators and parents from SGB helped me to consolidate information given by principals and HODs on the role that they played in the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy. The SMT members are tasked with the implementation of this policy but they need to work collaborately with all stakeholders especially the LO Educators and members of the SGB. The interviews took place in the principal's offices in each school for both LO Educators and the SGB members. I explained to them the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. For instance, I explained to them that their participation was voluntary and they gave consent by signing informed consent forms. Issues of confidentiality, right to individual privacy and anonymity of the participants were fully explained (Runhare, 2010).

4.8.2 Participants observation

Participants' observation was also used for data generation. According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999), observation is the second most form of data generation which takes place while things are actually occurring and at the right time of the action. The aim of doing observation was to get an opportunity for live data from the three schools (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) to emerge. Observations were aimed at getting rich in-depth data which would help me in answering my research questions and assist me in moving beyond the subjective

perceptions of my participants. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.397) state, “the qualitative researcher aims to catch the dynamic nature of events, to see intentionality, to seek trends and patterns overtime”. In addition, Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999, p.134) argue that “interacting with people in a naturalistic way makes it possible to understand their world from the inside out”. They further argue that observation is not just an act of observing without active response, it requires a researcher to look for answers to the research questions of the study. For instance, the things that I was looking for when observing the participants at their work place, I was interested in obtaining some clues that would assist me make sense of what was emerging from interviews and also that was helping in providing answers to the research questions.

Although observations in my participating schools were informal, I had to keep records in the form of field notes. In my field notes I included contextual information like event, date and time. I recorded my observations in my field notes as soon as possible after each observation, to avoid forgetting details. Foster (1996) defines field notes as something that researcher’s viewing of behaviour, physical and social context of people and also through conversations, discussions and interviews have been recorded to provide detailed information of the events that happened. This helps the researcher to have a record of the investigation of the understandings and interpretations of those observed.

There are many advantages of field notes as a method of recording observations which I agree with. Some of the advantages, according to Foster (1996), include flexibility. This means that researchers are not restricted to focus on something arranged prior. In addition, field notes provide a much fuller, more detailed record of the events. Another advantage is that making field notes does not cause any delays and make it quick to react (Foster, 1996). Some of the events that I observed included seeing district officials addressing pregnant learners in a class in Dukuza H.. I also observed educators giving learners who came from giving birth extra classes after school in order to catch up with the work done while they were absent.

4.8.3 Documents Review

Another data generation method that was used in this study was documents review. During the process of research I collected public documents from the three researched schools in order to review them. These documents were minutes of meetings such as staff, parents and departmental meetings, matric results analysis books and log books where they log all activities done in the school on daily basis. According to Creswell (2009), documents can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher, that is, it is an unobstructive source of information. Again, documents represent data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention to compiling them (Creswell, 2009). Therefore documents were relevant to me as they complemented what was verbally captured during the interviews. But there are limitations also to document review like the document may not be authentic and accurate and there may be protected information that that may be unavailable to be viewed by the public (Cresswell, 2009). Nevertheless, the meaning that participants attached to what I had seen the documents was deemed to be important given that the study was rooted in the interpretive paradigm.

4.9 Data recording procedure

The proposal should identify what data the researcher will record and the procedures for recording data (Creswell, 2009). In this study, data recording was planned before entering the field as this was a qualitative research. All participants in this study signed the consent form which allowed the researcher to use voice recorder during the interviews. Therefore, accuracy in data capturing for individual interviews was ensured through the use of a digital voice recorder which has a capacity to capture voices up to a radius of four metres. At the beginning of each and every interview, I reminded the participants that the whole interview would be recorded, and would then be transferred to the computer to prevent any loss of raw data. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), the use of a voice recorder added to data truthfulness because each transcription from voice to written script contained a one-to-one word correspondence between what was said and what was written. After each and every interview, the recorded script would be replayed for the participants to cross check their views. Thereafter, I transcribed the raw data from the voice script to written script.

Furthermore the researcher took notes during the interviews in the event that recording equipment fails (Creswell, 2009).

4.10 Data analysis

Data analysis was done qualitatively. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data. The thematic analysis was used whereby data was analysed inductively which would allow the data to speak through themes that emerged from the individual interviews, document review and observation. According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis provide a flexible and useful research tool which can potentially provide a rich detailed, yet a complex amount of data. During this process inductive method of data analysis was used in which written texts, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs and spoken words or narratives were examined and broken down into meaningful units or data bits (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) mention four decisions to be made prior to data analysis. The first decision to be made is which one to be used between rich descriptions of the data set or to use a detailed record of one particular feature of the data. In this study I used rich descriptions of the data set. According to Braun and Clark (2006), there are two reasons for using rich description of the entire data set; firstly, it is not to exclude the other set of data but to include every theme that emerged from the data to give sense and depth of the significant themes. Secondly, using rich descriptions helped me to dig deeper into the phenomenon that participants were not talking about. Learner pregnancy as a topic has been widely researched but the views of the SMTs regarding their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy have not been heard in other studies.

The second decision to be made when using the thematic analysis is whether to determine the themes discovered in the study using inductive or theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). In this study, inductive analysis was used which means that I as a researcher used the themes identified and associated with the data itself in order to give thick description of the whole data set which is the reason why data-driven methods of theme recognition were used. In inductive analysis, data analysis is not driven by the researcher's own interest,

questions, theoretical framework and assumptions but it is driven by the data itself (Potjo, 2012). However, Rabiee (2004) and Braun and Clark (2006) emphasise that researchers cannot run away from their theoretical framework and data analysis cannot be made separately.

The third decision to be made prior to data analysis involves the level at which themes will be recognised in terms of whether they are "semantic or latent themes" (Braun & Clark, 2006). In the context of this study, I used semantic themes, which indicates that, as the researcher, I had to focus on the external interpretations of the data itself (Potjo, 2012). When using this approach, the researcher does move further on the external interpretation of the data to consider the underlying hypothesis informing the external interpretations expressed. However, Rabiee (2004) states that data analysis occurs continuously from the unanalysed data to the descriptive expressions and finally to the explanation for understanding. Braun and Clarke (2006) concur with this view saying that there is a need for the researcher to move further on the basic description of the themes, to give a brief statement of the main points of the data and interpret it in relation to the existing literature.

The last decision to be made prior to data analysis is regarding epistemology in terms of whether to use "realist or constructionist thematic analysis" (Braun & Clark, 2006). In this study, I used constructionist thematic analysis. This means that interpretations and experiences are jointly constructed through shared assumptions about reality and reconstructed rather than being regarded as associated within individuals (Potjo, 2012). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) indicate that the process of data analysis follows three stages, namely, data preparation, exploration and specification.

4.10.1 Data preparation

Data preparation involves creating a database where transcribed data are stored in their original form (Seamark & Lings, 2004; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This is done in order for the researcher to familiarise himself or herself with the data (Rabiee, 2004; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009). In this study I personally transcribed all the data, word for word from oral into written text. Where translation was required, like in the case where a

vernacular language was used during the individual interviews with the SGBs, I sought the services of English Senior Education Specialist, who separately translated each audio script from vernacular to English word for word. I read all the material including field notes from observations in order to engage with the data. I also listened to the audio script and read the written transcriptions over and over again in order to check for accurate correspondence between oral and the written words so that I got to identify and understand some of the hidden meanings in the data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). According to Creswell (2009, p.185), the main aim in this stage is to is to get a "general sense of the data itself and to reflect on its meaning".

4.10.2 Data exploration

The actual analysis of data began at the stage of examining the transcribed data script in order to make sense out of the data in relation to the research objectives and questions (Runhare, 2010). This involved data coding to identify data themes and categories (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Grbich, 2007). At this stage data coding was therefore interrelated aspect of data analysis which the researcher undertook. Coding refers to "the procedure of arranging data into parts of text before interpreting that information (Creswell, 2009). The coding procedure involves taking the transcribed data, arranging sentences and paragraphs into various parts and giving them a phrase or (Creswell, 2009).

After transcribing each set of raw data from the individual semi-structured interviews, I read through each of them several times in preparation for open-coding (Berg, 2001). This was done by analysing the written transcript word for word, line by line phrase by phrase and paragraph by paragraph in order to identify emerging concepts (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Grbich, 2007). Open-coding helped the researcher to critique, infer and understand the data by repeatedly reading and questioning the data. For easier identification of similar words of phrases, I colour coded words and phrases with the same colour in the written texts. I then identified common interpretive codes, which I grouped together to generate emerging themes for the study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

4.10.3 Data specification

The final process of data-coding involved further separating data into sub-categories, which had more detailed synthesis concepts on unanalysed data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Grbich, 2007). Then the initial codes were classified and categorised together to form the themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). During this stage, I used the coding procedure to produce a description of themes and then the codes were analysed and combined to form broad themes (Creswell, 2009). Some codes became the main themes while others were divided further to form sub-themes. When all the themes and sub-themes were determined and arranged, they were given names (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Rabiee (2004) refer to this stage as charting, where I record and move the codes from their original context and rearranges them under thematic content that has been formed in the previous stage which is data exploration. At this stage, I had to reformulate and improve or revise the themes. In short, this means that I had to determine and define the main idea that each theme deals with (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When all the themes have been determined, classified and categorised, the next and final phase of analysis begins (Potjo, 2012). The last phase of data analysis is the interpretation of the data (Rabiee, 2004; Creswell, 2009) and to write the research report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This final phase is about interpreting and explaining of the data and reflecting on the lessons learned (Creswell, 2009). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the main reason of writing the research report is to give an account as in telling a story in a clear and logical way, which will convince the reader of the value and justifiable findings. This can be done by using the actual themes from the data, avoiding repetition and ensuring that there is a coherence of ideas. Braun and Clarke (2006) further maintain that the research report should not just be a description of the data, it should form an argument and it should be explained within the theoretical framework.

4.11 Issues of trustworthiness

In quantitative studies, research rigour is measured by validity and reliability while qualitative researchers use data trustworthiness to measure the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of their gathered data and research findings (Moss, 2004;

Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). To achieve data trustworthiness in this study, I employed several measures that included crystallisation of research instruments and participants, audit trail, member checking, critical reflectivity, thick descriptions of data in the form of *verbatim* transcriptions and selection of relevant and various data sources (Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). This ensured the "accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of the research" (Leedy & Omrod, 2005, p. 97). Each of the measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings is discussed below.

4.11.1 Credibility

According to Mutch (2005), credibility ensures that what participants have said is true and interpreted correctly so that the study will be viewed as credible. To achieve credibility, I employed multiple data gathering methods or techniques and a variety of data sources. This assisted in crystallisation, and cross-checking the accuracy and consistency of the information gathered. The corroboration of the different research methods and data sources in the form of semi-structured individual interviews, participants' observation and document analysis by different categories of participants helped me to verify the perspectives of participants, as well as to obtain thick descriptions and data saturation (Runhare, 2010). Besides these techniques, I also employed member checking to allow participants to have access to the gathered data before they are documented into a research report (Moore, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). According to Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006), this process allows participants to check information discovered from the data analysis so that the participant can affirm or dispute the accuracy of the work.

As part of member-checking measure, I allowed the participants to listen to the recorded text after every interview so that they could make comments, clarifications, corrections and additions on the views participants had expressed. Furthermore, transcription from verbal to written scripts was done word for word and where participants were quoted in the final report, *verbatim* quote was done. Follow-up or repeated interviews were also used to explore emerging or unexpected issues or themes, as well as to verify and elaborate on information the researcher had written (Runhare, 2010).

4.11.2 Transferability

The second criterion that I used is transferability. In qualitative research transferability refers to the extent to which research findings of a particular study can be applicable to a similar sample of participants and research context and settings (Richter &Mlambo, 2005). Since this research was a case study of three combined schools, I cannot generalise the findings to all the schools in the province or even in the district. However, the results could be transferable to schools and participants that match the description of the three study sites and selected participants. To enhance transferability, I ensured that I made thick description of the process that I followed in the process of data generation. Such processes included the selection of the schools and their socio-cultural contexts. Such descriptions would ensure that the context and the schools can be compared to other similar contexts where a similar study could be conducted.

4.11.3 Dependability

Dependability is replication of research in which the same findings can be repeated if the same research instruments and data gathering procedures were conducted on a similar research sample and under similar conditions (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). According to Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006), audit trail or data inquiry audit helps to achieve dependability in qualitative studies. Therefore, I made careful selection, description and application of research methods and data gathering procedures to suit this study's research questions, objectives and the unique circumstances of data sources. The careful selection of relevant research instruments were instrumental in guarding against my personal biases and emotions that could infringe on the accurate presentation of data from the perspectives of the participants.

4.11.4 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability is about research unbiasness which is verifiable, whereby generated data and findings should not represent that of the researcher but that of the participants' views and perspectives or meanings (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) emphasise that in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of crystallisation and showing no interest or unbias of the researcher. Transcribing exactly the same words from audio-recorded to written scripts of all interview sessions was one way in which the researcher made sure that the views of the participants were truly expressed.

4.12 Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to principled sensitivity to the rights of others and that while truth is good; respect for human dignity is better (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, various institutions of higher learning have to ensure that the manner in which their affiliates conduct research complies with their codes of ethics. Similarly, the University of KwaZulu-Natal specifies that all researchers linked to it have to apply for ethical clearance before they can conduct research. For ethical purposes, I applied for ethical clearance from the ethics committee in UKZN (page v). Then I applied for permission to conduct the study in the selected schools from the KZN Department of Education (Appendix 1). I then moved on to negotiate access to conduct research in the selected schools with the principals (Appendix 2). Thereafter, the informed consent letter was given to the research participants (Appendix 3). In the letter the purpose of the study was explained and that the participants' identities would be protected by using *pseudonyms* and that confidentiality would be guaranteed. Also included in the letter was the fact that the findings would be reported in a complete and honest manner. Included in the letter was the consent form where the participants had to sign the willingness to participate. It was indicated that the participant has a right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process without them suffering any consequences for doing so.

4.13 Limitations of the study

At present, I am an office-based educator at this District that I have selected. There were limitations in this regard concerning the issue of power. Participants may tell me what they believe I want to hear and they might perceive me as having more knowledge being a District official. To minimise such threats to trustworthiness, I tried to explain how important and knowledgeable they were in the context of sharing their experiences and understandings of the manner in which they implemented learner pregnancy policy. In short, I had to ensure that they viewed themselves in a positive light as possessors of knowledge (Bhengu, 2005) rather than passive participants. Again I chose to use rural combined schools; Wolpe, Quinlin and Martinez (1997) argue that schools in South Africa are categorised into co-educational, single sex, specialist, former white and black, farm, rural or former home land and independent schools. Using rural combined schools only is not a representation of all schools in South Africa. Therefore, I could not generalise findings from this study to all different schools. The reason is that communities may respond differently to the same social phenomenon (Runhare, 2010). Although it is hoped that transferability of the findings to schools which are of similar socio-cultural context could be realistic.

4.14 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was used in carrying out the study. Various aspects of the research process were explained in full detail. The next chapter provides a detailed presentation and discussion of the data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews, documents' reviews and observations.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLES PLAYED BY THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the research design and methodology that was used in generating data for the study. In this chapter data that was generated through semi-structured interviews with the principals; the HODs; LO educators and parents from the SGBs of the three participating schools is presented. In addition to semi-structured interviews, semi-structured observations and documents reviews were used. The thematic analysis was used whereby data was analysed inductively which allowed the data to speak through themes that emerged from the individual interviews and observations. According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis provides an adaptable and useful research device which can potentially give rich detailed, yet a complex amount of data. During this process inductive method of data analysis was used in which written texts, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs and spoken words or narratives were scrutinised and broken down into relevant components (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Due to the voluminous nature of the data generated from principals, HODs, LO educators and parents in the SGB; I have divided data presentation into three chapters, namely Chapter Five, Six and Seven. Specifically, this chapter presents the perspectives of all categories of participants on the roles played by the SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in their schools. Chapter Six presents the perspectives of the participants on the challenges experienced by SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools while Chapter Seven presents the perspectives of the same participants on the strategies used by the SMTs in overcoming the challenges experienced in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

5.2 Presentation and discussion of data

Eight major themes emerged from the data and these are as follows (1) Participants' awareness of the learner pregnancy policy (2) Mobilisation of counselling services for pregnant learners (3) Mobilising sessions for all learners in the school (4) Mobilising and conscietising staff on learner pregnancy policy (5) Strengthening of school-parent partnership (6) Strengthening and sustaining sessions with the learners (7) Supporting LO educators and (8) Respecting and promoting the learners rights to education. These themes are discussed in-depth in the following sections.

5.2.1 Participants' awareness of the learner pregnancy policy

The data has indicated that all participants in the study were in agreement that the SMT members had consulted with their school communities on learner pregnancy policy. It has also emerged from the data that the policy on learner pregnancy was communicated to everyone in the school. The availability and the intention of this policy were communicated to the parents, the educators and the learners themselves. For instance, the existence of this policy was mentioned in the parents' meetings and the reason for it were provided. Even though sometimes the parents meetings were not meant for the policy but it was mentioned that it would appear in the agenda as the pregnancy issues were problematic in these schools. Parents' meetings were deemed to be the right platform to talk about it. Emphasising the importance of this policy and how the school and the home should collaborate, Mr Dladla the Principal of Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *We as a school communicate with parents, and make them aware of the policy. What this means is that we call the parents meeting to discuss the policy with them. We emphasise that they should work together with the school to emphasise that children should abstain from sexual activities; they should talk to their children about the consequences of unsafe sex and the results they will get when they are pregnant. We emphasise that the parents should inform the school when the child is pregnant and send the child to the clinic as early as possible to avoid complications and so that we will know the date of delivery to prepare the child for the leave of absence during the period of delivery.*

Views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. This principal further emphasised the dangers of teenage pregnancy as well as the rights of the learners to education. That is why this principal explained to the parents that when children fall pregnant, that should not mean the end of the world for them, but that they should return to school to complete schooling. This is what Mr Zulu had to say:

> *We normally have parents' meetings where we discuss these issues. We tell the parents about learner pregnancy policy that we need to work together with them to prevent our learners from getting pregnant. We tell them to emphasise to their children that they must behave themselves and not prematurely involve themselves in sexual relationships while they are still young; they must emphasise the consequences of unsafe sex and also of falling pregnant while still young. We tell them that the policy emphasises that all learners have a right to education pregnant or not. Therefore they must not take their children away from school when pregnant. We emphasise that the policy says that these learners must come back to school after delivery when they feel that they are now fit to do so. No child should be denied the opportunity to complete their studies.*

The views expressed by the Principal of Ngwadi H. above were also shared by Mr Ntuli, Principal of Mamponjwane H. This principal emphasised the process followed in informing various stakeholders in the school. For instance, he highlighted that before informing the entire parents' body they as SMT informed the SGB first and in their discussion emphasised the need to decrease learner pregnancy at school. This is what he had to say in this regard:

> *As an SMT it is our responsibility to communicate the policy to everyone concerned. Therefore we started with SGB and discussed the policy with them before going to the parents. We talked about the prevention of learner pregnancy and the management of learner pregnancy to the parents in their meetings.*

The views expressed by the three principals were corroborated by the SGB member who worked closely with the SMT members. This member of the SGBs from Dukuza H. confirmed what the principals mentioned earlier about communicating the policy to the

parents. He went on to say that, in fact, as SGB members, they received training from the Department of Education regarding the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. This is what he had to say:

> *The policy was communicated in parents meetings. As SGB members, we attended the workshop organised by the department together with the principal. After the meeting we came back and reported to the rest of the SGB, those members who were not at the workshop. We decided to call the parents meeting especially for this policy because we knew learner pregnancy is problematic in our school. We have a high rate of learner pregnancy. So we informed the parents of the learner pregnancy policy* (Mr Cindi, SGB member from Dukuza H.).

The views expressed by this SGB member were shared by those from Ngwadi H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. These SGB members did not only focus on their awareness of this policy but they also emphasised the importance of trying to reduce learner pregnancy. As SGB members, they thought that it is important to remind parents that they should conscietise their children about the consequences of early involvement in sexual activity. Another SGB member from Ngwadi H. had this to say:

> *The policy was communicated during parents meetings. When we have parents meetings, we include pregnancy item on the agenda. This is where we remind the parents of the learner pregnancy policy and that they must help us to reduce pregnancy rate which is high in our school. We remind the parents that they must help the school to prevent pregnancy by supporting learners in focusing in their school work and emphasise that the school maintain that learners should abstain from sex. We discuss with parents what to do when the learner is pregnant until delivery and after delivery* (Mr Zwane from Ngwadi H.).

Besides the parents and SGB members, teachers were also made aware of this policy. This was done in the same manner as the parents; the policy was communicated in the educators' meetings. This was done based on the firm belief that the implementation of the policy would be effective. It was also done to help the educators to be able to deal with pregnancies when

they occurred. School principals and HODs believed that class teachers in particular, needed to know what to do. This was illustrated by the HOD from Dukuza H. when she said that:

> *Teachers are made aware of the policy especially class teachers in our meetings. They are made aware that they have to support those learners, not to say something negative to them in class and do not shout at those learners. Educators are told that they have to inform the SMT when a learner is pregnant especially those that have disclosed* (Miss Buthelezi, HOD from Dukuza H.).

The views expressed by the HOD from Dukuza H. were also shared by other HODs from Ngwadi H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, emphasising the teachers' awareness of this policy, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

> *I organise meetings with educators and discuss the learner pregnancy policy. I do this to ask them to help us as SMTs not to lose these learners. They are reminded to support them and to try by all means that they are given work done while they were absent. They are reminded in those meetings again that no discrimination is allowed at school and that these learners must be treated with dignity like any other learner in the school* (Mr Ndebele from Mamponjwane H.).

From the above extract, it can be seen that the kind of support required from the teachers is different from that of the parents. Teachers are asked to continue providing teaching support even when the pregnant learners are no longer at school. A Life Orientation Educator from Dukuza H. confirmed that one of their tasks was to try and engage in activities and campaigns that were aimed at reducing learner pregnancy at school. This is what she had to say in this regard:

> *The policy was communicated to educators, during educators meetings it appears on the agenda, we then talk about it. Although it is just the SMT who goes on and on talking about it without giving us copies of the policy, same applies tom parents. They will tell us that we need to be involved in activities that will prevent learner pregnancy like learner pregnancy awareness campaigns, emphasise that learners must abstain from sex. We need to inform the school when pregnancy occurs in our classes and support those learners academically before and after pregnancy. Help the*

school to retain those girls by making sure they come back to school after delivery (Miss Cele from Dukuza H.).

The issue of reducing learner pregnancy as part of the responsibilities of the teaching staff and school management was emphasised by LO Educators from all three schools. In fact, they all agreed that the Department of Education provided workshops to the SMTs and that the latter gave them feedback on the content of the workshops. In this regard, one of the LO educators had this to say:

SMT and SGB attended a workshop organised by district officials to talk about this policy to them. They gave us educators the feedback of the workshop for learner pregnancy policy, telling us that the policy have the prevention part and the management part. We then talk about the implementation plan, for example, that we will talk to these learners on weekly basis and divide them in classes and sometimes according to gender to talk about prevention of pregnancy (Miss Ndlangisa, LO Educator from Mamponjwane H.).

While there was broad agreement among all participants that all stakeholders in the schools were made aware of learner pregnancy policy, one of the educators expressed a different view in that some of the stakeholders, in particular, new teachers were not informed of such a policy. This educator was of the view that perhaps, The SMTs just assumed that the new teachers were also aware of the policy. This is what this LO educator had to say in this regard:

The policy wasn't really made known to everyone especially new teachers. It is only the old teachers who know the policy in details. When you come to school for the first time to join the school as an educator, you need to be told about the policy but the SMT just assume that this learner pregnancy policy is known by everybody (Miss Cele, LO Educator from Dukuza H.).

It is disturbing that some of the important stakeholders were not properly informed about such an important policy. This is serious in more ways than one. Educators are the ones that

deal with the learners in the classroom and they need to know how to handle the problem of learner pregnancy. Furthermore, the new educators need to inducted into the school culture and they need to be informed about expectations from them in terms of dealing with and supporting pregnant learners as part of the implementation of this policy.

It was therefore, important that the learners are informed of this policy and its implications for them as learners. The data has shown that the pregnancy policy was also made aware to the learners themselves. All participants agreed that the policy was communicated to the learners in order to implement it effectively. This was done so that the entire school community would work together to prevent and manage learner pregnancy. To confirm that the learners were not left out, the Principal of Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *During the assemble we talk to the learners. We normally remind the learners about the policy like the prevention part, where we emphasise that they should abstain from sex to avoid being pregnant and getting STIs and HIV. We also stress that learners should inform educators when they are pregnant, they should visit the clinic to get their delivery dates so that we will know when it is time to take leave for delivery. We also stress the fact that they should not discriminate against pregnant learners in the school* (Mr Dladla, Principal of Dukuza H.).

The views expressed in the above extract were also shared by the HOD from Ngwadi H. who confirmed that the learners were also made aware of the learner pregnancy policy. This is what she had to say:

> *We also remind the learners of the policy now and again because we know when you want your learners to master something you need to repeat it now and again and it will sink into their minds* (Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H.).

Looking at the above extracts, it shows that indeed, the SMTs did play their role of making sure that the learner pregnancy policy was communicated to the entire school community for effective implementation, except in isolated cases where this did not happen. Awareness of the policy was done in all researched schools even though one school complained about new

educators being neglected. The SMT members have the responsibility to communicate the learner pregnancy policy in such a way that this it is functioning effectively so that everyone will support them in the implementation of this policy because they will all be aware of it (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). Therefore, the SMTs should be able to sell the policy to everyone who will be affected by it, including educators, learners and parents (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). Sharing this policy to all parties showed that the SMTs were invitational leaders. One of the principles of invitational leaders is intention; this showed that clear intentions of what the policy is saying and how it is going to be implemented were shared in the school to create a positive environment (Stillion & Siegel, 2005).

5.2.2 Mobilising counselling services for pregnant learners

The data has revealed that SMT members played an active role in supporting the welfare of pregnant girls in the participating schools. The SMT members demonstrated that they embraced the spirit of the learner pregnancy policy by mobilising counselling services for pregnant learners. The SMTs did this by working together with other stakeholders who provided counselling services such as the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development. It emerged from all the participants that the SMTs referred pregnant learners including those that have delivered their babies to talk to school nurses and social workers as part of individual counselling process. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. when he said:

> *If ever they experience social problems like issues of poverty, coming to school not having any meal, we refer them to social workers to talk to them and help them to access food parcels.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Miss Buthelezi, an HOD from Dukuza H.. She said that pregnant learners were referred for additional help from other stakeholders outside the school. This is what she said:

> *We also work with other stakeholders like school nurses and social workers who usually come to school and address learners on pregnancy. They help us in dealing with individual cases like a learner who cannot deal with pregnancy. They counsel*

that learner and help her during her pregnancy stage and even after delivery sometimes (Miss Buthelezi, an HOD from Dukuza H.).

The views expressed above were also shared by Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. about mobilising counselling services for pregnant learners. She had this to say:

The SMTs are also supportive to pregnant learners. They help them to deal with pregnancy and refer them to professional help when there is a need to do so.

These views were also confirmed by Mr Cindi, a parent member of SGB from Dukuza H.. This parent said that the SMT members played a role of helping pregnant learners who were experiencing problems during pregnancy. They referred them to the nurses and social workers to give them necessary counselling services. This is what he said:

SMTs are able to help learners when experiencing problems during pregnancy. They refer those learners to professional help like those with no support from their homes; they refer them to social workers and those with health problems are referred to nurses in the nearby clinic.

Another participant corroborated the views and experiences expressed above by principals, parents and HODs. This participant argued that the SMT members even involved the officials of the Department of Education by requesting them to come to the schools and assist those learners who sought counselling services so that they could better handle their pregnancies. This was illustrated by the HOD from Dukuza H. by saying that:

We refer learner to the social workers and school nurses if we see that they need additional help other than what the school can offer. Sometimes we call officials from psychological services to come and give counselling to our learners if need be. They help us to liase with local social workers if they see the need to do like doing home visits for these learners (Miss Buthelezi, an HOD from Dukuza H.).

The above narratives were corroborated by the data generated from observations. When I had finished with interviewing the LO educator in Dukuza H., I observed that there was an

official from the district office from psychosocial services who came to counsel the pregnant learners. The learners concerned were called in one of the offices in the administration block. Although I could not establish, nor was I in a position to assess the quality of support that such psychosocial services officials provided, it was evident that indeed, the participating school involved relevant service providers in supporting the pregnant learners. By so doing, the schools showed that they were trying to implement this policy.

The narratives expressed in the above extracts suggest that the SMT members took their role of implementing learner pregnancy policy seriously. By soliciting additional support from the specialists, the SMTs wanted to ensure that pregnant learners managed to cope with their pregnancies. Counselling services was provided to individual learners in order to help them deal with their personal circumstances as pregnant learners. That was consistent with policy provisions. According to the policy on learner pregnancy, the school should provide counselling and guidance services to pregnant learners and their parents for the benefit of the learner and the baby (DoE, 2007). Again, the SMT members need to offer good school environment that supports pregnant learners to such an extent that those learners got a sense of belonging (Khalil, 2008). The belief was that by undertaking all such supportive activities, the affected learners would be able to complete their studies. This showed that the SMTs were caring and ethical in nature and that showed that they were invitational (Burns, 2007). The SMTs valued these learners and respected them regardless of pregnancy and treated them fairly well like all other learners. They considered the welfare of pregnant learners to show that they support them and were behind them in helping them to complete their studies.

5.2.3 Mobilising sessions for all the learners in the schools

The data indicates that all participants in the study were in agreement that one of the roles played by the SMT members was to organise learner pregnancy awareness campaigns. Such campaigns were aimed at alerting the learners to various risks associated with sexual behaviours and involvement in sexual activities at an early age. These campaigns were meant for all the learners in the school irrespective of whether they were pregnant or not, or whether they were girls or boys. Also, in these campaigns, the schools involved other stakeholders especially from sister departments to come and address the learners on the dangers of unsafe

sex, and the consequences of learner pregnancy. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. when he said:

> *We organise learner pregnancy awareness campaigns where we invite school nurses from the Department of Health, social workers from the Department of Social Development, the police officers from the South African Police Service and even parents members from the SGB to come and talk to the learners about learner pregnancy; how they must behave themselves emphasising abstinence; the consequences of unsafe sex and the dangers of falling pregnant while still young. All these stakeholders assist in the prevention of learner pregnancy.*

Views expressed by Mr Zulu were also shared by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H.. This is what he had to say:

> *The SMTs invite school nurses, social workers to address the learners in learner pregnancy awareness campaigns. All these stakeholders help the SMTs to play a role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. They address the learners about pregnancy and the consequences of unsafe sex. They always talk about prevention of pregnancy to learners. They guide the learners about how they should deal with pregnancy when it occurs.*

It was also confirmed by the HOD from Dukuza H. that the campaigns were done in the school to make the learners aware of this social ill together with other stakeholders. This is what she said:

> *We organise learner pregnancy awareness campaigns where we invite school nurses, social workers and SAPS to come and address learners. These stakeholders work with the school to provide their services, so they do not mind to come to school and educate learners and give them relevant information which will help them to deal with health and social issues. They talk to learners about puberty stage, adolescence stage and other related issues. They talk about unsafe sex and how to prevent pregnancy. They talk about peer pressure and how to avoid it. They give them details of how they can come and access their services like when need counselling* (Miss Buthelezi, HOD from Dukuza H.).

Views expressed by Miss Buthelezi were also shared by Miss Hlophe the HOD from Ngwadi H. Miss Hlophe emphasised that the learner pregnancy awareness campaigns were aimed at trying to prevent high rate of pregnancy in her school. She put her ideas and experiences like this:

> *We organise the awareness campaigns, also liase with NGOs to do awareness for learners. We also invite school nurses from clinic to come and address the learners on issues of pregnancy. Fortunately there are school nurses that usually come to school to do health services to learners therefore we have friendship with them; they do come and address learners on sexuality education and healthy lifestyle. The local social workers also do not have a problem they come on the day to address learners on social issues. They talk about grants available for learners to address these issues of learners becoming pregnant due to poverty saying they can come for food parcels and they can arrange social grants for them* (Miss Hlophe the HOD from Ngwadi H.).

Moreover, it also emerged from the educators that the SMT members organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns as part of their role to implement learner pregnancy policy and thus help prevent learner pregnancy. The LO Educator from Dukuza H. had this to say with regards to the issues highlighted above:

> *The SMT in our school organise learner pregnancy awareness campaigns where they involve other stakeholders like sister departments, that is, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development. School nurses and social workers attend those campaigns and talk to the learners about pregnancy, abstinence, safe sex, consequences of pregnancy and how it affect your life as a learner* (Miss Cele, LO educator from Dukuza H.).

The LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. also confirmed organising the campaigns by the SMTs to help the learners by also working with peer educators. This is what she said:

> *The SMT organises learner pregnancy awareness campaign where they work with peer educators. They invite social workers and school nurses to come and address learners on pregnancy like abstinence, consequences of pregnancy and also social issues like welfare issues.*

Furthermore, the SGB members expressed similar sentiments about the role of the SMTs whereby they organised learner pregnancy campaign for the entire school. Mr Zwane the SGB member from Ngwadi H. said:

> *The SMT again invite other stakeholders to come to school and address learners on pregnancy. They usually invite the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development even SAPS. These stakeholders talk to learners about behaving themselves and focusing on education. SAPS usually tell learners that it is a criminal offence for an older man to impregnate young learner. The social workers even avail themselves in helping those learners who live alone with social grants and so on.*

The main issues that were elicited from the interviews were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as documents review. Looking at the log books from all schools where all the activities highlighted in the above paragraphs, I found that the visits by various stakeholders to the schools were reflected in the Log Books, and what the purposes of their visits to the school were. It appeared on the log books that indeed there were learner pregnancy awareness campaigns which took place in the schools which involved many stakeholders such as the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development and also the Department of Education. It appeared on the log books that in Dukuza H. the learner pregnancy campaign took place on the 29th of May 2015, while in Ngwadi H, it was on the 12th of June 2015 and in Mamponjwane H., it was on the 7th of 22nd of May 2015.

All the extracts from all the participating schools showed that organising learner pregnancy awareness campaign was an important event to do and could influence the learners in positive ways. The common idea that I identified from these participants was that these campaigns involved as many stakeholders as was possible. The main purpose was to change the learners' attitudes in favour of safe sex behaviours. The main aim of the Department is to ensure that learners are educated on abstinence and that they are aware of the consequences of involving themselves in early sexual activities. Also another aim is to help the learners to take good options that protect their health and supports their access to educational goals (DoE, 2007).The SMTs in these schools were invitational leaders in such that they valued teamwork. They involved all stakeholders in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. They worked cooperatively with all stakeholders to achieve positive results (Burns, 2007).

5.2.4 Mobilising and conscietising staff on learner pregnancy policy

It emerged from the data that another role that the SMT members played in implementing the learner pregnancy policy was that of talking to the educators with the aim of supporting them in dealing with pregnancies when they occurred. All the participants seemed to agree that the SMT members talked to the educators most of the times in order to minimise possible resistance against the policy. They mentioned that the educators were given guidance and direction on how to help prevent learner pregnancy among the learners. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal in Dukuza H. saying:

> *We talk to educators about learner pregnancy during meetings in order to help them deal with this issue. Educators are told to support these learners pregnant or not and treat them equally. No one seems to react negatively to the police because they know that this is the policy which we must all abide and it is coming from the government there is no need to challenge it but we need to implement it as schools.*

The principal of Ngwadi H. expressed a similar view that educators were not left on their own in dealing with pregnancies but they that they received constant support from their respective principals. This is what he said:

> *We also have meetings with educators to tell them that they are not alone in dealing with pregnancies; they must inform the SMTs when pregnancy occurs in their classes in order to get support. We emphasise that the policy says that they must support pregnant learners with their work and that as educators they must not discriminate these learners in their classes* (Mr Zulu, Principal of Ngwadi H.).

Similar views were also expressed by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. that the SMT members talked to their educators especially the class teachers. This is she had to say:

Educators are reminded of the policy especially class teachers. Educators are told that they have to inform the SMT when a learner is pregnant especially those that have disclosed. If a learner do not report her pregnancy and the teacher suspect that she is pregnant, the teacher is not allowed to approach that learner but they had to report that case to the SMT who will then call the learner to find out the truth. They are reminded that they have to support those learners, not to say something negative to them in class and do not shout at those learners.

The above was also confirmed by Mr Ndebele the HOD from Mamponjwane H. that the SMT members talked to the educators to minimise their fears about dealing with pregnant learners. This is what Mr Ndebele had to say:

I organise meetings with educators to discuss the issue of learner pregnancy. I do this to ask them to help us as SMTs not to lose these learners. They are reminded to support learners and to try by all means that they are given work done while they were absent. They are reminded in those meetings that no discrimination is allowed at school and that these learners must be treated with dignity like any other learner in the school. They are also told to inform the SMT when they discovered that a learner in their classes is pregnant so that we call the parent and discuss how to help that learner to focus on school work. I also ask educators to use charts with positive messages that they can get from the Department to encourage learners not to engage themselves in sexual relationships. They are asked also to be as proactive as possible and be creative in preventing learners from falling pregnant.

Similar sentiments were also echoed by the LO Educator from Dukuza H. to confirm what the SMTs have mentioned that they talked to the educators about learner pregnancy in order to guide them and give them direction in dealing with pregnancies in the school and in their classes. She said:

During educators' meetings learner pregnancy appears on the agenda; we then talk about it. The SMTs tell us that we need to inform the school when pregnancy occurs in our classes and support those learners academically before and after pregnancy.

Help the school to retain those girls by making sure they come back to school after delivery etc. They will tell us that we need to be involved in activities that will prevent learner pregnancy like learner pregnancy awareness campaigns to emphasise that learners must abstain from sex (Miss Cele from Dukuza H.).

The issue of talking to the teachers to conscietise them about the need to respect the learners' rights to education and the need to support them was corroborated by the data generated from the review of documents kept in the schools. For instance, when I looked at the minute book for departmental meetings in Dukuza H., I noted in the minutes that the HOD in her meetings also talked about learner pregnancy with educators in order to implement the learner pregnancy policy on the 28th of April 2015. They talked about how the educators should support pregnant learners in their classes.

From the above extracts it can be deduced that the SMTs played a big role in implementing the learner pregnancy policy by involving the educators. They talked to the educators in order to avoid resistance in implementing the policy. SMTs should ensure that resistance is minimised (Brinkerhoff, 2001). But they can achieve that by working together with educators and do not leave them to deal with pregnancy on their own. The critical component in policy implementation is the ownership of the policy (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). The SMTs created and nurtured networks and partnerships for co-operation and co-ordination in order for educators to support them in implementing the policy.

5.2.5 Strengthening school-parent partnership

It was highlighted in the previous discussion that the policy on learner pregnancy was communicated to all stakeholders in these schools. However, it was also revealed that when a child was found to be pregnant, the school called the parents of the learner concerned to discuss the manner in which such a situation would be managed. Such discussions happened despite the fact the policy on learner pregnancy spells out clearly what needs to happen when a learner falls pregnant. Therefore, discussions with parents served as a reminder to them so that they work hand in hand with the school in providing support to the pregnant learners.

Therefore, the schools conducted consultations with the parents in order to strengthen partnership between the school and the parent for the good of the learner. Even though it was revealed that the schools experienced challenges in this regard because some of the parents did not respond when called to school, but to those that care about their children, they worked together with them. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *We get to know more about the family where learners are coming from because we call the parent to discuss the pregnancy of her child. We focus on how are we going to deal with it and how are we going to support that child together with her parents.*

Similar views were also expressed by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. about talking to the parents of pregnant learners in order to work together to help the learner during pregnancy. This is what he had to say:

> *We push harder and don't surrender because we know we have to play our role as SMT when the learner is pregnant. We as SMTs always talk to learners and their parents. When we discovered that the learner is pregnant, we send that learner to the clinic so that we know the date of deliver and ask the learner to come to school with her parent. The reason is that we want to help the learner not to go through the pregnancy alone. We need to support the learner as a school but also we need the support of the parent.*

It is not easy to handle the issue of a girl child who has fallen pregnant because this is a sensitive subject that can also raise a lot of emotions for both the child and the parents concerned. For this reason, the school called the individual parents and talk about how to deal with this issue in a sensitive way. Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. confirmed this school-parent partnership by saying:

> *We meet parents and talk about how to handle pregnancy working with the school. We ask parents to talk to their children and help them to handle their pregnancies in a positive way. We ask them to support their children and work hand in hand with the school. We do this to help the learners to be able to continue with their studies and not drop out due to pregnancy.*

The views expressed by the HOD from Dukuza H. above were also shared by Mr Ndebele of Mamponjwane H. He indicated that the school called the parents of pregnant learners so that they could work hand in hand with them. This is what he had to say:

> *But what educators normally do is to inform the SMT that a child in my class is pregnant and we take it from there. We involve their parents and they are then reminded that they need to support these learners. Parents are told work with school for the learner to be able to deal with both school work and pregnancy.*

These views were also expressed by the SGB members who worked closely with the SMTs; they confirmed that the parents of the concerned learners were called to school to discuss with them the way forward when a learner had fallen pregnant. Such a move helped to strengthen the partnership between the school and the home. Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H. has this to say:

> *When pregnancy occurs in school the SMT calls the relevant parents to talk to her on how to deal with this pregnancy to help the learner to continue with her studies.*

The views expressed by Mr Zwane, the SGB member were also shared by the other SGB members from Dukuza H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, Mr Nkabinde the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. confirmed this school parent partnership saying:

> *The SMT reminds the parents of what the policy says they should do when the pregnancy occurs like informing the school and supporting those learners.*

Looking at the above extracts one could conclude that the role of calling a concerned parent to school to discuss important issues about the pregnant learner was important so that the school could work hand in hand with parents. According to Macleod and Durrheim (2002), if the policy implementation is not effectively communicated, the stigma associated with learner pregnancy could evoke harsh responses from the community as it is the responsibility of the parent of the pregnant learner to assist with child care. According to Chohan and Gina (2009), strong support and availability of adult care-giving for a baby is required for a

teenage girl to be able to return to school. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), the family is very important in a developing child. The SMTs were trying to improve the working relationships between the school and the parents. This helped the pregnant learners to return back to school to complete their studies.

5.2.6 Sustained sessions with learners

The study has revealed that another role that was played by SMT members in implementing learner pregnancy policy was to give positive messages to the learners about preventing or reducing learner pregnancy rates. All the participants agreed that the school organised sessions with the learners to talk about learner pregnancy and to give positive messages to learners. They encouraged the learners to focus on their education. They emphasised that when it happens that they are pregnant, they must immediately inform their educators. The SMTs did these sessions on their own or sometimes, they allowed the educators the opportunity to do them. Sometimes they involved the SGBs and peer educators too. These sessions were conducted throughout the year to remind the learners to behave themselves and to address their concerns relating to learner pregnancy. Most of the times these sessions were conducted as part of the morning assembly; however, others were conducted in their classes.

During the morning assemblies, the SMT members would tackle various issues relating to learner pregnancy. Sometimes their talk would focus on prevention of learner pregnancy; in other times, they would focus on the management of learner pregnancy to learners. These sessions depended on their schedule that they had agreed to as a school. The following excerpt illustrates the above session by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H.:

> *Also we use assemblies to talk to learners and remind them that there are here at school to learn so they must focus on learning and forget about other things that destruct them from focusing on their studies. We emphasise that they should abstain from sex to avoid being pregnant and getting STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and HIV. We also stress that learners should inform educators when they are pregnant, they should visit the clinic to get their delivery dates so that we will know when it is time to take leave for delivery. We also stress the fact that other learners should not discriminate against pregnant learners in the school; pregnant learners should not be called names. We also tell them that they are allowed to attend classes*

until the last month of pregnancy where they have to take leave and emphasise that they should come back after delivery when they are fit to do so.

The views expressed by the principal of Dukuza H. were also shared by those of Ngwadi H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. These sessions that the SMTs conducted for the learners were also confirmed by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD in Dukuza H. when she said:

We also address these learners in assemblies where we talk about abstinence, unsafe sex and its consequences. We work together with peer educators and a learner support agent in talking to learners about Lifeskills and how learners should behave themselves. We stress that learners should live a healthy lifestyle.

Miss Ndlangisa the LO educator from Mamponjwane H. expressed the similar view that was expressed by the SMTs that they conducted various sessions with learners to talk about learner pregnancy during the assembly. This is how Miss Ndlangisa put it:

The SMT also talk about learner pregnancy to learners during school assembly and emphasise that the school maintains that they should abstain from sex and focus on their studies. But most of all, learners are told not to leave school when they are pregnant and that they must come back after deliver to continue with their studies.

The views expressed by the principals, HODs and LO Educators were corroborated by the SGB members who worked closely with the SMTs. For instance, Mr Cindi, the SGB member from Dukuza H. confirmed that the SMTs conducted sessions with the learners to talk about learner pregnancy and to encourage them to focus on their studies. This is what he had to say:

They talk to learners about preventing pregnancy. They discourage learners from engaging in this culture of "ukuqoma" while they are still young. They talk to learners about abstinence and using condoms to prevent pregnancy and diseases.

Views expressed by this SGB member were shared by those from Ngwadi H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, Mr Nkabinde, the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. went further to say that they personally came to school and talked to the

learners during assemblies to emphasise what the SMT members had told the learners. He said:

> *We also talk to learners in the school assembly about behaving themselves and waiting until they finished school before engaging themselves in sexual relationships. We do this to help the SMTs so that the learners can see that we are also saying the same things as SMTs.*

The narratives from the participants were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as observations. For instance, I came very early in the morning to do interview with Mr Ntuli the school principal of Mamponjwane H. and I attended their assembly. The educator who was conducting the prayers that morning talked to the learners about various issues including negative effects of ill-discipline, the importance of respect and ended up talking to them about complexities and negative effects of learner pregnancy. She told them, for instance, that if they kept on missing classes and absenting themselves they would end up involving themselves in sexual activities and become pregnant. She was stressing the fact that being at school studying was keeping them safe from all sorts of social ills that were happening in the community. That was an indication that the schools paid serious attention to learner pregnancy issue, and they were utilising morning assemblies to continuously deal with the issue.

Besides talking to the learners during assemblies, the SMTs further moved on to allowing educators to talk to learners in their classes. These sessions were conducted by the educators depending on their schedule. But it emerged that male educators were not comfortable to talk about learner pregnancy especially to the girl learners. Therefore, some schools arranged these sessions in such a way that female educators addressed the girls while male educators addressed the boys in their classes. This was illustrated by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. when he said:

> *We also designed a programme where we engaged the learners themselves and also peer educators to talk to the learners and address them on pregnancy, the dangers of engaging themselves in unsafe sex and how pregnancy can affect their future. We have sessions with boy learners and girl learners to talk about pregnancy and how they should behave themselves. Female educators sit with the girls and male*

educators sit with the boys and talk about issues that concerns them in terms of gender like puberty, adolescent and relationships. This helps learners to talk freely about the stuff that they do not understand about themselves without being laughed at by the opposite sex. Even girls can talk about boys and boys can talk about girls without offending anyone.

Similar views were also shared by Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. who confirmed that the SMT members gave educators an opportunity to talk to learners about learner pregnancy in their classes, and this is what he had to say:

I also ask educators to talk to the learners in their classes and use charts with positive messages that they can get from the Department to encourage learners not to engage themselves in sexual relationships. They are asked also to be as proactive as possible and be creative in preventing learners from falling pregnant. Sometimes they divide them and females talk to girls and males talk to boys because some males are not comfortable to talk to girls about pregnancy.

Mr Mthembu, the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. revealed that the SMT members asked the educator to have these sessions with the learners and also emphasised that male educators addressed the boys and female educators addressed the girls. He said:

They ask female educators to talk to the learners because we told them that we are not comfortable to talk to the girls about these issues. The educators address girls most of the times where they talk about sugar daddies and that they must live a healthy lifestyle. But we as male educators also talk to boys alone where we address them on behavioural change.

Similarly, Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. shared the same views that were expressed by Mr Mthembu. This is what she said:

We usually talk to them about their sexual affairs on weekly basis as well as SMT help us a lot. We divide learners according to their grades and discuss sexuality issues

with them and how it affects them as teenagers. This happens once a week where we take each grade each week. Sometimes we divide learners according to gender where male educators talk to boys and female educators talk to girls about how they should behave themselves. What happens to them when they grow and what to do and not to do when you grow up. Learners feel comfortable when you divide them according to gender because they do not like to talk about girls' staff in front of boys and also boys do not like to talk about their staff in front of girls (Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H.).

Even the SGB members concurred with the SMT members that one of their roles was to communicate positive messages with all the learners in the school to prevent learner pregnancy. The SMT members communicated clear and consistent messages that all learners should abstain from sexual activities. They were told about the risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases and getting pregnant. In addition, they were informed that there is a negative impact that HIV/AIDS and learner pregnancy has on their future aspirations (DoE, 2007). One of the principles of Vision 2030 which is geared towards a Learning Nation for Industrialisation and a better life to all is based on providing learners with appropriate information about reproductive health matters to encourage them to take responsible decisions (Hubbard, 2012). This is a role that the SMTs played in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy for learners to have information about sexual and reproductive health in order to take good decisions about their future. The SMTs possessed caring relationships with learners. This caring relationship helped that they love these learners and do not want them to take wrong decisions that could ruin their future. In the mesosystem level, learners who do not get love and attention at home and in school, tend to look for them in inappropriate places (Addison, 1992). Therefore, these SMTs were doing what is needed for the developing child to complete their studies.

5.2.7 Supporting Life Orientation educators

It emerged from the study that another role played by the SMTs in implementing learner pregnancy policy in these schools was to give support to the LO educators. In the subject Life Orientation, educators are expected to deal with topics such as pregnancy, Life skills and so

forth, in order to help the learners handle life challenges in general. It was revealed that sometimes educators had difficulties handling such sensitive topics, or sometimes they were not comfortable to talk to the learners about such topics, especially male educators. Therefore, they had to be given support every step of the way. Firstly, the principals selected relevant educators whom they believed would be able to teach this subject. They then supported them during the course of the year by, for instance, arranging subject advisors to come to school and give help where necessary and giving them time to talk to learners outside of their periods. These educators helped the SMT members in implementing the learner pregnancy policy. They relied on these educators because they were the ones who worked directly with the learners and they were approachable to the learners who needed them, especially the pregnant learners. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. by saying that:

> *We got LO educators whom we trust that they are going to address learners on pregnancy. They talk to learners about Lifeskills, they emphasise that learners should not involve themselves in sexual activities, and they should wait until they are older. They address the learners about the consequences of unsafe sex and tell them how falling pregnant while still young will ruin their future. They emphasise that learners should focus on their studies so that they will complete their schooling and find jobs to take care of their families in a perfect way. They give learners individual attention if need be. Therefore we support them a lot in doing their job.*

The principal of Ngwadi H. expressed similar views by saying that they supported LO educators who were the ones teaching about Lifeskills and sexuality education in classes. He said:

> *We ask the LO educators to continue stressing in their lessons that learners should abstain from sex or else they should use safe sex like using condoms. We know that it is not easy to talk about these things with learners so we work closely with them to give help when needed* (Mr Zulu, Principal of Ngwadi H.).

Similar views were echoed by Miss Hlophe the HOD from Ngwadi H. who mentioned the support they gave to LO educators to enable them to teach LO effectively in their classes. She said:

We make sure that LO educators are selected carefully and that they get necessary support to be able to teach LO effectively like organising workshops for them and inviting subject advisors to come and help them how to deal with some of the issues like some educators find it uncomfortable to deal with topics that involve pregnancy.

Again Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. expressed similar views to the other participants which emphasised the support given to LO educators to enable them to teach Life skills better and also the support they provided to the SMTs in dealing with pregnancies. This is what he had this to say:

I also give support especially to LO educators because we as SMT depend on them in teaching Lifeskills to these learners. We also need them to teach these learners about pregnancy even if there is a learner who is pregnant in class, we tell them not to be insensitive. I also ask them to support the SMT in any activity that they engage learners to prevent learner pregnancy. They are also told to inform the SMT when they discovered that a learner in their classes is pregnant so that we call the parent and discuss how to help that learner to focus on school work. We work together with them in supporting pregnant learners (Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H.).

Similar sentiments were echoed by the LO Educators themselves who acknowledged the support they received from the SMTs in doing their job which is teaching the learners about Life skills. This is how Mr Mthembu the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. put it:

Again the SMT support the educators who deal with pregnant learners especially LO educators like myself. They even support the LO educators in teaching LO lessons as they know some of the educators are not comfortable to teach some of the topics in LO like pregnancy especially if it is a male educator like myself. They allow us to attend workshops called by subject advisors to be able to deal with these sensitive issues.

Moreover, Miss Ndlangisa the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. also shared similar views to those expressed above by highlighting that they received support from the SMTs to be able to deal with pregnant learners. She emphasised that, through the support of the HODs, they

were able to teach sensitive topics which formed part of the content of Life orientation. This is how she put her views:

> *They support the LO educators in teaching Lifeskills to learners and in making us feel comfortable to talk about these pregnancy issues to learners. They give us time to talk to learners outside our periods to engage learners on sexuality education.*

Furthermore, the SGB member from Ngwadi H. concurred with the above views, that support was indeed given to the LO educators to enable them teach Life Orientation effectively. This is what he said:

> *They give educators time in classes especially LO educators to educate learners on health and social issues and Lifeskills in order to prevent learner pregnancy. They support LO educators in dealing with pregnant learners in their classes* (Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H.).

While the support provided by the SMT members to the educators seemed to focus on how LO could be better taught, the support provided to the learners seemed to be different. For instance, besides soliciting the support of various experts, the main thrust of the support to the learners was that of abstinence from sex. The SMT members communicated clear and consistent messages, through the LO educators and other means, that all learners should abstain from sexual activities (DoE, 2007). They supported LO educators by informing the learners about the risks posed by unsafe sexual behaviours such as of getting infected by sexually transmitted diseases and getting pregnant. The SMT members also highlighted the view that there was an impact that HIV/AIDS and learner pregnancy had on their future aspirations. Such messages were transmitted mainly through Life Orientation. According to Reddy, James and McCauley (2005), the SMTs should select LO educators carefully in order to promote effective implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. LO educators should be able to support and advice the learners on sexuality issues. Therefore, LO educators form part of a very important component in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. At the same time SMT members need to know that, even though they gave responsibilities especially to Life Orientation educators to act on their behalf during the implementation of the policy, they still retained accountability for successful policy implementation. Therefore,

the SMTs in these schools made sure that the LO educators had the necessary skills to teach this subject by also involving Subject Advisors to guide them.

5.2.8 Respecting and promoting the learners' right to education

The interview with the participants in all three schools revealed that the SMT respected and promoted learners' right to education. They gave the learners information on the prevention of learner pregnancy and also on the management of learner pregnancy. They supported pregnant learners during pregnancy and allowed them to continue attending classes until they were due to give birth. They also encouraged them to come back to school after they had given birth, when they felt they were fit to do. They supported the educators and the parents in helping these learners complete their school work. They provided a caring environment and resources that supported effective implementation of learner pregnancy policy by the school community at large. Furthermore, it emerged that the SMT members behaved like real parent to these learners; they made attempts not to discriminate against them and tried to understand the pregnant girls' situation from their own perspectives. In that way, the learners understood that the school was not against them but only that they had made bad decision that could ruin their future. Therefore, from the participants' perspectives, pregnant learners felt that they were supported by the school. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *We respect the right to education of learners. We behave as parents- loco parentis. We put ourselves in the shoes of these learners so that we will not judge them. We show understanding because we all make mistakes. We treat them equally and do not discriminate them because they are pregnant. We support them in their studies and always motivate them not to give up even if they find it hard to catch up with the work done while they were absent. We encourage them to come back after delivery to continue with their studies.*

In the same vein, Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H, expressed the similar view about the respect and promotion of the learners' right to education. This is what he had to say:

We show positive attitude, love these kids, give all learners attention, we become their role model and show respect towards these learners. We make sure that we do not discriminate against learners especially those who are pregnant. We show them love by giving them support especially in their school work. We become their role model by showing good behaviour ourselves as SMTs; we do not do bad things like discriminating any learner. We come to school early and not absent ourselves for no good reason. Again we show respect in terms of treating everyone equally, pregnant or not. Also respect the right to education for learners, we do not expel any learner due to pregnancy instead we support those learners.

The views expressed by the Principal of Ngwadi H. above were also shared by Mr Ntuli of Mamponjwane H. This principal emphasised that that the SMT members showed positive attitudes towards these learners by respecting their right to education in the process of implementing the policy. He stressed the view that for effectively policy implementation, they had to ensure that they to win the hearts and minds of the learners. This is what he had to say in this regard:

We possess the qualities of caring for learners and being supportive to them as well. We show learners that we are caring for them by not judging them when they are pregnant. We support them academically and socially. We attract their attention so that they will listen to us when we tell them about pregnancy. We provide them with necessary resources to help them continue with their studies and do not discriminate them. We respect their right to education (Mr Ntuli, Principal of Mamponjwane H.).

The data has also shown that the SMTs gave guidance, direction and support to everyone in the school for the effective implementation of the policy. It emerged that the SMT members also helped to give support to these learners to enable them to continue with education as part of promoting their right to education. Miss Buthelezi, HOD from Dukuza H. had this to say:

We work with other stakeholders effectively like school nurses and social workers to help these learners because everyone has a responsibility towards decreasing learner pregnancy. Therefore everyone needs to be given a fair chance to do so. We are also supportive to our learners, no matter the situation is, we do not discriminate the pregnant learners, we treat them equally with others and show the element of caring.

We give them time to visit clinic as long as they report and continuously checking educators that they are giving them work done while absent. We do not give up on them because we want all of them to finish school so that they will complete their studies, make a living and be able to support their parents.

Similar views were also shared by LO educators in all schools who confirmed that the SMTs indeed respected and promoted the right to education for all the learners in the school irrespective of their pregnancy status. Miss Hlophe, the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. had this to say:

The SMTs emphasise the fact that all learners have a right to education so they must not drop out of school due to pregnancy. They are told to come back to continue with their schoolwork after delivery. The SMTs are able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders in the school, which help everybody to cooperate in implementing this policy and be able to contribute in the prevention and management of leaner pregnancy. SMTs are supportive to learners, educators and parents. This helps them to work together towards decreasing this learner pregnancy. SMTs are also caring; they do not judge these pregnant learners and they treat them with dignity and like any other learner in the school. This helps them not to lose these learners because they see that they are cared for in the school.

Furthermore, the parent members of the SGB expressed the same views about the SMTs that they respected and promoted the learners' right to education. Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. said:

They support pregnant learners. They do not suspend them from school; instead they make sure that these learners continue to attend school until they take a leave for delivery. The SMTs again try their best to make sure that all pregnant learners come back to school after delivery.

The views expressed by this SGB member were shared by those from Ngwadi H. and Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, Mr Nkabinde the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. had this to say about the SMTs respecting and promoting the right to education of learners:

The SMTs are supportive. They love these children. No matter how bad the situation is concerning learner pregnancy, the SMTs still support these learners and they do not judge them. They treat them well and help them deal with their pregnancies. They do not give up on them because even if the child is not coming back to school after delivery, they make means of calling the child to come back to school.

Looking at the above extracts, one can note that the SMTs were behaving like reasonably responsible parents would do to their children. They ensured that working with the learners was less difficult for the educators as they understood their situation and were willing to help. The support that the learners received encouraged them to continue with studies. This is consistent with legislative frameworks and policy provisions. For instance, Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution Act stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education. This clause protects everyone including pregnant learners. Therefore, this means that these schools assisted pregnant learners to exercise this fundamental right to basic education. The Constitution also protects every person from being unfairly discriminated against and from unequal treatment. This means the rights of pregnant learners are guaranteed in the constitution. Therefore, schools should not discriminate against these learners in any form.

According to Levin (2001), policies impart objections and that policy implementation can only be understood in terms of the actors' intentions. Therefore, the role played by the SMT members suggests that they had good intentions and that their actions comply with the policy provisions. Therefore, it is important that the SMT members provide an enabling environment for the entire school community to do their work in line with the policy (DoE, 2011). Lastly, the SMT members need to provide a caring school environment that supports pregnant learners which could give those learners a sense of belonging (Khalil, 2008). Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) concur with Ferguson and Woodward (2000) that if pregnant learners continue with their studies after delivery and be presented with necessary support by the school, they can manage to complete their secondary education and further their studies in the tertiary institutions. This can be achieved by these schools if learners are cooperative and are dedicated to their school work. These SMTs as invitational leaders knew that the learner pregnancy policy was there to guide them and provide a win/win results between the school and the learners. Therefore, these schools attempted to

create a collaborative rather than a competitive place for all learners to achieve their goals (Burns, 2007).

5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data that emerged from the analysis. I reported on data gathered from the individual interviews I conducted with the principals, the HODs, LO educators and the parent members of the SBGs in the three schools. Furthermore, I reported on the data elicited through observations and the reviews of documents from these schools. The major purpose of the chapter was to explore the roles that the SMT members were playing in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools which were located in poverty-stricken communities in the district.

In a nutshell, I would like to highlight that the essential points elicited from the data presented as they relate to the roles of the SMT members in implementing the policy. It became evident that all the participants were aware of the learner pregnancy policy; they mobilised counselling services for pregnant learners; they further mobilised various sessions for all learners in the school; they mobilised the staff; they strengthened school-parent partnerships; they strengthened and sustained sessions with the learners; they supported LO Educators and emphasised respecting and promoting the learners' rights to education. The data has also indicated that, while the SMTs understood and played an effective role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy, there were still more learners getting pregnant and others even left school due to pregnancy, and that posed a huge challenging to the SMTs. Therefore, the next chapter is dedicated to the detailed discussion of the challenges faced by the SMT members in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE SMTs

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed data that was generated from principals, HODs, LO educators and SGBs on the roles played by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. As highlighted in the introduction of Chapter Five, due to the voluminous data, I have divided the data presentation into three chapters. In this chapter, I present and discuss in-depth the challenges that were faced by the SMT members in implementing the policy on pregnant learners. A similar pattern has been followed in this chapter, whereby the challenges experienced by the SMT members are explored from the perspectives of the three principals, three HODs, three LO educators and three SGB members. There are two categories of challenges analysed in this presentation. The first category of challenges has to do with the conditions that which encourage rather than discourage early involvement of the learners in sexual activities which ultimately result in learner pregnancy. The second category of challenges has to do with the implementation challenges of the learner pregnancy policy.

In presenting the data, *verbatim* quotes are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporates data generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two and the two theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Three are also infused into the discussion.

6.2 Discussion of challenges faced by the School Management Teams

Ten broad themes are used as headings to present and discuss data in this chapter. These themes were as follows (1) the influence of old Zulu traditions (2) the school categorised as a combined school (3) prevailing socio-economic conditions (4) unsupportive parents (5) lack of communication between the school and home (6) failure of early identification and disclosure (7) no roles models in the community (8) policy silence on boy learners (9) male educators not comfortable in dealing with pregnant learners and (10) Negative attitudes displayed by peers and some educators. These themes are discussed in-depth in the following sections.

6.2.1 The influence of old Zulu traditions on the implementation of policy

All the participants were asked the question about challenges that the SMT members may have faced in the process of implementing the policy on pregnant learners. Their responses showed, amongst other things, that there was an old Zulu tradition that had a negative influence in terms of encouraging exposure of the learners to unsafe sex phenomenon. All three schools were situated in rural areas where members of the communities believed in some of the old Zulu traditions that clashed with what the school was promoting. Some called it a behaviour pattern and some called it tradition but most of the participants raised this as a concern because it interrupted learners from completing their schooling as they ended up getting pregnant. The old Zulu tradition I am referring to in this study is known as ‘ukuthwala’ and it does not have an English counterpart. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to explain. Such difficulty also emanates from the fact that the concept ‘ukuthwala’ has become elusive to understand and its practice has been contaminated with abuse, misunderstanding such that the discourse in South Africa is characterised by what Nkosi (2013) calls women abduction with the intentions of marrying that young woman. Such a practice was found to eb prevalent in the communities where the three schools were located.

The second Zulu tradition that had an impact is known as 'ukuqoma' and 'ukumisa iduku' as part of ukuqoma. Basically, what happens is that the young girl who is acknowledging officially that she is in love with a young man would go to her boyfriend's home and bring them gifts to show that she is now having a love relationship with that boy. In response, the boy's family would raise a red flag for every member of the community to see that a young man in the family has a girl friend who is officially going to marry their son. Therefore, it was publicised that the girl from a certain family had a love relationship with a boy of a certain family while still at school. Whilst such a practice used to be done by young men and women who were no longer attending schools; such a practice has lost such restrictions. Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. expressed his views about this traditional practice that, from his perspective, it was destroying the learners as they ended up falling pregnant. This is what he had to say:

> *In our community around this school, there is this ritual of "ukuthwala" which is being promoted. This means that once you reach a certain age maybe 14-16years, they see you as a fully matured woman, so you need to have a boyfriend, and same applies to boys. This disturbs the learners as some of them do not come back to school while some of them get pregnant. This activity of "ukuthwala" is being accepted in the community no matter how young the child is. Boys in the community especially the older ones who are not at school, maybe who are working especially those working in Johannesburg will come at a certain time and take this girl child to his home to become his wife. The boy family will send the "lobola" to the girl family and that is all. Some of these girls are taken without their permission but because it is their culture so what they say, they will have to abide. Even if they do not want this boy but they need to respect the elders and live with this boy. When the boy allows this girl to come to school, you find that she is now pregnant and everybody knows the story so there is no problem to them.*

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. and Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. respectively. Mr Ntuli concurred with the above as he emphasised that their school was in rural community where certain traditions were practiced which made it difficult for them to implement learner pregnancy

policy. He explained the kind of community they have which promoted this old Zulu tradition saying:

> *We work with rural community where traditional activities are practiced. They legalise things like love affairs by parents. They know about "ukuqoma" and "iduku" as long as they will get the money. This traditional practice is where the girl sends presents like blankets, food items etc to the family of her boyfriend to show everyone that he is now officially having a relationship with that boy. Maybe even the boy will send his parents to the girl's family to pay "lobola" for the girl. Parents approve of that, when you disapprove they think that you are jealous. These parents do not care whether the child is still young and should concentrate on her studies. As long as they get the money it is enough and will be happy that her child is married now. Other learners it is the pressure from their parents saying so and so has sent "iduku" to that family why don't you do the same and their targets are the wealthy families because of poverty. The community is putting pressure on these learners to follow this tradition no matter how young they are. This leads to learner pregnancy* (Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H.).

The issue of this influence of the old Zulu traditions contributed in increasing the rate of learner pregnancy in schools. These views were also expressed by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. that some families cared only about money; they did not care about their children. This is what she had to say:

> *Parents do not consider pregnancy as a problem as they approve of the relationships of their children. Sometimes the family of the father of the child has paid damages to the family. Sometimes the girl learner had sent "iduku" to the boyfriend's family, so everybody is aware who impregnated that child. The parents do not support the learner pregnancy policy in action because they still promote the culture of "ukuthwala" and "iduku" which is against this policy. They say their children will be married and they will get money. Some even put pressure on their children to do this. What they are doing is the opposite of what is expected on them. They do not have a problem of learners not being expelled from school when they are pregnant, but they will tell you that it is up to the boyfriend's family to allow the girl to come back to*

school after delivery because damaged have been paid (Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H.).

The views expressed by Miss Buthelezi above were also shared by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. and also Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, Mr Ndebele concurred with the views expressed in the above saying that there was a challenge of this tradition in implementing the policy and that it contributed to the increased rate of learner pregnancy. This is what Mr Ndebele had to say:

Parents are coming from traditional community who believe in their cultures. They believe and promote their cultures. This culture of "iduku" is problematic. It is increasing learner pregnancy because when a learner is pregnant it is known that she has sent gifts to this family so she is supposed to be pregnant because this relationship is known. So the pregnancy is not a mistake at all.

Furthermore, Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. mentioned that such a practice of 'ukuqoma' and 'ukumisa iduku' made it difficult for the parents to support the learner pregnancy policy fully as they were promoting that practice. She mentioned that:

Some learners do not take this thing of pregnancy seriously as they have the support of their parents. Some parents are busy promoting this thing of "ukuqoma" and "iduku" which is their culture. The girls send gifts to the family of their boyfriends as a sign that they are now in a relationship. Everybody will know and it will be an event for everyone. Therefore, if a learner is pregnant everybody knows that the girl is involved with whom because she has sent "iduku" to the family in front of everyone. Also some of these learners are not staying with their parents, they are staying with their boyfriends, so parents don't see the problem when the learner is pregnant, it's culturally correct to them. It is correct to them fall pregnant as this age because parents allows them to stay with their boyfriends (Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H.).

The views expressed by Miss Ndlangisa above were also shared by Miss Cele, the LO Educator of Dukuza H. and Mr Mthembu the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. respectively. Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H. about this

Zulu tradition which was being practiced in the three communities and that it caused challenges to the implementation of the policy. This is what he had to say:

> *Some parents still promote this culture of "ukuqoma" which makes learner to get pregnant because some of them live with their boyfriends after this event. Some of the parents do not bother to come to school when the child is pregnant while they know that the policy is saying they must inform the school and work with the school to support the learner because they know that the child is pregnant because she is living with her boyfriend* (Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H).

The views expressed by Mr Zwane above were also shared by Mr Cindi, the SGB member from Dukuza H. and Mr Nkabinde, the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. respectively. Expressing his unhappiness with the influence of the two traditions on learner pregnancy, Mr Nkabinde had this to say:

> *This community promotes this cultural thing of "ukuqoma" where the girls show off that they are now in a relationship with someone. When these girls have done this they do not care about school, they concentrate more on their boyfriends who are older in many cases. They do not listen to educators. The biggest problem is that parents are supporting this cultural activity no matter how old their children are it doesn't matter to them. When they have engaged in "ukuqoma", they become pregnant because they do not even practice safe sex and it is normal as everyone knows that so and so are involved in sexual relationship. Some learners are faced with peer pressure. Others laugh at them when they do not do this thing of "ukuqoma". While others are pressured by their parents as young as they are, some parents forced them because they know that this family is wealthy so they will get money for food if their child is engaged with the boy of that family.*

Looking at the above extracts from participants, it became evident that even though the SMT members were trying to play their role positively in implementing learner pregnancy policy, but there were challenges like the influence of the old Zulu tradition in these communities. Schools found it difficult to change the mindset of the communities who still believed in their

traditional activities. This old Zulu traditional practices of 'ukuthwala', 'ukuqoma' and 'ukumisa iduku' were still practiced in these communities even though learner pregnancy policy had been communicated to all stakeholders. Preventing learner pregnancy while these activities were still practiced was a concern for everyone involved in education. According to Coulter (1999), Stromquist (1999) and Wilson and Decker (1999), international conventions on women rights focused on the educational concerns for women. In terms of such conventions, there is a need to review and re-evaluate traditional customs and perceptions that could be harmful to issues of equality of access to education and career development for men and women. Therefore, it is the role of the SMT members to review this traditional practice working together with the communities to ensure that the learners' access to education was guaranteed. Again, in ensuring that pregnant learners are not losing out on education as part of reality Vision 2030, which is geared towards a Learning Nation for Industrialisation and a better life to all, it is important that respect for cultural and family values is shown. One way to show respect is by providing sufficient flexibility to allow for a range of options (Hubbard, 2012). In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, cultural influences affect the developing child in the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The way the communities in these three researched school still followed their traditions affected the learners because they involved themselves in these activities and ended up getting pregnant. Sometimes it became difficult to come back to school after delivery when they were living in their boyfriend's family. The community did not support the school by at least bending their tradition to allow learners to complete their studies. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the SMTs to engage with the community in trying to make them understand the importance of education to be able to prevent learner pregnancy.

6.2.2 The school categorised as a combined school

Another challenge experienced by the SMT members in implementing the leaner pregnancy policy was the issue of the schools having been categorised as a combined school. All the schools in this study were combined schools, which mean that they started from Grade R up to Grade 12. Most of the participants from all three study sites highlighted the view that it would have been better if these schools separated into a primary and secondary schools rather than being combined schools. Their views were that having both the young learners (primary school section) and the older learners (secondary school section) negatively affected younger

learners. Such a view was based on the assumptions that sometimes young learners tended to copy what old learners were doing in front of them even if it was a bad thing. Therefore, according to the participants, younger learners, belonging to the primary school section, did not think that getting pregnant was wrong because older learners were doing it in front of them and they also wanted to copy that. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *The challenge we got here is that we have young learners and high school learners. Some of the things done by high school learners are copied easily by primary school learners; therefore, they impact negatively on primary school learners. I am talking in terms of bunking classes; discipline also these high school learners get pregnant. These young ones think it is a good thing to do.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. about having a combined school. He argued that it had a negative impact on education because pregnant learners were seen by these young learners everyday in school and they thought that it was cool to be pregnant at school. This is what he said:

> *A separated school will do all the good; the interest of the little ones and the interest of the big ones are not the same. In our school being a combined school is having a big impact because the little ones are seeing the big ones with big stomach. It does have a negative impact because the little ones are learning all the bad things from the big ones and it becomes difficult to tell them that what they are doing is wrong.*

Furthermore, Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H., gave an example of how having both the young and the old learners in one school had a negative impact on them. She emphasised that:

> *For an example, a Grade 6 learner was impregnated by a Grade 12 learner in this school. I think having the young and the old learners in the same school cause the old learners to take advantage and have sexual relationships with young learners in the school. Again the young learners see the old learners having relationships in front of*

them and some becoming pregnant and think that it is ok. They then want to do it themselves without thinking about their future. I mean to say young learners tend to copy things without thinking. So these old learners are sometimes a bad influence to them.

The views expressed by Miss Buthelezi above were also shared by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. She revealed that they did have pregnant learners from the primary side which was a bad thing because they were still very young. This is what she said:

Sometimes we do experience the pregnancy at a primary level. Although they are not many like we had about 2 learners who are pregnant at primary level this year. This is caused by having older learners who are taking advantage of younger learners here at school. They don't have to look outside; it is easy for them because they are here in one school.

During the interview with Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H., she extended her concern about the school being a combined school. Her preference was also having either a primary school or a high school not both in one site. She had this to say:

I think having a combined school does contribute a little bit to learner pregnancy because learners who are young are seeing others doing wrong things and they try to practice. You know young learners always see the older learners in this school having relationships whereby they see them talking, kissing etc in front of them. They are doing everything in front of these young learners without knowing that to some of them they are their role models. So these young learners end up practising what they see older learners doing. The thing is they share everything, like toilets, playgrounds etc. Again older boys take advantage of young girls because it is easy to do as they are in the same school. We had a case in our school where a Grade 12 learner impregnated a Grade 6 learner. They were having a sexual relationship and it started here at school solely because it is easy for these boys to talk to the young learners inside the premises.

The issues discussed above were corroborated by the data generated from observations. For instance, after the interview with the LO Educator in Mamponjwane H., I went around the school during break time. I observed that all the learners played together whether primary school learners or secondary school learners and the break period occurred at exactly the same time. All learners were at the playground and you could see older boys talking to young girls. There was no educator on duty.

The views expressed by the participants in the extracts in the five extracts above indicate that all the participants were opposed to the notion of creating combined schools and advocated separation of primary schools from secondary schools. Impregnating primary school learners in the same premises was cited as an example of how bad the situation was for these schools. It was evident that there was a big challenge for the SMT members in their implementation of learner pregnancy policy when viewed from the perspective that they were also expected by the DoE to prevent or reduce learner pregnancy rates in their respective schools.

The data has revealed that learner pregnancy was dominant in schools that were poorly resourced, those located in poor neighbourhoods. This disturbing situation has been highlighted in the literature where it was also revealed that those schools that were categorised as no fee paying and those located on land independently owned (farm schools), as well as those that involve considerable age mixing (combined schools) were exposed to the high risk of learner pregnancy phenomenon (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010). Similarly, a study conducted by Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), found that the types of schools with high teenage pregnancy were those schools which were poorly resourced, located in the poor neighbourhoods as well as schools which were age mixing (combined schools). These studies are illuminating issues and patterns that require careful considerations by officials in the DoE. In the microsystem level of development of a child, cognitive system is important because this is where the young learners imitated what they saw the older learners did in front of them thinking it was the right thing to do (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

6.2.3 Prevailing socio-economic conditions

Interviews with participants in this study revealed that another challenge faced by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy was the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the community. Almost all the participants described their community as being deep rural, experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment, and high levels of illiteracy. In some instances, those parents who were employed were working far away from their homes. Such scenarios exposed their children to vulnerabilities of many kinds such as having to fend for themselves while parents were away. Learners tended to have sexual relationships with older men in order to receive financial support for survival. Therefore, coming from a poor socio-economic background played a critical role in learners falling pregnant. This happened in two ways; first they were vulnerable to older men's wishes and second, it was believed that the learners fell pregnant deliberately so that they would have access to child support grant from the government. Others even chose boyfriends from well to do families because they could support them. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *Another thing which causes pregnancy is this thing of poverty; some learners come from families who do not have jobs, and they are unemployed. Some end up not eating anything at home. Therefore, they tend to find a boyfriend from a well to do family who will be able to feed them. Some get pregnant because of social grant, they know they will be able to get this money and put food in the table.*

Views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. and Mr Ntuli the Principal of Mamponjwane H. respectively. Mr Ntuli also expressed his views about the challenge of learners coming from poor socio-economic background that it was the cause of high learner pregnancy in schools. This is what Mr Ntuli had to say:

> *Also poverty problems are a challenge to these learners such that they choose to be involved with boys from well to do families so that they will be able to feed themselves. They also know that they are going to get child support grant from government. Some of the learners come from child headed households; therefore they think that if they get married they will be able to get something to eat.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. who also saw learner pregnancy as caused by prevailing poverty in the community where many of the people were unemployed. She said:

> *Another challenge is poverty; we have poor families here; they are illiterate; most of them are unemployed and others work far away from their homes. Some learners get pregnant only because they opted to live with their boyfriends who support them with food. Their parents are not working and they are not getting any food at home, so they involve themselves in sexual activities with older man who can feed them.*

The prevailing socio-economic conditions of these communities were also mentioned by the LO Educators that they contributed immensely to the high rate of learner pregnancy. Mr Mthembu the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. had this to say:

> *This community is poor and illiterate. Many of the parents are unemployed while others work far away from their homes living children alone. Some learners in this community are living in child headed households; they do not have a parent figure that is looking for them. So they do as they please while others involve themselves in sexual relationships because of poverty. They do not have anything to eat and also to wear. They depend on their boyfriend to provide them with food and clothes. So this makes them to fall pregnant as they are not even using condoms in these relationships with older people.*

The views expressed by Mr Mthembu above were also shared by Miss Ndlangisa the LO Educator of Mamponjwane H.. She concurred with the above view saying that the learners came from poor socio-economic background and they thought that by involving themselves in sexual relationships would help them to survive. This is what she had to say:

> *Another challenge is poverty; the economic background in this community is poor. Most of them are illiterate and many families do not have anyone who is employed; they depend on social grants. Therefore, getting money for damages when a learner is pregnant or getting money for "lobola" to them is a big thing. They do not think of the future; they think about the present like this money get finished and then what are they going to do and how are their going to feed the baby when it is born.*

The prevailing socio-economic conditions were also expressed by Mr Zwane the SGB member from Ngwadi H. This is what he had to say:

> *In this community, there are many psychosocial issues like learners living alone, parents unemployed and there is no food at home. There are learners who are left alone in their homes. Their parents have passed on, so they have no one to look after them. You will find that some parents work far away from home such as Johannesburg, so they need to live by themselves while the parent are at their work place. Some parents come home once or twice a year, so learners live by themselves the whole year through. Again the challenge is poverty in this community, many of the parents are not working, and some depend on social grant. So to most learners, getting food to eat is a real struggle. Therefore, these learners end up involving themselves in relationships with older men who in many cases do not want to use condoms. The girls are forced to choose between safe sex and starve or to get be fed and survive.*

It emerged from the above extracts that SMTs are experiencing a very big challenge because of the community which was not stable. As highlighted in the sections above, issues of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty play a pivotal role in high levels of learner pregnancy in schools. According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), there could be a causal relationship between increased pregnancy in poor communities and the government child support grants. Again it was found that socio-economic conditions, gender inequalities, poor school environment and performance result in pregnant learners dropping out of school (Grant & Hallman, 2006; McGaha-Garnett, 2007). The findings of a study by Grant and Hallman (2006) revealed that it was not only pregnancy which caused girls to drop out, but a range of factors such as the lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and the domestic demands placed on them played a prominent role. Government social grant was a resource provided by the government to mitigate poverty but at the same time this was seen as a cause for learner pregnancy because some families depended on them due to poverty. In these three researched schools, many parents were unemployed and many learners were suffering. Therefore, some learners ended up involving themselves in sexual relationships with older people in order to survive.

6.2.4 Unsupportive parents

Another challenge that was revealed in this study was that of parents who did not involve themselves in the affairs of the school. The parents from these communities viewed to largely unsupportive when it comes to education of their children. Even though one of the roles that the SMT members mentioned was that they were strengthening parent-teacher communication, there was still a challenge of parents who did not cooperate. Some of the parents were also working far away from home and some left very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from work in the farms; they did not have much time with their children. Children did anything they wanted in the absence of their parents. This is what Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. had to say:

> *Parents here are not playing a vital role; most of the parents are migrant workers, and some are in Johannesburg and some in Durban. Some leave home early and come back late because of the work they do. They work very far from home. So they don't have much time to spend with their children, therefore in that time, learners are able to do anything. They don't even have time to look at their children's homework. They do not have time to look at their children's work to see if they are still attending classes regularly. Some parents are busy and others are working very far they do not find time to come to school to fetch their learner's work. But some are running away from their responsibility. They do not care about their children's work. They think it all lies with the educators. They do not want to involve themselves in the affairs of the school even if the issue involve their own children. You would find that parents do not take school seriously even if you call them for parents meetings some do not bother to attend those meetings. They think school is not their responsibility.*

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Ntuli of Mamponjwane H.. He said that even if the educators were trying their best to assist the pregnant learner, it was not easy when they were not working in partnership with the parent. This is what Mr Ntuli had to say:

> *Another challenge is a failure of parents to play their roles. We also involve the pregnant learners' parents. But some parents do not want to take full responsibility for their child' pregnancy. It makes it difficult for the school to support that learner especially during the delivery period when the learner is not at school. They shift*

their responsibilities to the educators. Sometimes they do not even bother to come to school to discuss the pregnancy of their children. They do not support the child with the school work during pregnancy and when the child is absent from school.

These views were also expressed by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. She argued that some parents were running away from their responsibility when it came to education of their children. She had this to say:

We also ask the parent to send someone who will stand in for them if they are not available for the parents meetings. But some parents are irresponsible; they do not bother to send someone. As much as we do all that but you find that when a child is pregnant it is the school who calls the parent instead of the parent coming to school to report that her child is pregnant. Some even don't bother to come even if we have called them. Some parents do not want to take the responsibility while others do not take education seriously.

Some parents did not even have a say as to whether their children must come back to school after giving birth or not because the child was living with their boyfriends' families. Therefore, they did not support the school in its effort to assist the child to come back from school. Mr Nkabinde the HOD from Mamponjwane H. had the following to say:

There is no parental support in what we are doing at school. They do not want to take the responsibility. With other parents, even if you call them to school, they will not come. Others will come and tell you that they know about the pregnancy and it is up to the boy's family whether they allow the child to continue with schooling or not.

Moreover, Mr Mthembu the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. concurred with the issue of unsupportive parents. She argued that some parents did not even support their children's babies by taking care of them so that the child could go back to school. This is how Mr Mthembu put it:

The challenge is with the parents who are ignorant. They do not take the responsibility for their children. They do not want to work with the school in helping these learners. They take it as if it is only the responsibility of the school to take care of the pregnant learners. Some of them do not even want to look after their children's babies so that they will come back to school to continue with their learning. Learners

have to take care of their babies themselves and some even do not come back the same year; they come back the following year because of that reason.

Furthermore, Mr Cindi, the SGB from Dukuza H. expressed his views about unsupportive parents that they still promote this Zulu traditional of "ukuqoma" which increased the rate of learner pregnancy. He said:

Parents are not supportive. They still promote this culture of "ukuqoma" which makes learner to get pregnant because some of them live with their boyfriends after this event. Some of the parents do not bother to come to school when the child is pregnant while they know that the policy is saying they must inform the school and work with the school to support the learner.

The views expressed in the extracts above were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as documents reviews. When going through the log book in all three schools, I found out that there were many cases that were written about parents of certain learners not responded when called by the school to discuss the pregnancy of their children. In some cases it was written that the parent sent another learner from other schools to be in her place because she was busy and could not come to school. Other cases written were about parents who did not come to collect the work for their learners who are on leave for delivery. Like in Mamponjwane H., it was written on the log book that on the 20th of March 2015, a certain pregnant learner came to school with her nephew who is a learner from a neighbouring school instead of her parent claiming that her parents were working far away from home and could not be available to come to school. The school told them that they will not talk to a learner; they need her parents who unfortunately did not avail themselves until the learner left the school to give birth to the baby.

There are indications from the above extracts that the lack of parental and spousal support was one contributing element which determined whether a pregnant girl continued with her education or dropped out of school after delivery (McGaha-Garnett, 2007). Therefore, this meant parents who did not involve themselves in the school affairs of their children can contribute to their children not completing their education due to the lack of support, especially when a child had fallen pregnant. It is a duty for the SMT members to call the

parents and discuss with them what to do when a learner falls pregnant. Such a move is meant to minimise the chances of a learner dropping out of school altogether. Parental involvement is a big issue where learner pregnancy is concerned. Some parents may neglect the teenage mother's responsibilities giving reasons that they now have to take care of the baby (Kanku & Mash, 2010). According to Beck (2000), structures at the exosystem level have the effects on the development of a person by interacting with some structures in the microsystem. Therefore, if the parents are not supporting their children and school, this can lead to the learners not completing their studies.

6.2.5 Lack of communication between the school and the home

Another challenge that that was mentioned in this study is the issue of lack of communication between the school and the home. Some parents were committed to their work such that they did not communicate with school to check their children's progress in school. Also the school sometimes found it difficult to liaise with the homes of the learners due to long distances between the home and the school. The learners travelled long distances from home to school and *vice versa*. This was a concern for the participants as they highlighted the view that many things happen along the way to school in the morning and also along the way to their homes in the afternoon. As much as the school tried to reduce learner pregnancy they could not be sure that learners went straight home after school. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *Most of our learners travel long distances to school and back home. Some learners are travelling approximately 15 to 20 km to school. There is a lot of damage that happens along the way. Some even go via their boyfriends' homes before going to their homes. Even parents cannot know because the school is too far from home. Some even dodge classes while their parents thought they are at school during the day. But they check other learners when going back home, they join them as if they were also in school. This gives them chances to spend time with their boyfriends without parents realising that they are not attending classes. Some parents find out when we report to them that so and so has been absent from school several times. It is where they find out that she has been dodging classes all along.*

Similarly, Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. expressed his views about the lack of communication between the school and learners' home. Parents did not take responsibility for checking the learners' work each and every day to check how the learner was doing in the school. By doing such activities, they could detect when the child was not attending classes. Also illiteracy among the parents could be a contributing factor because they could not check learners' progress. Learners took advantage of that situation and bunked classes. This is what Mr Zulu had to say:

> *The parents in this community are illiterate and ignorant at the same time. Learners are travelling long distances to school; this gives them time to dodge classes as the parents do not check learners' work every day and the school cannot reach the parents to check whether they are aware that the learner is not coming to school. Sometimes, we ask the learners who live nearby these learners to tell their parents only to find that they were not aware that the learner is not coming to school because they go with others in the morning and come back with other in the afternoon. That is where learners get the time to do their things and end up getting pregnant.*

To add to the above issue of learners travelling long distances to schools, Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. also mentioned the challenge of learners dodging school while the parents thought their children were in school. This is what he said:

> *You find that the parent saw that the learner went to school in the morning and also she comes back with the others in the afternoon. But the problem comes when the school report to the parent that so and so has been absenting herself from school without the reason. Only to find that she was going to school every day but end up dodging during the day and spend the whole day with her boyfriend and when learners go to their homes in the afternoon, the learner join them.*

Views expressed by the principals above were also shared by Mr Cindi, the SGB member from Dukuza H.. He concurred with the above participants that there was a lack of communication between the school and the children's homes because of the long distances from school to home. Learners took advantage of that situation. Mr Cindi had this to say:

The parents are always busy searching for jobs; others work far away from home and others are unemployed but they send their children to school in the morning and are satisfied that they were in school when they come back in the afternoon. But these children will take their chances during the day and dodge classes while parents think they are at school and go to their boyfriends. The school will think they are absent and at home while the parents think they are at school. No one is communicating with another, it just assumptions which end up causing these learners to be pregnant.

From what these participants said, I concluded that the distance which is far from school and *vice versa* poses a challenge to the implementation of policy on learner pregnancy. While every effort was being made in the school to prevent learner pregnancy, learners used the time they took to travel to and from school in negative ways. Unavailability of schools around the community contributed to the challenges posed in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Spear and Cater (2002) argue that learners whose families are unsupportive and provide less supervision are more likely to become pregnant as teenager.

6.2.6 Failure of early identification and not disclosing pregnancy

Another challenge that was of much concern for the schools in their implementation of learner pregnancy policy was that schools were failing to identify pregnant learners at an early stage of pregnancy and that some learners did not disclose their pregnancy status. If the learner did not come to them to disclose their status, they tended to find out late in their pregnancy when it was impossible to hide it anymore. The school cannot know of the pregnancy especially if it is still early days if the pregnancy is not reported as it should in terms of the policy. Some of them tended not to disclose because they were not sure whether to keep it or to abort the baby. This was a concern raised by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. This is what he said:

Some learners deny being pregnant and end up nearly delivering their babies in school because we will have to call the ambulance when the water breaks from that learner while she is still at school.

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. This principal further emphasised that the learners did not disclose their pregnancy status, and as a result they were unable to give them support when required. This is what he had to say:

> *Also sometimes they do not bother to inform us when they are pregnant so that we give them necessary support. Some even do not bother to tell their parents especially those with parents who are busy with work. They think they will manage on their own which is not the case as the school should be involved.*

The views expressed by the above principals were corroborated by the HODs who worked closely with the LO educators. The HOD from Dukuza H. emphasised that as educators they could not force learners to disclose but at the end of the day it became their problem when the learners had labour pains. She gave an example of a learner who denied her pregnancy and even tried to lie to the nurses at the clinic. This is how she put it:

> *Learners sometimes deny being pregnant, for example, a learner in our school was pregnant and we send her to the clinic but she came back with negative results from the clinic. We do not know whether the child ask someone else to urinate for them or what but the learner's results were negative while we saw that she was pregnant. But the policy does not allow us to tell them that if they do not want to disclose themselves. We thought maybe she wants to abort the child that is why she is denying it. All of a sudden, we had to send that child to the clinic after water break during school hours and then we heard that the baby was dead. We thought that learner did something to the child because signs were there that she doesn't want this child by denying pregnancy until the last day* (Miss Buthelezi, HOD from Dukuza H.).

The views expressed above by the HOD from Dukuza H. were also shared by the LO Educator from Dukuza H.. This LO Educator also emphasised that some learners do not disclose their pregnancy and as educators they could not identify these learners in time. This situation ended up giving the school problems because the pregnant learners had to be sent to the clinic by the school when they are about to deliver. She said:

> *Some learners deny their pregnancy, they do not report it until it becomes late and you find that they have to be rushed to the clinic when it is time to deliver their babies*

because they did not inform the school of their delivery date so that the school will remind the learner when it is time to leave for delivery.

The SMT members found it difficult to identify a pregnant learner without disclosing at an early stage. Some learners did not come to school to report that they were pregnant. The learner pregnancy policy states that it is the responsibility of the pregnant learner to inform a designated educator about the pregnancy. The educator responsible will then has to refer the learner to the clinic and keep record of clinic attendance (DoE, 2007). The challenge with this issue is that when a learner goes into labour at school, there are no school nurses on standby to take care of the learner (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). This is a big challenge to the SMTs without the necessary resources.

6.2.7 The dearth of role models in the community

It emerged from the participants' interviews that the environment that learners came from was not good in the sense that there were no role models in their community. They went to school for the sake of going to school without setting any goals to achieve or aspiring for anything. People they saw in their immediate surroundings in their community were not educated; they were largely unemployed and depended on social grants. For them life revolved around being pregnant and getting married because that what is what was happening in their communities. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. when he said the following:

The community environment has bad influence on these learners and there are no role models. They are staying with their brothers and sisters who do not take life seriously and are involved in sexual relationships and do these things in front of them. Learners think that it's ok to do all these things because at the end of the day you will receive social grant from the government which will help you to be able to feed yourself as job opportunities are very scarce.

The views expressed by Mr Zulu above were also shared by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. He also highlighted that having no role models in the community had negative influence on the learners. They did not imagine themselves going beyond the

schooling system and getting into tertiary institutions. In any case, their elder brothers and sisters were living with then at homes after completing Grade 12 examinations. This is what he said:

> *There are no role models in this area. Learners think that even if they finish schooling they won't be able to go to tertiary institutions because they do not have money to go there. Their families were not learned so what will be different from them. They just think school is no use after matric. Again there are many HIV/AIDS deaths which are experienced here and also child headed households. Many families depend on government social grants* (Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H.).

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Mthembu, the LO educator from Ngwadi H. that having no role models in the community contributed to learner pregnancy because there were so many things happening in the community and they did not even care about education. He said:

> *The environment learners where grow up in contributes to learner pregnancy; they come from poor families. They want social grants. Also many of the families are dysfunctional, some they are always drinking alcohol, there are single parents' households, child headed households and others have parents who do not care about education.*

Furthermore, Mr Zwane, the SGB from Ngwadi H. shared similar views with the above participants that the learners' thoughts were dominated by negativities with no positive energies and inspiring experiences. What they saw year in and year out was poverty, unemployment; illnesses, ukuqoma and ukuthwala, getting pregnant and maybe getting married; the list is endless but there were not positive experiences. This is how Mr Zwane put it:

> *The problem in this area is that there are no role models. These learners think getting pregnant is part of what they need to do forgetting that they are still young.*

The dearth of role models in the communities where the learners grew up had negative influences on them. The influence of the environment in the microsystem; the meso and

exosystem has an impact on the young person. The theoretical framework of this is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Evidently what the data is pointing to here can be explained in terms of the microsystem whereby the parents' educational level in this community is very low. Learners do not look up to young people who have succeeded with their career paths. Learners do not continue with their tertiary education after matric. Again this is evident in the mesosystem whereby the type of family and the community is influential because these learners do not see any one who is committed to education. There are many single parents while others are married but their husbands live far away from them. Instead learners are looking up to these people who did not complete their schooling. There are no role models at all.

6.2.8 Policy silence on the boys in the school

It was revealed from the study that another challenge that the SMTs encountered when implementing the learner pregnancy policy is that this policy is silent when it comes to boy learners. Most of the focus is on girls and not on the people who impregnated those girls. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. when he said:

> *The policy seems to focus mostly on girls and leave out boys. The policy focuses on the behaviour of both girls and boys and prevention of pregnancy for both boys and girls. But it is silent on what to do to boys who impregnated girls. For example, girls should take leave to go and deliver a baby but boys continue to study. It is as if the pregnancy is the responsibility of girls only. Boys should also take leave to go and support the girls.*

The views expressed by Mr Zulu above were also shared by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. He also mentioned that the boys who impregnated the girls continued with their studies while the girl would be on leave for delivery. There is nowhere in the policy where it specifies what the boys should do in case they impregnated the girls especially in the same school. This is what he said:

There is no part in the policy which says what boys should do in case they impregnated a learner. It is silent, only girls lose out from school work when taken leave of absence to deliver a baby while the father of the child is continuing with schooling as if nothing happens. The policy does not even mention that the boys should inform the school especially when it is in the same school (Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H.).

The above views were also shared by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H.. She mentioned that even when the schools organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns the speeches used to be directed at the girls only and left out the boys altogether. This is what she said:

Even when we do learner pregnancy awareness campaigns we stick to girls telling them that if they don't behave themselves well they are going to get pregnant. We don't usually talk to boys that they mustn't impregnate girls during these campaigns. Even stakeholders from other departments focus on girls only (Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H.).

The above views were also shared by Miss Cele the LO Educator from Dukuza H.. She mentioned that the boys who impregnated the girls did not even support these girls. Pregnant girls went through pregnancy alone; sometimes they endured various forms of psychological torture. In the end, they had to catch up with school work done at school while they were absent. This is what she said:

There is nowhere in the policy where it is mentioned that the boys who impregnated the girls should support these girls. They go through everything alone. Just imagine this Grade 6 girl in our school who was impregnated by Grade 12 boy. She had to cope on her own while the boy is focusing on his studies. It's a bit unfair to girls really.

The above extracts show how various participants felt about the policy on pregnant learners being silent on boy learners. It is only the prevention part which also mentioned the boy learners because it is general but the boys are not mentioned on the management part. The prevention part emphasises that the main aim of the Department is to make sure that learners are taught about abstinence and the consequences of involving themselves in sexual activities. Also another aim is to help the learners to make informed options that protects their health and promotes their access to educational opportunities (DoE, 2007). The policy on learner pregnancy states that the prevention measures shall be done by the schools by providing Life Orientation to all learners in the school (DoE, 2007). This means that boy learners are included in the prevention measures. Therefore, there is a challenge of ignoring boy learners in the management of learner pregnancy in schools and procedures when pregnancy occurs.

6.2.9 Male educators not comfortable in dealing with pregnant learners

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that members of the SMT played a big part in ensuring that the policy on learner pregnancy was implemented. However, it has also emerged that male educators were not comfortable in dealing with pregnant learners. Therefore, the three schools made female educators to talk to female learners especially when they discovered those that were pregnant. Male educators made it clear that they did not feel comfortable because pregnant learners were girl learners. They stressed that they could only address both boys and girls on broad issues and not specifically to pregnant learners. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. when he said:

> *We are using female educators in this school to do talk to learners because male educators made it clear to us that they do not feel comfortable to talk to learners especially girl learners about pregnancy and ask us to use female educators as this mostly affect girl learners in high school.*

The above was also shared by Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. that male educators were complaining even to teach in a class where there were pregnant learners. They were saying they did not feel comfortable to be in that class at all. This is what he had to say:

Educators are always complaining about these pregnant learners. They will tell you day in and out that so and so have done this in class to show that she wants my attention. They will tell you that they are not comfortable to teach that class because there are pregnant learners especially male educators.

Mr Mthembu from Mamponjwane H. who is a male LO educator shared similar views from above that it did not feel right for him to approach a pregnant learner. To resolve the problem, he asked female educators to talk to that learner in his class. In addition, male educators were trying to run away from a situation where it might be assumed that they may have impregnated that learner or else the learner herself says it is this educator who has impregnated her because he was seen with him. Sometimes, even the girls themselves were not comfortable to talk to male educators. This is what Mr Mthembu had to say:

When it happens that I suspect that a learner is pregnant in my class, I talk to female educators to talk the learner concerned. It is not easy for me as a male to approach a pregnant learner especially because they are girls. The learners themselves are not comfortable to talk to the male educator about pregnancy, they prefer female educators. I even tell them that they are free to go and talk to the educator they are comfortable to talk to whenever they need to talk. Sometimes you are afraid that when you talk to that girl alone as a male educator, she will say you are the one impregnated her because they will see you alone with that girl; anything can happen so I need to distance myself from that situation and ask help from female educators. I just teach them normally.

The above extract indicates that dealing with pregnant learners may be tricky for male educators. Nevertheless, the data has shown that pregnant learners felt uncomfortable sharing their feelings and experiences with male educators as much as male educators were. Nowadays, male educators do not want to find themselves in compromising situations where they might be suspected that they have impregnated learners in the school. Being uncomfortable to deal with pregnant learners is a challenge to the implementation of learner pregnancy policy because it is the duty of all educators to manage learner pregnancy. The focus is not only on the prevention but also on the management of learner pregnancy. This calls for everyone to be fully involved. Schools should adopt a comprehensive approach to education in order to reach a balance between the interest of the pregnant learners with those

of the school, educators and other learners (DoE, 2007). When learner pregnancy occurs in schools, some SMT members face a challenge because they do not know how to handle a pregnant learner including educators (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). This calls for the SMTs to seek for assistance in this regard.

6.2.10 Negative attitudes displayed by the peers and the educators

The data has indicated that all the participants in the study were in agreement that the SMT members had challenge of negative attitudes which affected successful implementation of the policy on learner pregnancy. Negative attitudes were displayed by pregnant learners themselves, other learners in the schools, especially boys and also by some educators. Negative attitudes displayed by pregnant learners themselves entailed not listening to what the educators were telling them. For instance, they were not submitting their school work as they used to; they also did not do the work that had been given to the other learners while they were absent and they just became lazy. Emphasising the issue of negative attitudes displayed by pregnant learners, Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. had this to say:

> *Learners have bad attitude; they think they know all. They do not listen to educators who always give them advice about how to behave themselves and the consequences of involving themselves in sexual relationships while they are still at school. They do not take their work seriously. They end up being pregnant. For example, those pregnant, educators always complain about them not submitting work on time or not submitting at all. When they were absent they do not bother to ask and continue with the work that was done while they were absent and that they are lazy in class. These attitudes affect the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in such that the numbers goes up instead of going down when learners are told that they should abstain from sexual activities.*

Views expressed by Mr Zulu above were also shared by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD of Dukuza H.. This HOD further emphasised their non cooperation and stubbornness. She said:

We also have to deal with attitude of those learners. They are stubborn, lazy and some of them angry at themselves. They do not cooperate with educators; they do not submit their work.

The views by the SMTs above were corroborated by the LO Educators who worked closely with these learners. Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. confirmed what the SMTs mentioned earlier about bad attitude displayed by pregnant learners. She went on to say that, in fact, as LO educators, they taught these learners in classes and found it difficult to support them with their attitude. This is what she had to say:

But most of all as soon as they are pregnant, they start to perform badly even though many of those learners you find that they were performing badly even before the pregnancy. When we do orals, they will not want to go in front of learners with their big stomachs because they think learners will not concentrate, they will just laugh at them. They end up losing marks again, even if you tell them that no one will laugh at them they are not confident enough to stand in front of the class. When you touch on these topics they do not participate in class; sometimes they feel offended and don't involve themselves in activities done in the class. This makes them to lose out because they don't pay attention to the work done.

The views expressed above were corroborated by the SGB member who worked closely with the SMTs. This member of the SGB from Ngwadi H. confirmed what the SMTs mentioned earlier about bad attitude displayed by learners as a challenge in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. This is what he said:

We are having a problem of ill discipline of learners. Learners are demotivated, they no longer respect people; and they do as they please. They do not listen to adults (Mr Zwane, SGB member from Ngwadi H).

Besides the pregnant learners who displayed negative attitude, other learners from the schools also showed bad attitude towards pregnant learners especially in their classes. This disturbed the educators when teaching because they had to shift the focus on disciplining those learners during class teaching. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal from Dukuza H. when he said:

Sometimes other learners have bad attitude towards pregnant learners; they call them names. They will complain that they feel sleepy in class because of this child who is pregnant. They always watch every step they take and laugh at them like when not performing well in class. Educators have a duty to discipline those learners for the smooth running of the lesson.

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H.. She went on to say that other learners would mock them and laugh at them especially when they knew the identity of the father of the child. This is what she had to say:

Other learners tended to mock, taunt and laugh at this learner especially when they know the father of the unborn baby. They will tell you that they are feeling sleepy because of this pregnant learner. You need to now and again discipline these learners in the middle of the lesson. That disturbs you from your lesson presentation.

Furthermore, the views expressed above were also shared by Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. She emphasised that negative and hostile attitudes displayed by other learners disturbed the teaching and learning. This is what she had to say:

Other learners tend to make jokes especially during LO lesson if we are going to talk about pregnancy; then they will make jokes referring to the pregnant learner. That will cause you to stop and reprimand that child. Other learners have attitudes simple because they want to laugh at this learner with big stomach and called her names and ask her silly questions like how it feels to be pregnant. Even other learners will complain that they are feeling sleepy because there is a pregnant learner in class. All those things disturb the teaching and learning because sometimes you end up talking to them and reminding them about the class rules.

Moreover, the views expressed above were also shared by the Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. He mentioned that educators always complain about other learners who were not pregnant that they had bad attitude towards pregnant learners. He had this to say:

As SGB members we always receive complaints from educators that the learners, particularly those that are not pregnant disturb them when teaching because they show bad attitude towards pregnant learners. They laugh at them and tell the educators that they cannot concentrate because there is a pregnant learner in class.

It was therefore, noted that some educators displayed bad attitude towards the pregnant learners. Some educators considered the issue of supporting pregnant learners as an additional workload on them. They always complained that these learners were lazy and did not want to submit their class work, and thus fell behind in terms of progress with school work. They further complained that it was becoming too much work for them as they were expected to call the ambulance or send these learners to the clinic using their own cars when they were about to give birth while at school. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *Besides the male teachers who always say they find it difficult to work with pregnant learners and that they are not comfortable to speak to these learners. The rest of the educators complain that these learners are lazy, always absent and do not submit the work like other learners you have to drag them to submit. It also becomes a challenge when the delivery time comes when the learner is at school and has not taken leave. Educators have to call the ambulance or send the learner to the clinic with their own cars. They say it is too much for them.*

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. This HOD further emphasised that educators felt that it was a burden for them to do same assessment that were done while the pregnant learners were on leave. The grievance emanated from the fact that they did not do any work while absent due to many reasons like they are busy taking care of their babies and some live far away from school; therefore, they would argue that they did not have time to do their school work. The teachers felt that they were expected to do the work of the nurses because they have to help these learners especially when they were about to give birth during school hours. She had this to say:

> *It's the complaint on the side of the educators that they have to redo the task that was given to other learners while this pregnant learner was absent from school and have to remark again. They take this as an additional work over and above the work they are suppose to do at school because it disturbs them from their schedule of assessments. They will tell you that these learners are ill discipline; you have to beg them to submit their work. Most of these learners live far away from school, so it's not easy sometimes to reach them so that they will do the work they are missing at school. Others move from this place when they are about to deliver to be nearer to*

hospital and clinic. This therefore makes them not to do any of the work until they come back to school (Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H).

The views by the HOD above were corroborated by the LO Educators. Furthermore, educators felt that they now had to play the role of being a nurse instead of teaching learners in classes. This was illustrated by Mr Mthembu an LO Educator from Ngwadi H. when she said:

Again teachers now play a role of being a nurse; they sit with a learner and wait for an ambulance to fetch a learner. This happens especially when the pregnant child broke water in the class or that child gets complications with her pregnancy while at school. It is either we call an ambulance to come and fetch the learner or one of the educators has to send the child to the hospital with their cars. This is too much for the educators.

The views expressed above were also shared by all members of the SGBs that participated in the study. The views elicited from semi-structured interviews were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as observations and documents reviews. In all three schools I discovered that in their log books there were cases reported about educators complaining about pregnant learners that they demonstrated laziness; that they did not concentrate in class and that they did not submit their work which was done while they were absent. Also there were cases about the educators complaining about disturbances that other learners did when there were pregnant learners in their classes and that these were interrupting the educators while teaching was in progress. Again I found out about educators who were complaining about more workload when it came to pregnant learners. They were complaining that they doing one task several times to just to accommodate pregnant learners. Also educators were complaining about using their own cars to send pregnant learners who were in labour to the clinic. Like in Ngwadi H, it was written in the log book on the 4th of March 2015 that the school called an ambulance to come and take a pregnant learner to the clinic because she was in labour but seeing the time was running waiting for an ambulance, the educator was asked to send the learner to the clinic with her own car. Again, when doing rounds after school in Dukuza H., I observed that a Grade 12 catch up class was in session. An educator was having an afternoon class and he had only 3 learners who were teen mothers and he was trying to help them catch up with the work done while they were absent. The

educator expected to have 6 learners but others did not bother to remain behind after school as they were supposed to.

Looking at the above extracts you could sense that the participants were expressing views and experiences that run against the spirit of the policy. Nevertheless, one should also highlight that what these participants expressed is their interpretation of their world as they experienced and made meaning of it. These attitudes displayed by the learners were disruptive to effective teaching and learning. Such attitudes ended up posing a challenge or a barrier to effective implementation of the policy on learner pregnancy which gives the learners a right to education like all other learners. Studies done by Richter and Mlambo (2005) and Miller, Cur, Shanok and Weissman (2008) indicated that the first pregnancy, especially the unplanned type, among teenagers, end up giving learners stress, depression, low self-esteem and identity diffusion. This results in pregnant learners being confused and looking for additional attention in class. These findings could be explaining why pregnant learners behaved themselves in the manner they did.

Furthermore, drawing from the extracts, I detected that educators felt a burden of having to go back and redo the work that they had done. What compounded the situation was that the learners whom they wanted to support were largely uncooperative. They complained about the issue of changing from the role of being an educator to that of being a nurse. This was caused by the learners who did not tell the school the period of their delivery. When a learner goes into labour at school, there are no nurses are on standby to take care of the learner (Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). Also Mpanza and Nzima (2006) agree with the above view and experience, saying in case of emergencies there are no school nurses who are skilled to deal with those learners, and to give counselling to these learners and first aid kits are not provided to these learners. This makes it difficult for the SMTs and educators to handle pregnant learners in their schools.

6.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented the data on challenges faced by the SMT members when implementing the policy on pregnant learner. I reported on data generated through individual

interviews I conducted with the principals, the HODs, the LO educators and parents who were members the SGB in the three schools. Furthermore, I reported on the data generated through observations and documents reviews from these schools.

The data has suggested that the implementation of the policy on learner pregnancy faced a number of challenges. The detailed discussion is made in Sections 6.2.4; 6.2.5.; 6.2.6 and so forth). The other challenges had less to do with the implementation of the policy as such, but had more to do with conditions that promoted learner pregnancy. The discussion thereof can be found in these sections (6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.2.3 and so forth). In the next chapter, I present the perspectives of the participants on the strategies used by the SMTs to overcome the challenges encountered in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in schools.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STRATEGIES USED BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed data generated from principals, HODs, LO educators and SGBs on the challenges encountered by the SMTs in implementing the learner pregnancy policy. In this chapter, I present a discussion about what the three principals, three HODs, three LO educators and three SGBs perceived as strategies that were used by the SMT members to overcome the challenges encountered during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools. In presenting the data, *verbatim* quotations are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporates data generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two is infused into the discussion.

7.2 Presentation and discussion of strategies used to deal with the challenges

Nine broad strategies were identified and are used as headings to discuss data in this chapter. These strategies were (1) Academic support given to pregnant learners and teen mothers (2) Promotion of peer education programme within the school (3) Promotion of sexuality education (4) Embracing and the promotion of Zulu custom (5) Stakeholders' involvement in prevention of learner pregnancy was promoted (6) Avoiding pregnant learners delivering babies in school (7) Provision of scholar transport for learners living far away from school (8) Encouraging sustained provision of nutrition programme by the KZNDoE (9) Supporting learner involvement in different activities. A detailed discussion of these strategies is presented below.

7.2.1 Academic support given to pregnant learners during and after delivery

It emerged from the study that pregnant learners during and after delivery were given academic support by educators to enable them to catch up with the work done while they were absent. Sometimes pregnant learners had to attend clinics while others experienced some complications with their pregnancies, and therefore, needed to absent themselves from school. Others took leave of absence for the time to give birth as provided for in the learner pregnancy policy (DoE, 2007). The work done during that time was given to them especially assessment done in absentia was given to them when they come back to school. Sometimes they gave the work to learners living near the pregnant learners as the schools were situated in rural areas and it was hard for educators to reach learners in their homes. Also they asked parents to come and collect the work for their children. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. by saying:

> *We have a vast rural area and it becomes very difficult for educators to visit these learners to give them school work as the policy says. So what we normally do those learners who are living closer to that one, we do give them some work or ask the parents to collect work for their children.*

The views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by the Principal of Ngwadi H. and the Principal of Mamponjwane H. respectively. For instance, Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. mentioned that learners were given academic support by the educators in their classes. The educators even sat with these learners after school in order to help them to catch up with the work done while they were not there. This is what he had to say:

> *Most of the learners are supported academically; educators give them extra work in class. They are given assessments that were done while they were absent in order for them to have marks for continuous assessment. Some join learners who prefer to study after school instead of going straight back home* (Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H.).

The views expressed above by the principals were also shared by the HODs of all three schools that participated in the study. For instance, Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. emphasised that they asked the educators to report the pregnancy so that all the educators would be informed and will be able to give those learners academic support. Educators were asked to help those learners to the point that they extended their due dates for some submissions to allow them enough time to finish the work. This is what Miss Hlophe the HOD from Ngwadi H. had to say in that regard:

> *If the learners are absent, teachers have to report so that the teacher will give learners the work done. When they are not at school, we send the assessment to them with other learners living close to their homes. We ask the educators to inform the SMT when a learner is pregnant. Educators have to support that learner academically and also when not coping with stress pregnancy comes with, we ask them to handle that learner with care. They do not give her pressure, they have to give her time to do and submit their work even if it is over the due date.*

The views expressed by Miss Hlophe above were also shared by Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. He mentioned that the pregnant learners and those that had already given birth were given academic support. These took the form of extra classes that were offered in the afternoon in order to help them to catch up with the work. This is what Mr Ndebele the HOD from Mamponjwane H. had to say:

> *We encourage educators also to give them work that was done while they were on leave for delivery and try to involve them in extra classes.*

While there was broad agreement among all the participants that academic support was given to pregnant learners, one of the educators suggested that such support was not always well-received by the affected learners. For instance, some of the learners did not take support offered by the teachers seriously; they did not attend those extra classes while others did not submit the work given to them. This view was expressed by Miss Ndlangisa the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. who said:

We give them support academically and socially. For example, we give them extra work to do so that they catch up and involve them in the morning and afternoon classes, sometimes even weekends we teach them. But you find that those that do not perform well do not come to all those classes and do not do that extra work saying it is too much for them. They will tell you that they don't have time at home because they have to do house work and also take care of their babies so there is no time for school work at home. They give you many excuses not to submit their work on time.

It is disturbing that these learners were not taking their work seriously even though the educators tried their best to support them. They did not see that the educators were trying to help them to catch up with their work when arranging extra classes for them as the policy indicate that they must be given academic support. The views expressed above were also shared by Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. He mentioned that the educators did support the pregnant learners in catching up with their work by organising extra classes. He also highlighted that these learners did not attend these classes giving many reasons. Mr Cindi, the SGB member from Dukuza H. said:

They organise extra classes for these learners to help them with school work missed. Although most of the learners do not attend these classes saying they are busy in their homes.

The narratives expressed in the extracts above were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as document analysis. When I looked at the HODs minute book in Dukuza H., it was written on the 23rd of July 2015, that the educators should make sure that pregnant the learners are supported with their academic work. But it was also written that the educators complained that some of these learners did not bother to send back the work that has been given to other learners to give it to them when they are at home. Again it was written that educators asked the SMTs to talk to the parents in their meetings that they should work with them in supporting these learners as they needed them to submit work done as it is not easy to do everything when they come back after delivery.

Looking at the above extracts, it is evident that indeed pregnant learners were given support by the school academically and socially. Even after delivery educators took their time to help these learners catch up with the work done while they were on leave for delivery. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) concur with Ferguson and Woodward (2000) in their study, that if learner mothers continue with their studies after delivery and receive necessary support from school, they can manage to complete their secondary education and further their studies in the tertiary institutions. The policy states 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 (DoE, 2007). The above showed caring relationships possessed by the SMTs through educators in these schools. Although only few learners were coping with school work during and after pregnancy but at least educators were meeting these learners halfway to assist them in catching up. The SMTs as invitational leaders did not give up on these learners; they showed the principle of optimism. This means they viewed the problem of learner pregnancy as opportunity to show how serious they were about allowing all learners to complete their schooling regardless of pregnancy (Stillion & Siegel, 2005).

7.2.2 Promotion of peer education programme within the school

It emerged from all the participants that peer education programme was one of the strategies used by the SMT members to promote effective implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The SMT members supported peer educators in the work that they did for the schools. Peer educators in these schools educated other learners about life skills to help them change their lifestyle and behaviour. They came up with strategies to decrease learner pregnancy like teaching other learners using drama and poetry. They worked together with educators in addressing social ills in these schools. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. by saying that:

> *We have peer educators who now and again address learners on pregnancy. They teach learners about Lifeskills, they emphasise that learners should not involve themselves in sexual activities, and they should wait until they are older. They address the learners about the consequences of unsafe sex and tell and how falling pregnant*

while still young will ruin their future. They emphasise that learners should focus on their studies so that they will complete their schooling and find jobs to take care of their families in a perfect way. Peer educators educate these learners in entertaining ways so that they will catch their attention not like teachers in classes. For example, they will do drama, story-telling and poems which educate about learner pregnancy and its consequences.

Views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by the Principal of Ngwadi H. and the Principal of Mamponjwane H. respectively. It was revealed in all three schools that the Department appointed an out of school youth temporarily to become Learner Support Agents. For instance, Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. had this to say about the role of Learner Support Agent in the school:

The Department appointed a learner support agent for the school to assist us in dealing with learner pregnancy. The learner support agent work together with peer educators and goes an extra mile by allowing learners to come to her individually with their problems especially social problems to try to help these learners to be able to focus on school work effectively. They even talk to pregnant learners on how to handle their pregnancy and emphasise not to drop out due to pregnancy and that they must continue with school.

Furthermore, all the HODs agreed with the view of promoting peer education programme in their schools in order to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively. They also emphasised that peer educators did not work with educators only, but they also worked with a Learner Support Agent in dealing with social ills. Mr Ndebele, the HOD from Mamponjwane H. has this to say:

There is peer education programme and a learner support agent which has been introduced in our school. This programme helps other learners to understand our point of discouraging pregnancy if it is said by learners who are of the same age as theirs. These peer educators educate other learners about Lifeskills, HIV/AIDs etc. Also we have a learner support agent who is working with peer educators. This

learner support agent is not old, he is of similar age with these learners and they listen to him better than educators themselves. Also learners are not afraid to approach him when they are experiencing social problems compared to educators themselves. He tries to help them and refer them if needs be for professional help.

Moreover, the LO Educators shared similar views with the SMT from Mamponjwane H. above. They mentioned that peer education programme was being promoted in their schools. As part of peer education programme, these learners also organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns together with the SMT members. They invited all relevant stakeholders in their campaigns to come and do awareness to all learners about learner pregnancy and its consequences. Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

The SMTs conduct workshops for all learners, especially senior classes and FET phase with the help of peer educators and learner support agent. In these workshops, they allow peer educators to teach learners about Lifeskills, for example, good decision making and health relationships. Again the SMTs organise learner pregnancy awareness campaign where they work with peer educators. They invite social workers and school nurses to come and address learners on pregnancy like abstinence, consequences of pregnancy and also social issues like welfare issues especially at home.

The SGB members expressed similar sentiments about the promotion of peer education programme as a strategy used by the SMT members to overcome the challenges encountered in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. They mentioned that the peer educators were role models of other learners in the school as they behaved very well. Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. has this to say:

The SMTs work together with peer educators to do learner pregnancy awareness campaigns where they invite many people who will talk to learners and tell them about the dangers of being pregnant while at school. They give time to peer educators to educate other learners on social issues like the consequences of learner pregnancy. These peer educators are exemplary to other learners as they show good behaviour in the school.

The narratives that emerged from the extracts above were corroborated by the data generated from documents' reviews. Looking at the log book in all three schools, it was written that there was a peer education programme that was taking place and that these learners were given time to address other learners about learner pregnancy and also to educate them about Lifeskills. Again in all schools on the 6th of June 2014, it was written that there were interviews for learner support agents as per management plan from the District Office, who was going to work with peer educators in eradicating social ills in the school. The log books also showed that peer educators worked together with the SMT members in organising learner pregnancy awareness campaigns with the help of other stakeholders like school nurses and social workers.

The above extracts emphasise promoting and supporting peer education programme by the SMT members in order to effectively implement the policy on learner pregnancy. The introduction of Learner Support Agents which was meant to strengthen peer education programme was also emphasised. These learners educated other learners and did advocacy campaigns on life skills and learner pregnancy. Using this strategy of peer education programme in schools helped mitigate negative effects of learner pregnancy. Such successes could be attributed to the notion that as learners talk to one another as equals as compared to adults talking all the time, better results can be achieved. According to Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009), peer education programme is used as a strategy to intervene with adolescent sexual and reproductive health because it uses existing networks of communication and interaction. Evidence of peer education implementation suggests that if this programme is well developed there is a potential positive impact on self-esteem, confidence and resistance of peer pressure for both the learners and the peer educators themselves (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). The SMTs in these schools seemed to be invitational leaders because they provided peer educators recognition by given them a platform to showcase their skills and knowledge in trying to decrease learner pregnancy and taking care of pregnant learners(Halpin, 2003). This motivated peer educators to do more. However, I should not be seen to be suggesting a rosy picture due to peer education because, in fact, learner pregnancy has not been eradicated; it is still a persisting phenomenon in these schools.

7.2.3 Promotion of sexuality education in the schools

The then Department of Education introduced Life Orientation (LO) subject to the learners in order to help them with Lifeskills (DoE, 2003). It emerged from the interviews that LO subject was being supported and promoted in schools as a strategy to deal with learner pregnancy. It was revealed that LO educators taught learners about sexuality education as part of the curriculum. This was illustrated by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. when she said:

> *As an HOD for Humanities I promote and support the teaching of sexuality education amongst the learners. Besides that it is within the curriculum, I also think it helps the learners a lot. I believe that introducing sexuality education in schools was a correct move because it helps the learners to understand themselves and be aware of their developments.*

Views expressed by Miss Buthelezi above were also shared by the HOD of Ngwadi H. and the HOD of Mamponjwane H. respectively. It also emerged that sometimes educators did not feel comfortable to talk about sexuality issues with learners but the SMTs gave them support in order for them to be confident in dealing with these issues. For instance, Miss Hlophe the HOD from Ngwadi H. highlighted the following:

> *As an SMT member, I support the teaching of sexuality education to the learners. Sometimes educators do not feel comfortable to deal with this topic but I make sure that LO Educators feel comfortable to talk about sexuality issues to learners by giving them my full support. When we have meetings with them, we discuss the approaches they can use to teach sexuality education to learners in a way that will not offend anyone in the class.*

In the similar vein, the LO Educators mentioned that to overcome the challenges encountered in implementing learner pregnancy policy, the SMTs especially, the HODs did promote the

teaching of sexuality education to learners. Miss Hlophe, the LO Educator from Ngwadi H. had this to say:

> *I think that sexuality education should be stressed in our lessons as LO educators. This help the learners understand their bodies and their developments. The SMTs especially our HOD do support us and help us with the approaches of teaching sexuality education to learners.*

Another LO Educator emphasised that some parents were not comfortable to talk to their learners about sexuality issues while others thought that it was teaching their children about sex. But she also thought that it was not enough to teach the learners about sexuality education only, but that what they needed to do as educators was to be sensitive about other people's beliefs and values. Miss Cele the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

> *We as LO Educators have a challenge when teaching sexuality education because some parents do not feel comfortable to allow us to teach their children about these issues. But the SMT members remind us to be cautious when we deal with these issues not to undermine other peoples' values and beliefs. Other than that, they support us very much in teaching sexuality education.*

The views expressed above were also shared by Mr Nkabinde the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. He mentioned that the educators were being supported by the SMTs in teaching sexuality education in order to help learners to delay sex. He expressed a concern that some parents did not understanding what was being taught to their children but emphasised that the SMTs helped the parents in understanding the rationale behind the teaching of sexuality education in schools. This is what Mr Nkabinde the SGB member from Mamponjwane H. had to say:

> *The SMTs in this school addressed parents who were concerned about teaching their children about sexuality education because they thought it is teaching them about sex.*

That shows that they support the educators in teaching about sexuality education in their lessons.

Looking at the above extracts, one can conclude that sexuality education is one of the strategies that helped the SMTs to deal with the challenges of implementing learner pregnancy policy. It was also evident that to some parents, talking about sexuality to the children was a taboo subject. Nevertheless, the SMT members of the three schools promoted sexuality education and also supported LO Educators in teaching it. This means that LO subject was taken seriously in schools and relevant educators to teach it were selected by SMTs with the aim of helping learners deal with social issues in schools. According to Ventura, Mathews and Hammilton (2001), there are many studies that have been done about effective strategies to prevent learner pregnancy. For instance, there is a comprehensive sexuality education programmes which was introduced in schools which promoted access to reproductive health care which is a necessity for all learners. On this issue, Majova (2002) states that one of the main goals of a comprehensive sexuality education programmes is to assist learners develop and understand their values, attitudes and beliefs about sexuality and to assist them develop relationship and interpersonal skills. Also Kirby (2007) states that there is strong evidence that the introduction of sexuality education in schools can delay and promote safe sex. But even though the SMTs were putting their efforts in supporting the sexuality education which was taught through LO subject, the learners were still getting pregnant.

7.2.4 Embracing and promoting some Zulu traditions and customs

I have highlighted in the previous chapters that there were challenges in the community posed by the influence of the Zulu tradition of *ukuqoma* and *ukumisa iduku*. But there were also competing positive cultural traditions that were practised which had a positive effect on minimising learner pregnancy in these communities. The old Zulu custom which had become traditional in these areas is virginity testing which and the schools supported it. The girls in the communities were tested by women elders whether they were still virgins or not. They were also taught how to behave themselves if they wanted to stay virgins until they got married. Those girls who participated in that custom became role models to other learners in

the school because they did not involve themselves in sexual relationships and they did not get pregnant. This is what Mr Dladla; the Principal of Dukuza H. had to say in that regard:

> *We also support and promote this custom of virginity testing whereby some mothers in the community test young girls to see whether they are still virgins because we think by learners getting tested that they are virgins, they will always abstain from sex. Again these mothers who are responsible for virginity testing also educate these young girls about life as a whole, how to behave themselves which indeed help us to prevent pregnancies in our schools.*

Views expressed by Mr Dladla above were also shared by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. He highlighted that it was easier to support virginity testing in their school because even some of the governing body members were also involved in it in the community. Therefore, what they told the learners regarding issues of abstinence in school was also what was preached to these young girls when they were subjected to virginity testing. In some ways, what was happening in the virginity testing was a continuation of what the school was emphasising to the learners in schools. Therefore, it made it easier for the SMTs to support virginity testing. Mr Zulu had this to say:

> *Most of the parents who are in the SGB are also those who are responsible for virginity testing structures; they help us by communicating these positive messages to the young girls. They emphasise to these girls that they must behave themselves and should not involve themselves in sexual relationships while they are still young; they emphasise the consequences of unsafe sex and also of falling pregnant while still young. All in all, they emphasise abstinence to these girls which is what the school is also emphasising.*

While agreeing with Mr Zulu's sentiments above, Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H., emphasised the issue of incentives for the girls that participated in the virginity testing. He said that the girls who attended virginity testing in their community also got a rare opportunity of presenting themselves to "umkhosi womhlanga" (Reed Dance). That process entailed the girls being invited to a reed dance which is annually organised by His Majesty,

King Zwelithini, the king of the Zulus. This annual event takes place at Enyokeni, one of his Royal Palaces in Nongoma. This event is attended by many people in KZN province where young girls who are virgins showcase their traditional dances. They are taught by the elders to always show good behaviour and abstinence is emphasised. They also meet other girls from all over the province and enjoy themselves there. Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

> *These learners attend the group in the community where they are checked that they are still virgins by a certain mother; they are checked that they haven't involved themselves in sexual activities. They also teach them to behave themselves and to wait for their time to come when they get married. They also emphasise that if they don't abstain from sex they can end up falling pregnant and tell them the consequences of being pregnant while still growing. These girls also attend "umkhosi womhlanga" organised by the Zulu King Zwelithini Zulu. Last year we had 15 girls who attended this reed dance at Enyokeni in Nongoma. These girls are role models to the other learners and some learners copying that good fashion that you need to abstain from sex until proper time comes and you get a chance to attend "umkhosi womhlanga" which is a very big event in the Zulu Kingdom.*

The views expressed by the principals above were also shared by the HODs from the other schools. For instance, Mr Ndebele the HOD from Mamponjwane H. mentioned that even though they were supporting this Zulu custom of virginity testing amongst young girls, they were also aware that some people were against it saying it did not respect the rights of the girls. However, because they could see positive contribution made by such a custom, and that the girls involved were enjoying themselves, to them it was like a bonus. Mr Ndebele the HOD from Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

> *The school supports the girl learners attending "umkhosi womhlanga" because it is where the learners show pride that they are still virgins and that they do not involve themselves in sexual activities. We are aware that some people do not approve of this Zulu custom like people from gender rights saying it is violating the rights of girls but it is working for us. The girls like it and they do not see any violation of their rights because no one forces them to attend.*

The views expressed by the SMTs were also shared by the members of the SGBs. For instance, Mr Zwane the SGB member from Ngwadi H. mentioned that the female members of the SGB in this school were involved in virginity testing and that they supported it as a school. This is what he had to say:

> *We as SGB in this school support this thing of virginity testing and even some of the female SGB members here are involved in it. This helps us to promote abstinence in our children. Also every girl wishes to attend "umkhosi womhlanga" but only those who are still virgins get the opportunity to attend. This motivates other learners to abstain from sex and help us to prevent learner pregnancy in our school.*

The narratives expressed above were corroborated by the data generated from documents reviews. To confirm what the schools were saying about supporting the Zulu custom of virginity testing, the log book in Mamponjwane H. on the 4th of September 2015, it was written that 15 learners were not in school because they were attending "umkhosi womhlanga'; educators were reminded to arrange for these learners to write the LO examination immediately when they come back on Monday because it was a day for the final Grade 12 LO examinations which took place in September on a Friday when these learners had to leave for this occasion.

Looking at the above extracts, one can conclude that virginity testing was supported by all these schools and it helped them in dealing with the problem of learner pregnancy and promoting good behaviour amongst the girls. Even though this activity was done outside of the school premises but supporting it showed how inviting the SMTs were in supporting activities can help them implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). Although there were still challenges of "iduku and ukuqoma" but abstinence was still promoted by some of the community members through virginity testing. The Millennium Development Goals (MGD) have a clause that is exclusively devoted to the principle of gender equality in order to intensify access to, and completion of education by girls and women at all levels of education (UNESCO, 2005). In addition, one of the principles of the Vision 2030 which is geared towards a Learning Nation for Industrialisation

and a better life to all says that there should be respect for cultural and family values by providing enough adaptability to allow for a range of choices (Hubbard, 2012). This Zulu custom of virginity testing is amongst those strategies that were used by the schools in their implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. But the challenge could be that it was only a few numbers of girls who were attending this virginity testing activity; therefore, the rest of the girls were still exposed to getting pregnant because they did not take this custom seriously.

7.2.5 Promotion of the stakeholders' involvement in the prevention of learner pregnancy

The SMTs in these schools revealed that they worked with all relevant stakeholders in overcoming the challenges they experienced when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. The schools mentioned that the involvement of all stakeholders was important because they had a role to play in implementing learner pregnancy policy. This became more visible during the learner pregnancy campaigns when mobilising sessions for all learners in the school. Stakeholder involvement was also used as a strategy to deal with their challenges that the SMT member came across during policy implementation. This was illustrated by Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. saying:

> *We invite school nurses from the DoH, social workers from DSD, police officer from SAPS and even parent members from SGB to come and talk to learners about learner pregnancy; how they must behave themselves emphasising abstinence, consequences of unsafe sex and the dangers of falling pregnant while still young. All these stakeholders assist in the prevention of learner pregnancy. SAPS bring the ex-prisoners to address the learners about their experiences in jail and tell learners that they should make sure that they complete their studies because they will not find work and end up doing criminal activities which will lead them going to jail and ruining their future.*

The views expressed by Mr Zulu were also shared by both Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. and Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. respectively. But Mr Dladla went on to say that they even involved religious and traditional learners to help them address the

challenge of the Zulu tradition of "ukuthwala", "ukuqoma" and "iduku" to discourage learners from involving themselves while they were still at school. When parents did not avail themselves to school when called, they tried to visit their homes but sometimes they involved the traditional leaders and social workers to visit their homes. Mr Dladla the Principal of Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *We also involve religious and traditional leaders. We try to address this ritual of "ukuthwala", "ukuqoma" and "iduku" so that these leaders will help us to communicate positive messages to the entire community that learners must be given a chance to complete their studies before getting married. They try to discourage them from engaging in these activities while they are still young. We sometimes visit their homes, when we feel it is too far from school we involve Izinduna and social workers to talk to their parents. That is where we get the feedback that the child is living with a granny; their parents are unemployed and illiterate. Some of them their parents work far from home. Therefore, we treat them accordingly knowing their background*
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The views expressed by the principals above were also shared by the HODs. For instance, Mr Ndebele the HOD from Mamponjwane H. mentioned that they made use of all stakeholders to talk to both parents and learners on sexuality issues and discouraged learners from engaging in this tradition because they ended up getting pregnant while they were still at school. This is what Mr Ndebele had to say:

> *We make use of mobile clinics; nurses talk to the parents and the learners. They give education on sexuality issues to parents and learners. The school talk about the use of condoms but do not distribute them and ask nurses to talk to individual learners and give them condoms if they see the need. We try to talk to traditional leaders through SGBs to discourage this culture of "ukuthwala" and "iduku" especially to school going children. Although we felt it is very difficult to convince people of their culture but we try our best.*

Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. mentioned that they worked with other stakeholders in dealing with learner pregnancy. She mentioned that they tried to engage the

parents for the learner who got pregnant while doing Grade Six and they felt that it was a police case but the parents did not open the case and they referred the matter to the social worker. Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *We called the parent of the Grade Six learner who was pregnant and asked the parent to open the case to the police. We made the parent aware that the child was underage and this was a court case. But when we do a follow up, we heard that the parents of the boy had already paid the damages to the girl's family so they didn't open the case. We did our part so if the parent do not want to do it, we then referred the matter to the social workers who knows how to handle those cases.*

The data indicated that, from the participants' perspectives, it was very discouraging for the schools to deal with parents who did not seem to prioritise the education of their children. Some parents did not care that their children were pregnant; they focused on getting money for damages from the boyfriend's family or even getting "lobola" for their children regardless of the age of the child. This kind of behaviour from our communities promotes learner pregnancy instead of promoting education of their children. Therefore, the scenario outlined above negatively affected the implementation of learner pregnancy in schools. The LO educators shared similar views expressed by the SMTs above. They mentioned that the SMTs involved all stakeholders to deal with learner pregnancy in the school. Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. also mentioned that it was the Department of Education which helped them to work with sister Departments because they liaised with them to come and help the schools. Miss Cele the LO Educator from Dukuza H. said:

> *Sometimes we get nurses to come to school; they don't deal with learner pregnancy issues only sometimes they talk about hygiene, sexuality education. We do have social workers that come and talk to learners about pregnancy and social grants. Department officials from Education are the ones that makes it possible for the school to work with other Departments because they liase with them and ask them to visit our school often.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by the SGB members in all schools that the SMT members promoted the involvement of all stakeholders in dealing with the challenges in the

implementation of learner pregnancy policy. For instance, Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H. mentioned that they used the stakeholders to talk to learners as well as parents because some parents did not know how to deal with pregnancies in their homes. This is how Mr Zwane put it:

> *We as SGB members together with the SMT also discuss with parents the challenges they come across when their children fall pregnant and we try to help them sometimes we even invite the social workers and nurses to talk to parents about these issues to help parents in dealing with learner pregnancy in their homes. For example, the nurse will talk about pregnancy complications and how to take care of their children and signs and symptoms of pregnancy complication. Also social workers talk about social grants and how to access them.*

The views expressed above were also shared by Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. that they used home based carers to visit learners' homes to talk to their parents in order to support the pregnant learners. He also mentioned that they invited other stakeholders to support these learners and to discourage learners from involving themselves in these traditional activities while they were still at school. Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *The SMT use home based carers to talk to parents. They ask the home based carers and social workers to do home visits for learners to find out who is living with that pregnant learner and how to support the learner. They also invite school nurses and social workers to come and talk to learners about pregnancy, how they should avoid pregnancy and give them sexuality education. They talk to learners about abstinence and using condoms to prevent pregnancy and diseases. They ask the social workers to arrange social grants for those learners who live alone and do not have food. They discourage learners from engaging in this culture of "ukuqoma" while they are still young by using religious and traditional leaders.*

The narratives expressed above were corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as documents reviews. For instance, on the 3rd of August 2015, in the parents' minute

book from Dukuza H., it was written that the religious and traditional leaders were invited to attend the meeting and were given the opportunity to talk to the parents about learner pregnancy and its consequences and also to discourage parents from supporting this culture of “iduku”, “ukuqoma” and “ukuthwala” saying that they must encourage their children to wait and focus on their studies. This shows that the schools were involving as many stakeholders as possible who could have a positive influence in the communities to address learner pregnancy.

All three schools worked with other stakeholders to overcome the challenges encountered in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. As this is a social issue, involving everyone helped to make a difference in addressing learner pregnancy in schools. Learners will see the seriousness of this issue when seeing all stakeholders working together to help them to achieve their goals by completing their schooling. According to Matlala, Nolte and Temane (2014), the Department of Basic Education together with Department of Health introduced the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) which is being implemented in schools where health education to all learners is done including the combination prevention strategy and sexual reproductive health. This programme assisted the schools to work hand in hand with school nurses and social workers to address all social ills including learner pregnancy. Again they said that a multi-sectoral approach in addressing social challenges affecting learners including learner pregnancy and HIV/AIDS are amongst the strategies used. All stakeholders involved in the education of the learners from all sectors work together (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014). The SMTs in these schools allowed participation of all stakeholders as invitational leaders. They knew that they could not work in isolation; skills and knowledge from other stakeholders were collaborated into their programmes. These SMTs created cooperative and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to assist them in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy (Hansen, 1998). Nonetheless in all these efforts, learner pregnancy is still a challenge in all these schools.

7.2.6 Avoiding pregnant learners delivering babies in school

The proposal to keep pregnant learners in schools for an extended period of time has proved to have some negative effects. The data indicates that there was a challenge experienced by some schools whereby certain pregnant learners reached an advanced stage of pregnancy and

were about to give birth within the school premises. Water broke while they were still attending school and had to be sent to the clinic using educators' cars for delivery. It emerged from the interviews only in Dukuza H. that the SMT members tried to avoid this situation from happening in school. They asked for the clinic cards from pregnant learners to ensure safe delivery, and delivery dates have to be known by the school management. They also worked with the parents of pregnant learners to assist the school by accompanying the pregnant learner to school when a pregnant learner is about to deliver especially during examination time so that when anything happen the parent will be available. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. when he said:

> *We have those learners who do not tell us their date of delivery; some even tell us the wrong date I should think because others broke water while they are still at school and the teachers have to call ambulance to fetch the child or send the child to the clinic with their own cars. We decided in a parents meeting that when the learner is highly pregnant and do not leave school especially during exam time; she must come with her parents to school so that if she is about to deliver at school the parent will take the child to the clinic herself.*

Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. shared similar view with Mr Dladla that it was agreed that a pregnant learner should take a leave four weeks before delivery date and if a child wanted to continue to come school in that period, she must be accompanied by her parents so that they will take responsibility for sending the child to the clinic should it comes to that. Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *If a learner is pregnant, 4 weeks before delivery, they have to leave school. Otherwise if she is still fit to come to school, the parent has to come to school to accompany a learner because we cannot take the responsibility for what happens to the pregnant learner at school.*

Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. concurred with the above view from the HOD that the SMT decided to prevent pregnant learners giving birth at school by involving their parents. But she mentioned that the learners did not cooperate on this matter; they did not

bother to submit their clinic cards. Instead, they gave the SMTs wrong dates intentionally to avoid taking a leave and end up breaking water in school so that it appears as premature delivery. She said to avoid that they referred a pregnant learner to a Learner Support Agent at school to talk to the pregnant learners and make sure that he had the correct delivery dates because they trust him. Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *We use the learner support agent to accompany a pregnant learner to the clinic or else speak and make sense to the pregnant learner who usually prefers to speak to him rather than to the educators. This helps us to send a child home for delivery in time before delivering a baby at school.*

Mr Cindi, a member of the SGB from Dukuza H. also shared similar views expressed above that they agreed with the parents that if a pregnant learner did not want to take leave while heavily pregnant especially during the examinations, the parent must accompany that learner to school. However, she highlighted that most of the parents did not bother to come to school and the school ended up forcing the child to leave school then. This is what Mr Cindi, the SGB member from Dukuza H. had to say:

> *SMTs also came up with that if a learner does not want to leave school or it is exam time, the parent has to come to school to accompany the learner because they cannot take the responsibility for what happens to the learner who is pregnant at school. But parents do not want to take their responsibility, they think what happens at school belongs to school. They do not bother to accompany their highly pregnant learners to school and also do not bother to come and fetch learners' work when they have gone to deliver their babies. If a parent is not coming to school, than a highly pregnant learner leaves the school because it is close to her delivery to avoid delivering a baby at school even if it is exam time.*

Looking at the strategy mentioned above, it is clear that schools have tried to avoid pregnant learners giving birth within the school premises. Even though they could not identify pregnant learners at an early stage but they tried to have a record about when pregnant girls were due to give birth. While the policy stipulates that the learner should inform the school

when pregnant and the school should keep record of clinic attendance, these learners did not make it easy for the schools when they kept important details about their pregnancy to themselves. In order to help the pregnant learner, the school should provide counselling and guidance services to pregnant learners and their parents for the benefit of the learner and the baby (DoE, 2007). Furthermore, the learner pregnancy policy states that schools should strongly make sure that the learners continue with education prior to and after delivery (DoE, 2007). Therefore, the schools should allow the pregnant girls to continue with their education during pregnancy for as long as their medical conditions allow them to do so (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Hubbard, Munyinyi, Eggerman, Schulze-Allen, Carew-Watts, Holt, Coomer, Van Wyk, Schmidt, Zimry & Barth, 2008). Nevertheless, the parents were still not taking their responsibility by working with the school which led to a learner being sent home for delivery even during examination time and ended up dropping from school and repeating the same grade the following year.

7.2.7 Provision of scholar transport for learners living far away from school

One of the challenges that were mentioned in this study was that learners were travelling long distances to and from schools. The learners took advantage of the long distances and used that time to spend with their boyfriends before going home or even ended up bunking classes in the morning. Because there was lack of communication between the school and homes, some parents were not aware that their children did not come to school and dodge classes. It was only Dukuza H. which mentioned that they have attended to this challenge by applying to the Department to provide them with scholar transport programme and succeeded. The Department provided them with busses to transport learners to and from school. Opportunities to stop by at their boyfriends homes while on the way to school and vice versa have diminished because they travel by a bus. Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *Seeing that our learners are travelling long distances to school, we applied for the learner transport programme to the department and it was approved. We now have learner transport available for them. We think this will help us because learners will now travel straight from home to school and back home again in the afternoon without going to their boyfriends along the way or even dodging classes. As you can see outside there are 15 buses waiting to transport learners back home this afternoon.*

The views expressed above were also shared by Miss Buthelezi, the HOD from Dukuza H. that they were fortunate to be able to be involved in the scholar transport programme. She mentioned how they came up with an idea of applying for this programme to help their learners. Miss Buthelezi from Dukuza H. had this to say:

> *We set down with the SGB and discussed this challenge and came up with a motivation as to why we need these busses. We mentioned the issue of high rate of learner pregnancy due to long distances to school and of course the high rate of late coming. We mentioned that there is lack of communication between the school and learners homes due to long distances from school. Parents think their children are at school while the school think the children are at their homes when absent.*

Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. shared the similar view with the SMTs about providing scholar transport for learners to overcome the challenge of travelling long distances to school and ended up being pregnant because they bunked classes along the way. Miss Cele the LO Educator from Dukuza H. said:

> *There are now school busses which the SMT applied for from the Department because our learners live far away from school. These busses are transporting learners from homes to school and backwards. We really think these busses will help us in preventing more pregnancies which were caused by learners travelling long distances to school where they ended up dodging classes and visiting their boyfriends while at home they think the child is at school. Even after school these learners were ending up coming home very late saying they were held up at school while they went to their boyfriends place on the way home. Now its home straight to school and school straight back home.*

A member of the SGB also shared the similar view with the above praising the SMT for such a brilliant idea of scholar transport. He mentioned though that some learners did not travel by busses sometimes claiming they were late and the busses left them especially in the mornings. This is what Mr Cindi the SGB member from Dukuza H. had to say:

We supported the SMT in their good suggestion that the school must apply for a scholar transport so that we try to prevent learner pregnancy, dodging of classes and late coming from the side of learners who are travelling long distances to school. We now have 15 busses that are transporting these learners every day. But there are still learners who do not travel by buses at other times claiming that they woke up late and couldn't catch a bus in the morning.

My personal observation in Dukuza H. confirmed that scholar transport was a reality in that school. When I came closer to the school gate in Dukuza H., I could see buses standing outside the school premises. I even got out of the car to count the number of them the way they were so many and I could count up to 15 busses. I waited to see the learners getting inside the busses after school and you could see that the SMTs were involved in sorting the learners to each bus and the process unfolded smoothly. I followed one bus to see how the learners got out to their homes and it was doing this like a taxi not like a bus with bus stops; it was stopping anywhere, I think it was doing this to ensure that all learners got out of the bus where it was closer to their homes not far away from home. One could conclude that the strategy of providing the scholar transport programme in the school could help the SMTs in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. The transport availability for the learners prevented them from dodging classes to be with their boyfriends. In addition, scholar transported assisted in solving the problem of late coming by the learners.

7.2.8 Encouraging sustained provision of schools nutrition programme by the KZNDoE

In this study most participants described their community as being deep rural; experienced high levels of poverty and that most people were unemployed. Such socio-economic conditions posed a challenge for the schools. In fact, School Management Teams thought that it was the socio-economic conditions that contributed to high learner pregnancy in the schools. To overcome the challenge posed by poverty where some learners did not have anything to eat at home, these schools received and encouraged sustained nutrition programme from the Department of Education. This was illustrated by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. when he said:

The school provides school nutrition programme from the Department. The community around our school is very poor; there is poverty and most people are unemployed. This feeding scheme provides learners with a once off food at school which makes them to come to school because they know they are going to get food to eat. Some do not have anything to eat in their homes; therefore, this plate is a blessing to them. Knowing that they are going to get that healthy meal encourages learners to come to school daily and do not absent themselves. This also helps us in the prevention of learner pregnancy because they will not go to their boyfriends to look for food to eat if they have eaten something.

The views expressed above by Mr Ntuli were also shared by Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. that they also have a nutrition programme in their school to provide learners with food. She further went on saying that they arranged for the leftover food to be given to needy learners after school to share with their family in the afternoon even though it was not enough. Miss Hlophe, the HOD from Ngwadi H. had this to say:

At school we have nutrition programme where learners eat at break time the food that is prepared by the school. What we usually do is to check learners who are needy and give them the food that is left after all learners have eaten. We take turns to give them so that they will eat at home and do not sleep hungry. Although it is not much for the entire family but it does make a difference to that home.

The LO Educators shared the similar view expressed above by the SMTs that providing the food at school helped them to address poverty issues. Miss Cele the LO Educator from Dukuza H. also mentioned that providing food at school helped to prevent learner pregnancy because girls will not go to look for food in wrong places. Miss Cele, the LO Educator from Dukuza H. had this to say:

Another strategy that the school uses to fight against poverty is giving learners food at school. The Department has introduced feeding scheme at school where learners eat healthy food once a day at school. This helps the school to help learners who do

not have food to eat at home to at least have one decent meal a day. That will help the girls not to go to their boyfriends looking for food.

Mr Zwane the SGB member from Ngwadi H. shared the similar view that on top of giving learners that once off healthy meal, the SMT decided to give the needy learners the leftover food after everyone has had their meal and tried to look for donation of food parcel and school uniform. Mr Zwane, the SGB member from Ngwadi H. said:

The SMT also give needy learners food that is left after everyone has eaten in the school feeding scheme to take away to their homes so that they will eat in the afternoon. They know that this leftover food is not enough but they try to rotate it to cover many learners. The SMT also look for donation of school uniform and food parcels from nearby businesses including the service provider for school nutrition and give those to needy learners to avoid them involving themselves in sexual relationships for those.

The views expressed by the participants above were corroborated by the data generated from through observations. Besides observing learners eating during break time, I had the opportunity to see educators giving other learners left over food when the bell rang after school. These learners were very excited and they went with their food to the bus. As much as it was not enough for the whole family but seeing their faces you could see that it would help them to eat before sleeping. Again the number of learners getting such leftover food was too little but at least something was being done by the school to help this community.

To conclude the above extracts, the SMTs in these schools saw school nutrition programme as a strategy to overcome the challenge of dealing with learners from poor socio-economic background. According to Sowetan Live (2013), the interventions done by the Department of Education include expansion of providing a nutritious meal even to secondary schools. But still the once off a day meal is not enough for these learners. They still need food at home and also clothes and shelter. This strategy can work but cannot address all the learners' problems which could be the reason learner pregnancy is still a challenge in these schools.

7.2.9 Supporting learner involvement in different activities

It was revealed that the schools supported the involvement of learners in different activities. These are co- curricular activities which helped learners to showcase their talents and keep them busy. When learners are not doing anything at school other than learning in class, they tend to use their energy in wrong places. These co-curricular activities include sports and culture. This was illustrated by Mr Ntuli, the Principal of Mamponjwane H. when he said:

> *We encourage learners to participate in sporting activities, cultural activities. The sporting activities that we have in our school are soccer, athletics and netball. We allow all learners to participate in these activities as we have an understanding that learners have lots of energy so they need to take that energy out by engaging themselves in these activities. If they do not participate in these activities they will use their energy elsewhere like having sexual relationships. But if they are busy with activities after school, it will help them to redirect their energy in a positive way.*

Views expressed by Mr Ntuli above were also shared by the other two principals respectively. For instance, Mr Zulu, the Principal of Ngwadi H. mentioned that some learners were not performing well in classes so if they found their talent in co-curricular activities they gained confidence back and did not involve themselves in sexual relationships just to get self-confidence. Mr Zulu the principal of Ngwadi H. had this to say:

> *We involve them in sports and cultural activities. We have netball, soccer and also took park in athletics activities. We also have gospel, "indlamu", drama, and "inkwahla" as cultural activities. We allow all learners pregnant or not to take part in these activities. We do not discriminate those pregnant. Involving learners in these activities help them to participate in other activities other than school curriculum. This also helps even those learners who are not good in class to excel in these activities and bring confidence. This helps us to address learner pregnancy in our school.*

The LO Educators shared the similar view with the principals saying that the school supported the involvement of learners in sporting and cultural activities to redirect their

energy and to bring back confidence in learners. Miss Ndlangisa, the LO Educator from Mamponjwane H. had this to say:

> *The SMT decided to give support for learners to participate in different co-curricular activities to keep learners busy all the time even after school to prevent learner pregnancy. We have sporting activities like netball, soccer and athletics. We also have cultural activities where we compete in all categories like gospel, drama etc. We also involve learners in debates and all of these activities are open to all learners. We do not say because a learner is pregnant she must not take part in these activities except when the learner is highly pregnant. This change the attitude of learners especially those that are not performing well because they show case their talent in these activities.*

Looking at the above extracts, it is evident that all three schools used the strategy of involving all the learners in different co-curricular activities in order to redirect their energy to something that will not harm them. This strategy was used to help the SMTs to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively. It also helped to prevent learners from involving themselves in sexual activities knowing they have something extra that they were doing in school either than learning in class. Sowetan Live (2013) states that the Department further introduced poverty intervention programmes to increase opportunities for learners to succeed in life and acquire relevant skills to make meaningful contributions in the socio-economic development of the country including co-curricular activities for all learners in schools. Therefore, involvement in these activities can help the learners to achieve their goals in life and help even those learners who are not good in class to redirect them to their talents. Schools that possess a positive school culture seem to make great effort to provide for a range of creative and attractive programmes like sports and culture (Witcher, 1993). The initiation of these appealing programmes showed that the SMTs in these schools were inviting (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). But in all these schools not all learners were interested in engaging themselves in these co-curricular activities which pose a challenge to the SMTs strategy in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

7.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented the data that emerged from semi-structured interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted with the principals and the HODs in these schools. Furthermore, I reported on data gathered from the individual interviews with LO educators and SGBs who are parents in these schools. The major purpose of the chapter was to explore the strategies used by the SMTs to overcome the challenges encountered during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools which are located in the poorest communities. In the next chapter, I present the emerging patterns regarding the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in schools by the SMTs.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMERGING PATTERNS FROM THE DATA

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented a discussion about what the three principals, three HODs, three LO educators and three SGB members viewed as strategies that were used by the SMT members to overcome the challenges encountered during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools. In this chapter, I present the emerging patterns from the data discussed in the three chapters. This chapter is about abstractions from the data, seeking to provide some explanation as to how the SMTs in combined schools played their roles the way they did. In presenting the pattern in the data, the chapter is organised into eight themes and these are (a) Similarities and differences among the three researched schools' profiles (b) Similarities and differences with the role played by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy (c) Similarities and differences with the challenges encountered by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy (d) Similarities and differences with the strategies used by the SMTs to overcome the challenges encountered during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy (e) Pregnancy-related dropout (f) Promotion of the old Zulu tradition used in the communities and its effects on learner pregnancy (g) A comprehensive approach used in the interpretation of the SMT members' actions (h) Dominant leadership approach used by the SMT member. The themes are discussed in the next section.

8.2 Similarities and differences among three researched schools' profiles

The location of the three researched schools was similar. All three schools were under Uthukela District in KZN Province. The schools that I had selected were combined schools; they had four main phases of schooling, namely the Foundation Phase, from Grade R to Grade Three; the Intermediate Phase, from Grade Four to Grade Six; the Senior Phase, from Grade Seven to Grade Nine; and the Further Education Training (FET) band, Grade 10 to Grade 12 (DoE, 1997). These schools were situated in deep rural areas. The areas around these schools were dominated by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS pandemic

and child-headed families. Many people in these communities were unemployed while others worked far from home. Some parents worked in the cities and left their children with grandmothers while others were left alone. Education and literacy levels were low to many of the adults. At the same time some people in the communities were poorer than others and had better resources than others. That is why some families preferred their children to be involved in relationship with a boy from a wealthy family in order to survive.

The three researched schools all belonged to Quintiles One. This means that all these schools were poorly resourced and located in the poor neighbourhoods. Therefore, the Department declared these schools as No-fee paying schools. Therefore, the parents in these schools were all exempted from paying school fees. The funds to operate the school functions come from the Norms and Standards of funding from the Government. But Dukuza H. and Ngwadi H. had better resources than Mamponjwane H. Enrolment levels differed and so did enrolment trends. Table 3 below presents a summary of learner enrolment in the three combined schools.

ENROLMENT	2014	2015	2016
DUKUZA H.	1698	1730	1798
NGWADI H.	1666	1678	1664
MAMPONJWANE H.	828	839	800

Table 2: Enrolment in each school

Dukuza H. and Ngwadi H. had an enrolment of more than 1500 learners for the past three years while Mamponjwane H. was less than 1000 learners for the past three years. These schools had many learners inside the premises which they had to manage.

STAFFING	SMT	EDUCATORS	SGB
DUKUZA H.	8	51	13
NGWADI H.	7	53	15

MAMPONJWANE H	5	27	7

Table 3: Staff establishment in each school

Looking at the staff establishment, all schools had a bigger number of staff. But Dukuza H. and Ngwadi H. had a bigger number of educators and same applies to SMT members and SGB members because of the size of the school determined by learner enrolment. Only Mamponjwane H. had a manageable number of educators because their enrolment is not too big just like the two schools. Having one principal in these schools, you could tell that it is too much work when it comes to management.

The following table illustrate the NSC results:

NSC RESULTS	2013	2014	2015
DUKUZA H.	84,3%	54,74%	53,33%
NGWADI H.	58,2%	39,02%	31,52%
MAMPONJWANE H.	97,7%	100%	30,77%

Table 4: NSC results in each school

Looking at the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for the past three years in these schools, it is evident that they differed as well; they were fluctuating from year to year. One year they had good results, another year they had bad results. All schools had not managed to sustain good results; Ngwadi H. had bad results for the past three years. Mamponjwane H. had been performing well for the past two years but there was a drastic decrease in 2015 performance while Dukuza H. and Ngwadi H. decreased in their results in 2014 and 2015. These schools had all been listed under T60 schools which is a list for bad performing schools regarding NSC results. The performance in these schools was poor especially in 2015 NSC.

The following table illustrate learner pregnancy prevalence:

LEARNER PREGNANY	2013	2014	2015
DUKUZA H.	12	18	17
NGWADI H.	13	17	19
MAMPONJWANE H.	11	12	18

Table 5: Learner pregnancy statistics in each school

The table above shows the number of learner that fell pregnant in the past three years. If one considers the pass percentage over the past three years, the figures suggest that the poor the performance of the school, the higher the learner pregnancy prevalence especially when you look at the year 2015. Looking at the three researched schools, learner pregnancy prevalence was fluctuating for the past three years. But these statistics showed high learner pregnancy prevalence in all schools. The majority of pregnant learners dropped out of school for the year of delivery and returned to school the following year to continue with their studies. Little number of learners who returned the same year and passed the grade, others end up not catching up with the work done while they were absent. A detailed discussion about the challenges faced by the SMT members in implementing the policy of pregnant learners is made in Section 6.2.6 in Chapter Six.

The following table illustrate learner pregnancy prevalence according to phases and grades:

Learner pregnancy Statistics	**Foundation phase Grade R-3**			**Intermediate phase Grade 4-6**			**Senior phase Grade 7-9**			**FET phase Grade 10-12**		
Year	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
DUKUZA H.	NIL	NIL	NIL	2	2	2	5	10	11	5	6	5
NGWADI H.	NIL	NIL	NIL	2	2	2	8	9	10	3	6	7
MAMPONJWANE	HIL	NIL	NIL	1	1	1	7	8	12	3	3	5

Table 6: Learner pregnancy statistics according to phases and grades

The above table shows the number of learners that fell pregnant for the past three years according to phases and grades. This shows that the having a combined school was a big challenge when looking at the number of learners getting pregnant at a younger age. The reason could be that older learners abuse or take advantage of younger ones. Again it could be that younger learners imitate what older learners are doing in front of them like involving themselves in sexual relationships with older people and getting pregnant. Senior phase is the worst affected in all three researched schools. This challenge was discussed in details in Section 6.2.2 in Chapter Six.

All researched schools were situated in deep rural areas. They all had a problem of the scourge of social ills. The schools had many orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and other learners were coming from child-headed households due to HIV/AIDS. The schools received funds from the Department of Education to buy school uniform for OVC. All schools managed to buy school uniform for 150 learners and that was a successful story from schools because when learners wore school uniform that was old and torn, they did not feel confident to come to school. This was illustrated by Mr Dladla, the Principal of Dukuza H. by saying that:

> *We received R20 000 from the Department of Education to buy school uniform for OVC in our school. These learners and their parents appreciated this action saying their children will now not be afraid to come to school having improper school uniform. They will have confidence to come to school.*

Again the learners cannot involve themselves in sexual relationships in exchange for the boyfriends to buy them school uniform and end up getting pregnant. What I observed is that peer educators in Dukuza H. had a big box in the reception area where they asked the educators and other learners to donate their clothes so that they distribute them to needy learners at the end of the year. All three schools asked Grade 12 learners to donate with their school uniform on the last day of their final examinations in order to give them to needy learners at the beginning of the year. These were the strategies to address the problem of OVC in order to help the school to address learner pregnancy at the same time.

8.3 Similarities and differences with the role played by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy

Analysis of the role played by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy showed that there are more similarities than differences in the three researched schools. Therefore, the discussion is more on the similarities than the differences. Analysis indicated that the SMT members promoted the awareness the learner pregnancy policy. It emerged from all participants that the SMTs made everybody in the school to be aware of this policy, including, the parents, educators and learners themselves. The ways in which the SMT members promoted this awareness were similar across the three schools. They used the parents meetings to discuss this policy to parents and also used staff meetings to discuss the policy to the educators. Even when they were meeting as a Department, it was mentioned that they discussed the policy and the HOD used such meetings to remind the educators of their duty in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. In the meetings, they discussed how to handle the pregnant learners especially those who were class teachers. Again, the learner pregnancy policy was promoted to the learners during morning assemblies and also in their classes. Learners were made aware that they had a right to education, including the pregnant ones. On the same vein, the school promoted pregnancy-free schools by preaching abstinence and delays in sexual activity of the learners. The learners were made aware again that, should pregnancy occur, they had to inform the school about it and continue to attend school during pregnancy and after pregnancy, as education was their right. They were made aware that they needed to be supported on their school work in order to finish their schooling and should not drop out due to pregnancy. However, the data from the current study contradicted the earlier finding that schools lacked adequate knowledge on the policy that regulates how girls who might fall pregnant while at school should be handled (Gordon, 2002; Runhare & Gordon, 2004).

There was one isolated case where it was found that some newly appointed educators were sometimes not properly briefed about this policy. In Dukuza H., the LO Educator revealed that the SMTs assumed that all educators were aware of the learner policy. She mentioned that the policy was not made aware to newly appointed educators. Schools appoint educators each and every year. It is the role of the SMTs to orientate those educators on the policies of

the Department. Therefore, the difference in this school is that they assumed that learner pregnancy policy was known to all educators which was an error that should not be repeated as it is against the school's own practices of informing everybody about this policy. Newly appointed educators should be made aware of this policy the same way as other older educators in the school. It is very important for the SMTs to communicate the policy to everyone in the school because everyone will own the policy and be able to work together in its implementation (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012).

The schools in this study provided support to pregnant learners as part of implementing the policy on learner pregnancy. These schools referred pregnant learners for professional counselling when the need arose. In his study, Runhare (2010) found that the educators did not have basic counselling skills and there were no formal counselling structures available in schools. According to the National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) educators have a responsibility to fulfil the pastoral care role as stipulated in the seven key roles of educators. Therefore, referring the pregnant learners for professional counselling was the right thing to do if they did not have requisite skills themselves to do it. These schools referred the learners to school nurses for health related issues and also to social workers for social related issues. They also made use of psycho-social support officials from the Department of Education to assist them with pregnant learners.

The main aim of the learner pregnancy policy is to ensure that learners are educated on abstinence and the consequences of involving themselves in sexual activities. Also the policy aims to assist the learners to make informed options that protects their health and supports their access to educational opportunities (DoE, 2007). The schools in the study organised sessions with the learners to talk to them about learner pregnancy and the consequences of learner pregnancy and also the educators emphasised that learners should abstain from sexual activities. These were done during morning assemblies and also in their classes. Furthermore, the schools organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns for all learners in the school. The schools involved all stakeholders like school nurses, social workers and even SAPS in their campaigns. They were supporting what Sapa (2013) mentioned that the Department is aware that addressing learner pregnancy is not a challenge facing only one Department. Addressing learner pregnancy is a battle that requires the active involvement of all

stakeholders, if it is to be effectively fought. Therefore, these schools were mindful that they would not be able to win this fight of learner pregnancy by working in isolation.

The SMT members in these schools were well aware that in order to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively, they had to work closely with the educators. Therefore, the SMT members mobilised and conscietised the staff members about the policy to remind them to support the learners during pregnancy and after delivery. They reminded the educators that the policy did not allow any form of discrimination to the learners due to pregnancy and to treat them equally with others (DoE, 2007). The SMT members again supported the LO educators in their duty to support and advise learners on sexuality issues. According to Timmerman (2009), the main role of the Life Orientation educator is to promote psycho-social environment that nurtures understanding, caring and empathy for others and which contributes to positive values, beliefs and attitudes among the learners. Therefore, Life Orientation educators were open-minded to individual learner's needs and they were accommodative and adaptive in their approach (Deventer, 2008). They had these characteristics as they tend to influence their attitudes and beliefs and make it easier for them to provide support and advice to the learners on sexual and reproductive health issues (Potjo, 2012). It was a big role to support the LO educators that these SMTs were playing in order to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively.

The SMT members in the three researched schools respected and promoted the right of the learners to education. Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution Act (No. 108 of 1996) stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education. The then South African Minister of Education emphasised that all learners, including pregnant school girls, have a right to education and therefore, they cannot be expelled from school because they are pregnant (Pandor, 2007). Again, Section 4(c) states that the policy shall be aimed towards achieving equitable education opportunities and rectifying past inequality in education provision, including the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women. Therefore, the SMTs in these schools allowed pregnant learners to continue with their schooling with the support of educators. If learners dropped out of school due to pregnancy, they were allowed to return to school the following year to repeat the same grade they were in before pregnancy.

Although the home-school partnership was emphasised by the SMT members as one of their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy, success was limited. The reason for the lack of parent support was largely due to ignorance, which could be attributed largely to their low levels of formal education. The policy on learner pregnancy provided the best opportunity to build school-home collaboration as both structures needed to address the issue of learner dropout due to pregnancy. There are research findings that suggest that family settings like child-headed households and single parents families had a strong effect on pregnant learners' future, educational plans and needs, resilience to continue with schooling and performance (Weigand, 2005; McGaha-Garnett, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Therefore, the home-school partnership plays a vital role in the life of the pregnant learner. The difference that emerged in Dukuza H. is that whenever they realise that the pregnant learner is living alone or with granny, they involved the Department of Social Development where they sent the social worker to make interventions in ensuring that the pregnant learner's welfare is taken care of and to make sure that the learner comes back to school.

8.4 Similarities and differences with the challenges encountered by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy

Analysis of the challenges encountered by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy showed that there are more similarities than differences in the three researched schools. Therefore, the discussion is more on the similarities than the differences. The parents from these communities were unsupportive when it came to education of their children. Even though one of the roles that the SMT members highlighted was to strengthen parent-teacher communication, there was still a challenge of parents who did not work cooperatively with the schools even if their children were pregnant. The learner pregnancy policy emphasised that parents have a responsibility of informing the school about the pregnancy of their children and taking care of the children's babies, some parents did not take that responsibility. For instance a study by Chetty and Chigona (2008) found that teen mothers did not have enough time to study at home due to being overburdened with housework and insufficient support from their family members in taking care of their babies.

Therefore, this situation caused some learner to drop out of school to raise their babies and find time to return back the following year.

Another challenge that was found to be common in these schools was that some of these learners were performing poorly prior to pregnancy. This made it difficult for the educators to support them. When they came back from delivery, there was lots of catching up because they were not doing any work while they were on leave for delivery. Therefore, the work became too much for these learners and ended up continuing with bad performance. The SMT members found a bit of a challenge to send work to the learners at home because some of them lived far away from school. Even when they tried the means of sending the work through learners who were neighbours of the pregnant learners, no work submitted back to school. These learners did not have time to do school work with no educator in front of them. According to Grant and Hallman (2006), and McGaha-Garnett (2007) most teenage mothers that dropped out of school were found to have a pre-pregnancy school history of grade repetition, temporary withdrawals, poor attendance, poor class participation and achievement and disruptive behaviour. Also in their study, Panday et al (2009) found that only a third of teenage mothers returned to school and there were many reasons for that including that this was due to poor academic performance prior to pregnancy. Again, parents were not supportive to work with the school in helping their children while on leave for delivery.

Moreover these communities in which the schools were situated had no role models who could motivate the learners to want to continue with their schooling. Bruckner et al (2004) emphasised that teenagers living in communities with high rates of poverty and single mother households are at higher risks for children to get pregnant at an early stage while they are still schooling. Also Spear and Cater (2002); Mpanza and Nzima (2006) concur with the above saying the background of children matters a lot to having early childbearing, thus include poor socio-economic status, illiteracy of parents and family history in terms of pregnancy. In the context of this study, the SMT members tried to encourage pregnant learners to return to school after giving birth. However, such attempts had very limited success as many pregnant girls dropped out because of too much work and others needed to take care of their babies. But they were all allowed to return to school the following year and many of them did come back.

Another challenge that was encountered by the SMTs in these schools was the policy silence on boy learners. The learner pregnancy policy states that girls should inform the school about pregnancy; they should undergo counselling, they should be supported academically during and after pregnancy and they should take leave of absence for delivery. But nothing is said about the boys who impregnated those girls. Chilisa (2002); Gordon 2002) and Hubbard et al (2008) made those arguments that in most cases the pregnant learner is given leave from school while nothing is said about the male partner who impregnated the girl. Therefore, boys continued with their studies without any disruptions and did not support their partners during delivery of the baby. This means that while the policy gives guidelines on the management of learner pregnancy, it also extends gender inequality by defining reproductive and childcare responsibilities as roles belonging to females by social norms, practices and customs (Leach, 2000). Maybe that is the reason why teenage fathers do not give any emotional and financial support to their partners because no one ever focused on them.

Furthermore, to the challenges faced by the SMTs in these schools was the issue of negative attitudes displayed by pregnant learners themselves, other learners not pregnant especially boys and some educators. Some pregnant learners found it difficult to deal with their pregnancies and became emotional. The study revealed that when educators teach in classes, pregnant learners thought everything was about them like examples made in classes. They became lazy; they had difficulties concentrating and were easily destructed from doing their school work. Other learners too made it difficult for these learners to continue with schooling. Some discriminated against them while others teased them; taunted and mocked them about their pregnancy. These incidences disturbed the teaching and learning in classes because educators had to discipline these learners all the times during class teaching. According to Chigona and Chetty (2007), there is a necessity for the policy to incorporate guidelines for dealing with mockery and teasing arising from the stigma associated with learner pregnancy. On the contrary, there were also educators who found it difficult to support these pregnant learners claiming that they were not trained to be nurses. Also they called it additional work to start afresh helping the pregnant learner to catch up with school work after delivery. These educators had to do assessment again and they were complaining that it was more workload on them. Many educators do not have training in handling issues

like pregnancies and lack sensitisation in dealing with sexuality issues (Timmerman, 2009). Therefore, educators become frustrated and uncomfortable in supporting and accommodating pregnant learners in schools (Potjo, 2012).

In this study male educators were not comfortable in dealing with pregnant learners. This was a challenge to the SMTs as all the educators should be able to handle learner pregnancy. But necessary support was given to these educators by the SMTs. The difference that was found in Dukuza H. is that all LO educators in the school were female educators even the HOD for Humanities was a female. Even though the SMTs were addressing the issue of male educators being uncomfortable in dealing with pregnant learners but this raised eyebrows as if learner pregnancy is the responsibility of female educators only whilst it is not the case. Everybody male or female should take the initiative in the implementation of this policy.

8.5 Similarities and differences with the strategies used by the SMTs to overcome the challenges encountered during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy

The study revealed that in all three schools academic support was given to the pregnant learners. The SMT members reminded educators to give academic support to these learners. The policy on learner pregnancy states that educators should continue offering academic support to pregnant learners and assess all submitted tasks and assignments by the learners during the period of delivery (DoE, 2007). These schools were situated in deep rural areas; therefore, it was not easy for the educators to reach learners when they were at home during leave for delivery. Parents were asked to come to school and fetch their children's work but they did not. Also the educators tried to give work to learners living nearby the pregnant learner but there was no response from pregnant learners. But the educators tried to assist these learners by giving those extra classes like the morning and afternoon classes in order to catch up after delivery.

In all the efforts that were made by the SMT members to make that learners catch up with the work done while they were absent, it was not well received by most of the pregnant learners.

The parents were not coming to the school to fetch their children's work as discussed above that parents were not supportive. Even the work given to other learners were not sent back to school to be marked. The learners told the educators that they did not have to do the work at home because they had to take care of their babies. Even these extra classes were attended by few learners; others did not attend saying that they did not have time and they had to take care of their babies. Even though academic support was given to these learners, most of them dropped out because they could not catch up with the work done while they were absent. These learners preferred to come back the following year to repeat a grade.

Another common strategy that was used by these schools was to support the peer education programme. The SMT members supported this programme because it was addressing the social ills experienced by the schools. The peer educators were educating other learners about learner pregnancy and its consequences; they were role modelling good behaviour, and they did advocacies on learner pregnancy like organising learner pregnancy awareness campaign with the help of the SMTs and referred learners for professional help to relevant authorities like social workers and school nurses. It was evident that the peer educators were given time to do all these things in order to teach other learners about Lifeskills. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009) states that evidence of peer education implementation suggests that if this programme is well developed there is ability to impact on self-esteem, confidence and resistance of peer pressure for both the participants and peer educators. The SMT members believed that when learners taught other learners, it was well-received because they understand each other. This programme helped the schools in trying to reduce learner pregnancy.

Furthermore, the SMTs promoted the teaching of sexuality education to the learners. Sexuality education was introduced because of the high rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexuality related issues such as pregnancy, rape and other sexual transmitted infections (Francis, 2010). One of the main goals of a comprehensive sexuality education programmes is to assist learners develop and understand their values, attitudes and beliefs about sexuality and to assist them develop relationship and interpersonal skills (Majova, 2002). The SMT members supported the LO educators in teaching sexuality education as other educators were not comfortable in teaching it. Although sexuality education was an effective strategy to address learner pregnancy, most of the parents from all schools were uncertain about it

commenting that it will cause their children to be sexually active (Key, Gebregziabher, Marsh & O'Rourke, 2008). But the SMTs tried to address the parents' concern in their parents meetings to gain their support in teaching sexuality education in schools.

It emerged from all three schools that there was the tradition which is done by the community of virginity testing amongst girls in the community. The girls had to be tested whether they were still virgins and they were taught many things like Lifeskills, good behaviour and so on by elderly people in the community. The schools embraced and supported this Zulu custom. The girls who were involved in virginity testing were exemplary to other learners in the school by showing good behaviour and focusing on education. They were abstaining from sexual activities and therefore were not getting pregnant. These girls got an opportunity to attend the reed dance organised by the King of the Zulus in the royal place where they enjoyed themselves and learnt so many things about themselves and the consequences of getting pregnant while they are still young. But in all three schools the number of girls involved in this custom was too low. For example, in Mamponjwane H. only 15 girls were able to attend the reed dance in the past year. Out of so many girls in these schools only a few were involved in this custom. The schools were also aware that some people did not approve of this virginity testing custom, saying that it was violating the rights of the girls to privacy and dignity. But the schools were supporting it because no girls were forced to do it and it also helped them in decreasing learner pregnancy. National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b), Section 4(c) states that the policy shall be aimed towards achieving equitable education opportunities and rectifying the past inequality in education provision, including the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women. Therefore, by supporting this custom, the SMT members gave the girl learners the opportunity to focus on their education.

The SMT members in these schools involved all stakeholders in addressing learner pregnancy. It emerged from the participants that the schools involved social workers, school nurses, home-based careers, religious and traditional leaders towards the prevention of learner pregnancy. The schools knew they could not work alone in this regard as learner pregnancy was a concern for everyone involved in the education of these learners. Working with all stakeholders increased the chances of learners not becoming pregnant. Sometimes

these stakeholders helped the school by doing home visits to check whether the children were living alone or with their parents or grannies. They referred those cases to relevant people to assist those learners. The SMT members in these schools believed that a multi-sectoral approach in addressing social challenges affecting learners including learner pregnancy and HIV/AIDS were amongst the strategies to be used whereby all stakeholders involved in the education of the learners from all sectors worked together for a common goal (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014).

One of the challenges revealed by the SMT members was that of poor socio-economic background of the learners. The learners in these schools were came from families where parents were unemployed or getting a low pay and some depended on social grants from the government, while others came from child-headed households. These communities were driven by poverty. Therefore, some learners were forced to involve themselves in sexual relationships in order to survive. The SMT members encouraged sustained provision of schools nutrition programme by the KZNDoE. This programme was available in all three schools as all of them were considered to be under resourced schools. At least all the learners were getting one healthy meal a day. The SMT members were also trying to help these learners by giving them leftover food to take home in addition to one meal they ate at school. Even though such food was inadequate, but it made a difference to some of the learners.

One of the differences in the strategies used by these schools was to address the problem of learners walking long distances to school. It was only Dukuza H. where they were supplied with 15 busses to take learners from home to school and *vice versa*. Seeing that the learners were coming late to school and others were absenting themselves for no reason, the school applied for the scholar transport and was successful. They revealed that having scholar transport minimised learner pregnancy because learners who were dodging school were not getting that chance to go via their boyfriends homes. The bus took them home and sent them straight to school. Also in the afternoon it did the same thing back home.

8.6 A pregnancy-related dropout

According to Manzini (2001), the school policy allows pregnant girls to continue with their schooling both during and after pregnancy. The policy on learner pregnancy introduced by

the Department allows the learners to continue with their education during pregnancy and after delivery (DoE, 2007). It is however, up to the pregnant learner and her parents to decide when to return to school after delivery (Pandor, 2007). The study revealed that in these schools learners were encouraged to report their pregnancy to the educators who then report to the SMTs. The school would then refer the pregnant learner to the clinic in order to make sure of the delivery period of the learner. Although some learners were found not to be reporting their pregnancy while others denied their pregnancy when the educators approached them. This could be due to ignorance or the fact that they were still deciding whether to keep the baby or not. These were the learners who caused problems in school because the school was not aware of their delivery period. Some of these learners went into labour while at school and educators had to call the ambulance or send these learners with their own cars to the clinic.

It was indicated that the learners who reported their pregnancy on time were given leave of absence for purposes of giving birth when the due date is nearer or when there were complications in their pregnancy. One school mentioned that when the learner was highly pregnant and did not want to leave school for the purposes of the examinations were allowed to continue provided a parent accompanied the learner to school so that when anything happens, the parent was there to take the learner to the clinic. But most parents did not respond to such calls and left the school with no choice but to send a child home for delivery even during examination time. This was an indication of pregnancy on school dropout (Grant & Hallman, 2006).

Again Grant and Hallman (2006) argue that highly motivated learners who performed well prior to pregnancy were those most likely to return. Similarly, those learners who manage to return to school following pregnancy are likely to use that opportunity to complete schooling. These motivated learners when supported academically after returning to school were able to catch up with the school work done while they were absent. But the schools in this study revealed that most pregnant learners dropped out of school and preferred to return the following year. The reason that these learners gave to educators were that they could not cope with the school work they missed; it was too much for them. While others indicated that they had to take care of their babies, no child care was available for them. Therefore, they had no choice but to drop out of school. The study revealed that most of those learners who dropped

out of school following a pregnancy returned the following year to repeat the same grade they were in when dropping out due to pregnancy. Furthermore, all these schools admitted these learners when they came back to school the following year. No school denied readmission to these learners. Therefore, most of the pregnant learners in these schools returned to schools following a pregnancy related drop-out. It was therefore only a limited number of girls who did not return to school altogether.

8.7 Promotion of the Zulu tradition by the community and its effect on learner pregnancy

The socio-cultural factors are governing variables which could influence behaviour more than formal organisational instructions or policy (Runhare, 2010). The study revealed that in all three schools there was this promotion of the old Zulu tradition of "ukuthwala" which influenced the behaviour of the community members more than the learner pregnancy policy. The word "ukuthwala" literary means to carry. There were some people who misused that cultural practice that was legitimately used by young men and women to resolve complex conflict situations to pursue their marriage ambitions. When people misuse such a tradition, authors such as Nkosi (2009) call such practices as culturally-legitimated abduction of a woman whereby a young man will forcibly take a girl to his home to signify the intention of marriage. As I argued elsewhere in this thesis, the tradition of ukuthwala was always an arranged situation between two parties, and no abduction or carrying of a woman against her will. The age of consent was 18 years. If one of the parties is under 18 years of age, parental consent is an additional requirement to validate such marriage. But in these communities where these schools were situated promoted the practice of this tradition even if their children were still young, that is, at an age of 12 years. This traditional practice contradicted the policy on learner pregnancy as these learners who were carried away to be the wives of these men ended up engaging themselves in unsafe sex and getting pregnant at an early age.

According to Coulter (1999), Stromquist (1999) and Wilson and Decker (1999), international conventions on women rights focused on the educational concerns for women, that is, review and re-evaluate traditional customs and perceptions that could be harmful to the equality of access to education and career development for men and women. The SMT members faced the challenge of implementing the policy on learner pregnancy to these communities with this

tradition contradicting the policy. The community seemed to be using this tradition incorrectly by allowing learners who were still young to be taken from their families and ended up violating the right to education of young girls. Traditional bride abduction was intended for people of the same age group who, in the normal course of events, would have been expected to marry each other. The custom was not meant for the minors (Nkosi, 2014). Nowadays, the abuse of the tradition of "ukuthwala" resulted in the violation of girls' rights to basic education. Prevailing poor socio-economic conditions in these communities resulted in parents allowing this tradition to suit their needs as the girl's family received money for "lobola" from the boy's family. Again the schools revealed that it was up to the boy's family to allow the girl to return to school. Some of these girls had to drop out completely from school while others were allowed to return by those families.

The communities in this study were described as deep rural, experience poverty; most people are unemployed, illiterate and some parents worked far away from their homes. Therefore, some learners engaged in the practice of "ukumisa iduku or ukuqoma" whereby a girl sent gifts to the boyfriend's family to show the public that she was involved in a relationship with that boy. These girls targeted wealthy families in order to survive. Learners who came from poor socio-economic background and this posed a challenge to the SMTs in their implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The findings from a study by Grant and Hallman (2006) revealed that it was not only pregnancy that caused girls to drop out, but also the lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and domestic demands placed on them.

The study revealed that the SMT members involved the SGBs, religious and traditional leaders to discourage this tradition to young children in the community. They did this because they have a duty and an obligation to change negative cultural practices that have an impact on education in their schools through the powers and authority vested in their hands (Nkosi, 2014). But it was a bit of a challenge because these communities promoted this tradition.

8.8 Comprehensive approach in the interpretation of the SMT members' actions

An ecological systems theory underpins the framework for this study. The microsystem is the first system that the developing person comes into contact with. This microsystem includes

the structures such as family, school, neighbourhood as well as other systems which the developing person has immediate and direct contact with (Beck, 2000; Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Schools in this study were situated in the communities with poor socio-economic background. The socio-economic situation posed a challenge to the schools when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy. Most learners came from poverty-stricken families. Some learners involved themselves in sexual relationships in order to survive; they had no one to take care of their needs. Most of the parents were unemployed and many depended on government social grants. This situation caused some learners to fall pregnant while they are still at school which had a serious effect on learning and behaviour (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). According to Arai (2007), the environments in which learners live often influence their behaviour. Arai (2007) further say that micro systemic influences such as social influences are very important in understanding how neighbourhoods affect behaviour of a child. This was a very big challenge that was encountered by the SMT members while implementing learner pregnancy policy which had a negative impact on learners' education.

Learner pregnancy affect the microsystem level of learners in many ways like this issue whereby high school learners impregnated primary school learners in one school. This was due to a combined school whereby all learners from primary school to high school learners were accommodated in one site. Older learners were taking advantage of younger learners. Also these younger learners copied what older learners were doing even if it is wrong like having relationships in school. Therefore, we had learners pregnant in primary phase. According to Langille, Flowerdew and Andeou (2004), if there is a problem in one structure or layer of the environment, this tends to show itself in other layers as well and overcompensation in one structure cannot make up for the problem in another. The timing of the significant life experiences in human development plays a role as to how the person will handle the responsibility (Salazar, et al. 2010). This means that the way the older learners handled themselves and ended up getting pregnant had a negative impact on younger learners and this affected their education in one way or another.

According to Salazar, et al (2010), learners are not directly involved in the activities taking place at the mesosystemic level (parents and educators interaction) but these activities tend to have an impact on their development and success. Neighbourhood and community contexts are the main mesosystem that are likely to have an impact on the development of youth

indirectly through their interaction with family, school and their peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The Department indicates that pregnant learner should be prepared that the community might not readily accept and support their situation because of society's values (DoE, 2007). Therefore, it was the responsibility of the school governance to advocate this learner pregnancy policy to the parents, the educators and the learners themselves. This study has revealed that the policy on learner pregnancy was communicated to all stakeholders in all three schools. This was done during the parents' meetings for parents; staff meeting for educators and during assembles for learners.

It is important that schools and educators work to create an environment that welcomes and nurtures families (Henderson, 1995). If the relationship in the child's immediate family breakdown the child will not have the necessary tools to explore other parts of the mesosystem (Addison, 1992). Therefore, the idea of strengthening good school-parent partnership when dealing with learner pregnancy increased the chances of the learners not dropping out of school. But it was highlighted that the parents were not supportive in these schools. Some pregnant learners had to deal with learner pregnancy without the support of their parents.

Parents were not working together with the school to support these learners. Neighbourhood and community contexts are the main mesosystem that are likely to have an impact on the development of youth indirectly through their interaction with family, school and their peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). These schools were struggling as there was an indication that there were role models in these communities. Learners were doing what they saw others doing in their community like getting pregnant. The relationships a child develops in school become critical to his or her positive development. Because of the amount of time children spend in school, the relationships fostered there carry real weight (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore, educators' support was very critical in the learners' phase. Offering academic support to pregnant learners was the key to their future aspirations.

Likewise, cultural influences play a vital role in the development of the children. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the cultural demands of a society tend to have a significant influence on the everyday interactions between individuals. Cultural beliefs have real power

in affecting all Bronfenbrenner's systems. These beliefs are deeply held and become a basis for a child's sense of self (Seifert, 1999). These schools revealed that there was an influence of the old Zulu tradition which was "ukuthwala", "ukumisa iduku" or "ukuqoma" as discussed in the previous sections, and it had a negative effect on learners' education. Therefore, the SMT members had a duty to try and discourage this tradition in a way that would not infringe the rights of everyone. These activities affected learners in negative ways and schools were struggling to deal with this issue. But it was revealed that the schools tried even to work together with religious and traditional leaders who were thought to be very influential in the community.

The issue of the lack of communication between the school and the home was mentioned as a challenge in these schools. Learners had to travel long distances to school and also in the afternoon going back home. Most of the parents had no time to check their children's work to see whether they were doing well at school or needed support. Therefore, the learners took advantage of that space. Activities taking place at the exosystem level like the lack of communication between the school and the home have an impact on the developing child even though he or she is not directly involved in them (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Much like the other structures of the exosystem, a child's society is responsible for providing resources that enable structures of the child's mesosystem to flourish, thus aiding in the child's positive development (Henderson, 1995). Therefore, providing scholar transport enabled learners to develop positively. This school was trying to bridge the gap of home school partnership that was lacking and causing learners to do as they pleased and ended up getting pregnant. The challenge now was with the learners who still claimed that the busses were very early in the morning and could not catch the bus and ended up coming late to school. The schools will never know whether they were still tricking them so that they get a chance to go to their boyfriends' homes. This was still a challenge in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

Furthermore, poor socio-economic conditions these learners grew in affected their development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the exosystem involves connections and processes that are happening between two or more environment in which one of them does not hold the child who is developing but the incidents affect the developing child indirectly.

By providing nutritious food in schools, it helped the learners to develop in a positive way and helped the learners to focus on their studies instead of looking for boyfriends in order to have food and to survive.

8.9 Dominant approach to leadership used by School management Team members

In this section, I explore leadership approaches that emerged to be dominant in the researched schools. An invitational leadership theory is another theory that framed this study. The SMT members in these schools appeared to be invitational. The leadership model of invitational leadership is a comprehensive design that is inclusive of many vital elements needed for the success of today's educational organisations which are schools in the study (Burns, 2007). Policies of schools which are successful and possess positive school cultures are created to encourage and seek a win/win result. This study revealed that these schools have communicated the policy on learner pregnancy effectively in order for them to be able to implement it. This is the second area of invitational leadership theory. SMT members had to ensure that various stakeholders are mobilised in order to address the problem of learner pregnancy. In terms of invitational leadership, it is important that every stakeholder feels invited to participate in making crucial decisions that will have deep impact on the life of an institution.

Another area of invitational leadership theory is the element of people. People constitute a resource that is most guaranteed to make a difference in creating a positive school culture (Burns, 2007). Involving people in as many activities that require cooperation and positive results is an excellent way to help individuals become part of an effective team (Burns, 2007). Therefore, involving people in the learner pregnancy campaigns surely made a positive impact in the lives of these learners. These schools revealed that the SMTs involved school nurses, social workers and even SAPS in their campaigns to address learner pregnancy. Schools showed that they needed all these stakeholders to fight the scourge of learner pregnancy, they cannot work alone. Halpin (2003) concurs with this idea and states that social capital, which is the crucible of trust, refers to the potential of people to work together for a common goal. Invitational leadership contributes to its growth by the way in

which it cares for and supports the contributions of others. Therefore, the SMT members followed the invitational leadership model which seeks to invite all stakeholders to succeed in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy (Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 1996; Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005).

Invitational leadership exemplifies a model of caring as an integral part of its primary tenets and fundamental belief system (Burns, 2007). These educators showed that they cared for the pregnant learners by giving them academic support. According to Hansen (1998), learners often feel 'disinvited in schools' due to the fact that they always feel overlooked when it comes to co curricular activities. Therefore, these SMTs involved all the learners in different activities in order for them to feel invited and they showed the learners that they cared for them regardless of their pregnancy. The SMTs were also reminding educators and other learners not to discriminate against pregnant learners and to treat them equally with others.

Purkey and Siegel (2003) describe peer education as the model which moves from emphasising control and dominance to the one that focuses on connectedness, cooperation and communication. This means that the SMTs as invitational leaders allowed peer educators to work with them when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in order to achieve success. Hansen (1998) confirms that for effective change, schools should invest in people for effective. Therefore, these SMT members as inviting leaders developed a more positive work and learning environment for sexuality education in these schools through peer education programme and also by supporting LO educators. Even where parents were not comfortable by letting their learners being taught sexuality education, the SMTs addressed their concern during the parents' meetings.

These communities were still promoting the culture of virginity testing among young girls to help them not to engage in sexual relationship until they get married. Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) describe invitations as messages passed on to people to inform them that they are able, responsible and worthwhile. By supporting the virginity testing activity, the SMT members showed that they are invitational leaders. These learners although they were a small number compared to the number of learners in the school were exemplary to other

learners. They focused on education and were taught to wait and not to engage themselves in sexual relationships until they get married.

Invitational leadership exemplifies a model of caring as an integral part of its primary tenets and fundamental belief system (Burns, 2007). Therefore, these SMTs were invitational leaders who intentionally created positive physical places to work and put into place policies that showed optimism of the leaders and lead to trust and respect among workers (Stillion & Siegel, 2005). Even though learner pregnancy was still a concern for these schools but the SMTs did play their roles in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The SMTs were still experiencing more challenges even though they seemed to be invitational leaders.

8.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented the emerging patterns from the data that was discussed in the previous three chapters. I presented the emerging patterns from the data gathered from the individual interviews conducted with the principals and HODs in these schools. Furthermore, I presented emerging patterns from the data gathered from the individual interviews with LO Educators and SGB members who were parents in these schools. This study has shown that there were more similarities than differences in the manner in which the three schools played their roles in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The same applied to the challenges encountered as well as the strategies that were used in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy by the SMTs. The next chapter presents the findings of the study and highlight some implications for research, policy and practice.

CHAPTER NINE

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY ON LEARNER PREGNANCY IN SCHOOLS: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the roles that the SMT members were playing in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in three combined schools in uThukela education district. The study also sought to explore the challenges that the SMT members faced when implementing the learner pregnancy policy and how they attempted to overcome those challenges. In order to explore and understand how the SMTs played their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy, experiential views of school principals, HODs, Life Orientation educators and SGB members were solicited through semi-structured interviews, documents reviews and observations.

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the data that was presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This chapter presents the findings of the study and highlights some implications for research, policy and practice. In presenting and discussing the findings, research questions that underpinned the study are used to organise the presentation. This approach was preferred because it enabled me to make a critical assessment of the findings. In a nutshell, an attempt is being made to assess the extent to which the research questions have sufficiently been answered. The chapter begins by providing a synthesis of the whole thesis. Thereafter, the research questions are re-stated before they are used as headings to organise the discussion of findings. The chapter concludes by highlighting some implications for research, policy and practice.

9.2 Synthesis of the study

In responding to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in school going learners in South Africa and continued access to education for boys and girls, a policy was developed to be introduced in schools (DoE, 2007). This policy was intended to assist schools in their efforts to reduce

the rate of learner pregnancy and in managing pregnancies when they occur (Chapter One).The terrain of this phenomenon was mapped with a view to understand current debates and challenges on this phenomenon (Chapter Two). Debates on this issue have contributed in shaping a theoretical framing of the study (Chapter Three). The theories that framed the analysis of the study were Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and invitational leadership theory. These theories helped me to understand how SMT members played the role when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. The discussions on theoretical framework had a direct link with the methodological approach adopted for the study (Chapter Four); In Chapters Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, descriptions of what emerged from conversations with various participants are made. Chapter Eight provides abstraction from the descriptive data and attempts to show patterns in the data with an aim of explaining why what appears to be the case is the case. The final chapter (Chapter Nine) presents the findings that are drawn from both the descriptive and theoretical analysis and the insights gained provide a basis for eliciting some implications for research, policy and practice in the area of educational leadership and management.

9.3 Research questions restated

The study that is reported in this thesis was underpinned by the following research questions:

- What roles do the School Management Teams play in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?
- What challenges do the School Management Teams come across when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?
- How do the School Management Teams overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in schools?

9.4 Responses to research questions

In presenting the findings, research questions have been utilised so that it is easier to assess the extent to which the data generated is directly aligned to the main question guiding the

study. This section is presenting the findings according to the research questions as highlighted in this and previous sections of the thesis.

9.4.1 What roles do the School Management Teams play in implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?

This question aimed to elicit empirical data around the SMT members' understanding of their role in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy and establish whether such understanding influenced the way they practiced policy in their schools. With regard to this question, the responses of the principals, the HODs, the LO Educators and the parent members of SGB have been are broken into three themes with a view to providing clear insights. These themes are: promoting awareness of the learner pregnancy policy, providing support to learners and respecting and promoting the learners' right to education.

9.4.1.1 Promoting awareness of the learner pregnancy policy

On the questions of the SMT members' understanding of the role they play in implementing the learner pregnancy policy, it was found that from the perspective of all the participants, the SMT members promoted awareness of the policy. It is evident that the SMT members promoted awareness of the policy among all key stakeholders in the schools, and these are parents, educators and the learners themselves. There is no doubt that the role of promoting awareness of the learner pregnancy policy was important to the schools in order to help the SMTs to implement the learner pregnancy policy effectively. Data has revealed the extent to which the SMTs made it their priority to promote awareness of the learner pregnancy policy to the entire school community.

In order for these schools to work together with parents, they made the parents aware of the policy. The SMTs took upon their shoulders to call the parents meeting to discuss the learner pregnancy policy. Even if the meeting was not necessarily about learner pregnancy, I found that the SMT members included an item on this issue. The reason for this was to show the parents that they have to work together to prevent learner pregnancy and also work together

to manage the learner pregnancy in order to assist the learners to complete their schooling. Even though it was mentioned that some parents did not seem to bother coming to parents' meeting due to various reasons, the SMTs did not give up; they kept on talking about the policy in their meetings with parents, hoping that parents would talk about it even in their homes and in the community at large. A detailed discussion of this issue is found in Section 5.2 of Chapter Five.

All these schools experienced high learner pregnancy rates as discussed in earlier chapters. In order to address that problem, the SMT members attempted to address that problem by involving the parents as part of the implementation of learner pregnancy policy, and thus avoid clashes between the school and the home. The SMT members felt that in order to reduce learner pregnancy, parents must be involved in the process. That is why they had to inform the parents of the policy so that they would then talk to their children in their homes about it. Parents were also informed about the consequences of learner pregnancy as well as the rights of the learners to education. This was done in order to assist the parents to encourage their children not to drop out of school due to pregnancy. Parents were also asked to assist the learners in taking care of their babies so that they would be able to come back to school to complete their schooling.

Furthermore, the SMTs promoted awareness of the policy to the educators too. This was done for effective implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. The SMT members understood that educators are the ones that spend more time with the learners in their classes. Therefore, they felt it was important to share this information with them. In fact, the educators are ones who need to provide support to those learners who fall pregnant; they need to give them work to do at their homes and update them about progress in their teaching. It is therefore of absolute importance that educators are offer with all aspects of the policy. Also to help the educators effectively deal with pregnancy whenever it occurred, educators, especially the class teachers, they needed to know what to do. In the very same way, educators too were informed of the policy in their staff meetings. Sometimes, like in the parents meetings, the item of learner pregnancy would be included in their curriculum meetings in order to be able to deal with the problem of high rate of learner pregnancy in the schools.

Educators were informed about the prevention of learner pregnancy so that they could play a positive role as well in dealing with that problem and help reduce it. One way of reducing learner pregnancy rate is to encourage abstinence and early involvement of the learner in sexual activities. It was therefore, important that they emphasise that learners should abstain from sexual activities as they are still young. They should wait for the right time in order to complete their schooling. The educators were also informed that they should emphasise the learners' right to education. Nobody should discriminate against pregnant learners; therefore, educators need to emphasise that all learners should be treated in an equal manner and with dignity like all other learners in the school. They were also informed that they should support pregnant learners to help them to deal with pregnancy and to catch up on the work done while they were absent.

The SMTs emphasised that the learners should be supported with their school work during and after pregnancy. However, there were some instances where newly appointed educators were not aware of the learner pregnancy. It appears that, perhaps, School Management sometimes just assumed that these educators were also aware of the policy; as it turned out; the newly appointed educators were not. Evidently, that was an omission on the side of the SMTs that could frustrate the educators as they were the ones that dealing with issues relating to learner pregnancy in their respective classrooms.

Moreover, the learners were also made aware of the learner pregnancy policy. They were informed of this policy and its implications for them as learners. The policy was communicated to learners in order for the SMTs to implement it effectively. This was done so that the entire school community would work together to prevent and manage learner pregnancy. The SMTs mentioned that during the assembly, they talked to the learners about the policy. They reminded the learners about the policy like the prevention part, where they emphasised that the learners should abstain from sexual relationships to avoid being pregnant and getting STIs and HIV/AIDS. They also stressed that learners should inform educators when they are pregnant in order to get the support they needed and that they should visit the clinic to get their delivery dates so that the SMTs should know when it is time to take leave for delivery. The SMTs also stressed the fact that learners should not discriminate against pregnant learners in the school.

The notion of retaining girl learners was also emphasised. During the promotion of the awareness of this policy to the learners, learners' right to education was emphasised in order to assist learners to complete their schooling. The learners were informed that as part of their right to education, they had to ensure that they returned to school after giving birth. Despite such appeals by the School Management that pregnant girls should not drop out of school, it was found that some learners did not cope with school work once pregnant, and could not catch up and ended up leaving school. Nevertheless, they did return the following year to repeat the same grade. All participating schools experienced the same problem but they allowed those learners to attend school when they came back the following year.

9.4.1.2 Providing support to learners

It was clear that as much as the members of the SMT promoted awareness of the existence and content of the policy on pregnant learners, pregnancy continued. Therefore, those learners that fell pregnant had to be dealt with; they had to be supported. Therefore, the SMT members had an obligation of supporting learners in schools whether pregnant or not. The SMT members provided support to the pregnant learners in order to achieve three main objectives. The support they provided was aimed at ensuring that the learners are retained within the school system, and they do not drop out of school. The SMTs had to provide support to pregnant learners as discussed in Section 5.2.2 of Chapter Five.

Secondly, the support was directed at all the learners, whether pregnant or not. Such support entailed educators and SMT members alerting the learners to the dangers of early involvement in sexual activities and the benefits of abstinence from sexual activities. The SMTs had to organise learner pregnancy awareness campaigns to help learners to make them aware of sexuality issues and the consequences of engaging themselves in sexual activities at an early age. These campaigns were meant for all learners in the school whether they are pregnant or not. This was done in order to prevent learner pregnancy and to manage pregnancies in the school.

Thirdly, the SMT member provided counselling services to those learners that had already fallen pregnant in terms of the policy on pregnant learners (DoE, 2007). Since the educators

in schools did not have counselling skills, they referred pregnant learners to relevant experts such as school health nurses and social workers. These officials had to deal with pregnant learners who needed counselling services in terms of health and social related issues pertaining to their pregnancies. The SMTs invited school nurses from clinic to come and address the learners on issues of pregnancy. Fortunately, all schools were allocated school nurses that usually come to school to do health services to learners. Therefore, all these schools had established friendship with them; they came and addressed learners on sexuality education and healthy lifestyle. Again the SMTs invited the local social workers to come on the day of the learner pregnancy awareness campaign to address learners on social issues. In addition, the SMTs also used the services of the Department of Education from Psychological services. They invited those officials to come and address pregnant learners and do individual and group counselling.

The findings show that the SMT members understood the need of collaborating with other stakeholders. They were aware that the schools alone could not win the fight against learner pregnancy but, working with other stakeholders could help reduce it. The findings also showed that pregnant learners experienced many problems during their pregnancy. Such problems included being abandoned by the father of the baby and others were not getting enough support from the family. Therefore, getting counselling sessions from relevant stakeholders was very important for them in order to retain them in schools.

9.4.1.3 Respecting and promoting the learners' right to education

The findings show that members of the SMT in the participating schools were acutely aware of the need to protect the rights of the every learner in the schools. Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution Act (No. 108 of 1996) stipulates that everyone has a right to basic education (RSA, 1996a). Section 9 (1) states that "everyone is equal before the law and has rights to equal protection and benefit of the law". Again, Section 9 (3) states that "the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status" (RSA, 1996a). Therefore, the role played by the SMT members in these schools was to respect and promote the learners' right to education. The South African Constitution Act requires the schools to do so. Therefore, the

SMT members in these schools were on the right track in terms of retaining learners in schools and supporting them during their pregnancy.

The SMTs gave support to pregnant learners and allowed them to continue attending classes until they were due for delivery. They encouraged them to come back immediately after delivery when they were fit to do to continue with their studies. They supported educators and parents in helping these learners complete their schooling. They provided an environment and resources that enabled effective implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Furthermore, it also emerged that the SMTs showed the element of caring to these learners; they behaved as real parents to these learners; they put themselves in their shoes in order not to discriminate against them but to support them and to understand their situation. In that way these learners understood that the school was not against them. This made the learners felt that they are supported by the school.

The SMTs in these schools showed respect in terms of treating all learners equally, pregnant or not pregnant. They respected the right to education for learners because they did not suspend or expel any learner due to pregnancy instead they supported those learners. The pregnant learners were told to come back to continue with their schooling after delivery. The findings have shown that most of the learners managed to come back to school at least in the following year. The SMTs in these schools showed a clear understanding of their role in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. Also they showed that indeed they played a big role in the prevention and management of learner pregnancy. However, they were experiencing more challenges whilst playing their roles which continued to increase learner pregnancies and drop outs of school due to pregnancy, although they were dropping and returning the following year.

9.4.2 What challenges do the School Management Teams come across when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy in schools?

This question highlighted above aimed to elicit empirical data around the challenges the SMT members come across when implementing the learner pregnancy policy. The question also attempted to establish whether such challenges influenced the manner in which they practised

policy on learner pregnancy in their schools. The findings relating to this question can be divided into three themes, namely, the influence of old Zulu tradition, unsupportive parents and negative attitude displayed by the peers and the educators.

9.4.2.1 The influence of the old Zulu traditions

The findings revealed that there was a negative influence of the old Zulu tradition which was being practised in the community. These communities are still practising the traditions of 'ukuthwala', 'ukuqoma', and closely related to this is 'ukumisa iduku'. A detailed discussion on this issue has been made in Section 6.2.1 of Chapter Six. To recap on this tradition of *ukuthwala*; a girl who is traditionally regarded as ready for courtship and subsequently marriage, makes arrangement with the boy who is ready to get married to the girl to carry her away; hence, the literary meaning says 'thwala' or carry (Nkosi, 2014). There are varied reasons for this. In some instances, the girl organises this because the mother (or both parents) are not in favour of her getting married to the boy's family; sometimes, it is because the family is known to be poor and there is another boy whom they like to be their son-in-law and his family is better off. In the old Zulu tradition, this process was highly organised. In most cases other girls in the community would be aware that so and so will elope, to use a closely related western concept of defying the will of the parents. The bottom line is that when the girls get into this process, it is out of desperation and dilemmas whether they should follow their hearts or that of the family; it is not abduction or taking the girl by force as some people talk about it in the media. Even though it may appear to be force in the eyes of the public, but it is an arranged process; the girl would be part of the planning. The girl's family will have to accept those cows or "money" in exchange of their daughter (Nkosi, 2014).

Even though this tradition was not meant to be a bad thing for the community, the findings demonstrate that, from the perspectives of the participants, the use of such a tradition posed a challenge to the schools and undermined effective implementation of the policy on learner pregnancy. The schools needed to prevent or reduce learner pregnancy rates. With such a tradition being widely practised, it is highly unlikely that schools can succeed in their

endeavours. The kind of life that is currently led in South Africa these days, as well as the definition of who a child is, demands that young people have to enjoy their rights to education. However, the learners that attended combined schools that participated in this study were still young to become wives. Therefore, the notion of participating in the traditions as discussed in Chapter Six is completely unacceptable. The learners still needed to be taken care of by their parents and not their boyfriends.

The findings are also suggesting that the influence of the tradition was complex in that it involved the interplay of socio-economic conditions of the parents and also some misunderstanding about this Zulu tradition. For instance, one would find that the family of the boy would not allow the girl to come back to school. That was despite the fact that the two youngsters were not married, yet the groom's family seemed to have powerful influence over the young girl. There instances where the school would beg them to allow the girl to continue with schooling but it all depended on the boy's family wishes - they had paid "lobola". Therefore, according to the account of the participants, the fact that lobola may have been paid for the girl gave them power over the girl's future as they regarded her as belonging to them. All these challenges indicate the enormity of the problem faced by the schools and the learners. While some families allowed the girls to come back to school, the trouble would be that they would get pregnant due to the fact that they living the life of married couples. The tragedy is that a pregnancy like that did not happen as a surprise to them; instead it was viewed as a blessing for the family. Therefore, such a tradition exposed young women to high risk of falling pregnant and thus increase the rate of pregnancy in schools when young girls were involved. So, it is clear that school faced a stiff challenge in fighting for the rights of the young girls in their schools.

The findings have also shown that the tradition of *ukuqoma* and ukumisa *iduku* also posed a similar challenge to that of *ukuthwala*. These two traditions were strong in the communities. In Chapter Six, I highlighted that in the process of a young girl formally accepting a young man as her husband to be, she would send gifts such as blankets and groceries to the family of a boyfriend to show the whole community that she is now having a relationship with that boy. This tradition is not a bad thing for older girls who have finished their schooling. However, in the context of this study, it was found to be a challenge to the school because it was done to the learners who were still school going, and were ready for processes that lead

towards marriage. When the girls got involved in such practices, they did not see anything wrong because, what they were doing was fashionable; they used to see others doing it in the community, and did not realise that they were actually ruining their future. If only they waited until they finished their studies, such a tradition was going to be proper and relevant too. However, because poverty also played a role in the scenario, the families concerned allowed these girls to follow this tradition thinking that they would get financial support from the wealthy family now that the girl was having a love relationship with the boy from that family. Some learners were pressured by their parents to do this; some did it in order to survive; they needed someone to take care of them.

The findings have shown that all the participants were in agreement that the practice of these Zulu traditions in these communities promoted learner pregnancy. The findings have also suggested that some of the young girls lived with their boyfriends, which meant they were going to get pregnant. The younger the girl the less chances of negotiating safer sex by using condoms in order to prevent pregnancy and STIs at the same time. This becomes a challenge to the SMTs in their implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. As much as the schools tried to prevent learner pregnancy, it became difficult to fight against the traditions mentioned. That meant that the school was saying one thing and the community was doing the opposite. The power of social conditions on the life of a learner is unbelievably is strong as the social ecological theory suggests.

9.4.2.2 Unsupportive parents

In this research it was revealed that many parents were not supporting the schools' efforts in dealing with learner pregnancy issues. The issue of unsupportive parents is a tragedy because schools are expected to work hand in hand with the parents in order to help the learners achieve their education. Schools and communities need to work collaboratively in order to achieve high quality education for the learners. Education of the learners is like a three legged pot, where these three should work together for the good of the child. The school cannot work alone without the support of the parents to fight against the learner pregnancy. From the perspectives of the participants in this study, some parents thought that when they sent their children to school, they were no longer their responsibility, but only that of the educators. They did not seem to care about what was happening in the schools. That posed a big

challenge to the SMT members in their attempts to implement learner pregnancy policy. The policy needed the parents to work with the school to prevent learner pregnancy and also to manage pregnancies when they occurred.

The schools in the study were situated in deep rural communities; hence, some parents were working far away from homes. Other parents were working in the farms which meant that they had to leave home very early in the morning and only came back very late in the afternoon. Therefore, they did not have time to look at their children's work even to check at whether they were still attending school. Some learners used this opportunity in negative ways seeing that their parents were not interested in their work. They dodged classes and sometimes went to their boyfriends' places while other learners were at school and came back with them in the afternoon. Parents would not even notice that the child did not go to school. This indicates that there were many factors which were not supportive of successful policy implementation.

The findings have also indicated that some parents were not supportive of their children even when their children were pregnant. When the school tried to call the parents to discuss the pregnancy of their children as to what to do from then onwards, many parents did not respond. The schools were experiencing the challenges when the parent is not responding because the school needed to discuss how to support the pregnant learner during and after pregnancy. This caused problems to the pregnant learner because many of them were living far away from the schools. In many instances, they did not have anyone to take the school work for them while they were on leave for delivery. This contributed to the learners dropping out of school during pregnancy.

The fact that many of the parents in these communities were not educated made them to be ignorant about critical issues relating to schooling. The parents needed to support the school in the prevention and management of learner pregnancy too. Even though parents were informed of the learner pregnancy policy in their meetings, it was discovered that other parents did not even attend those meetings while others did not bother to support their learners even if they are pregnant. According to McGaha-Garnett (2007), parental support is very important when a learner is pregnant in order to help the child to continue with her

schooling. Therefore, unsupportive parents decrease the chances of learners completing their schooling which is a challenge in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

9.4.2.3 Negative attitudes displayed by peers and the educators due to pregnancy

One of the questions I posed to the participants was about the challenges that the SMTs faced when implementing the policy on learner pregnancy. Their responses indicated that there were negative attitudes that were displayed by the learners and also by the educators. The study revealed that sometimes the pregnant learners would be stubborn, lazy, moody, and some of them would even be angry at themselves. They did not cooperate with educators; they did not submit their work. Some learners did not bother to come and report that they were pregnant. This was a challenge to the SMTs because they needed to support these learners. They did not listen to educators who always wanted to give them advice about how to behave themselves and also wanted to talk about the consequences of involving themselves in sexual relationships while still young and at school. Educators always complained about them not submitting work on time or not submitting at all. When they were absent from school they did not bother to ask about the work that was done in their absence. Such negative attitudes affected the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in such a way that the educators did not want to support these pregnant learners because of their attitude. In addition, the findings indicate that some pregnant learner who displayed negative attitudes did not participate in sessions where learner pregnancy was the main topic for discussion. All such attitudes were contrary to the policy on pregnant learners.

Furthermore, the learners that were not pregnant also displayed negative attitude towards the pregnant learners. They called them names, and they complained that they felt sleepy in class because of the presence of pregnant learners among them. They laughed at them like when not performing well in class. They did not even want to sit with them in their desks, especially the boys. They asked them funny questions and so on. Such behaviours by other learners are indicative of some of the myths they get from home about learning with a pregnant person. It is evident that what a person learns at home can influence his or her beliefs and practices in the school. Negative experiences sometimes become too much to bear and some learners had to leave school early in order to give birth quietly. Although their friends were always supporting them but it was not easy to tolerate being taunted by other

learners. This was done by other learners even if they were aware of the learner pregnancy policy that they should not discriminate pregnant learners. This kind of behaviour made it difficult for educators to teach if there is a pregnant learner in class because educators had a duty to discipline those learners for the smooth running of the lesson. Surely such activities disturbed the lesson and learners' concentration in class.

The findings presented in the paragraph above present a disturbing and gloomy picture about life in some rural schools such as these that participated in the study. The situation is disturbing in more ways than one. The fact that South Africa has been a democratic state for more than 21 years but there are people who still violate the rights of others with such impunity does not sound well. It is also disturbing to realise that as much as the SMT members work so hard to conscietise the school community about the spirit and content of the policy on pregnant learners, some schools still experience behaviours that put pressure on pregnant learners to drop out of school.

It is even more disturbing to learn that there were some educators who had bad tendencies of displaying negative attitude towards pregnant learners, especially male educators. Male educators indicated that they were not comfortable to deal with pregnant learners; they sent those learners to female educators to talk to them. They preferred talking to them generally and not as individual pregnant learners. Their preference to provide guidance to the boys may sound sincere on the surface. However, when one considers the fact that the same educators were complaining about doing work for the second time like giving learners assessments after delivery, their preferences to work with boys is questionable. These educators further complained that they had to do the work for the nurses while they were trained to be educators. They had to sit together with the pregnant learners waiting for the ambulance or took the child to the clinic with their own cars. They felt that it was too much for them and that it was an additional work for them for which they were not paid. As much as one feels for educators who have to work so much in compliance with government policy; it is disturbing that on one hand, they pretend to adopt and embrace the policy and continue to undermine its effective implementation on the other.

Negative attitudes displayed by the educators and the learners showed that as much as they were made aware of the learner pregnancy policy but they were not abiding by the rules. The

continuation of the unwavering complains about pregnant learners by the other learners not pregnant and educators were indications that the SMTs were encountering tremendous challenges in their implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. Nevertheless, SMT members were resilient and attempted to overcome such negativities and obstacles. The next section provides an overview of what they tried to do to ensure successful implementation despite the challenges.

9.4.3 How do the School Management Teams overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in schools?

This question highlighted above aimed to elicit empirical data around the strategies used by the SMT members to overcome the challenges they came across in the process of implementing the learner pregnancy policy. The findings show that there were broadly three strategies used by the SMT members and these were supporting stakeholders' involvement in prevention of learner pregnancy; promotion of peer education programme within the school and lastly academic support given to pregnant learners during and after delivery.

9.4.3.1 Supporting stakeholders' involvement in prevention of learner pregnancy

All three schools involved other stakeholders in the prevention of learner pregnancy. It was mentioned that, as much as parents did not support the school and did not involve themselves in the affairs of the schools, the SMTs used this strategy of involving other stakeholders to help them fight learner pregnancy in schools. The stakeholders that these schools made use of were social workers from Department of Social Development, school nurses from Department of Health, police officers from SAPS, religious leaders, traditional leaders and officials from the Department of Education.

The SMT members involved the above stakeholders by inviting them to come and address the learners about the health and social issues like unsafe sex, consequences of learner pregnancy and also social grants that were made available by the government to support those learners who were orphans. Involving various stakeholders included inviting religious and traditional

leaders to come to school and address all learners during assemblies. Messages from religious and traditional leaders usually remained the same; they talked about the importance of delaying sexual activity; the risks of practising unsafe sex and the need to complete schooling if and when learners fell pregnant.

Besides inviting stakeholders to the schools, SMT members also went out to the communities to try and influence them to assist the schools in making sure that the learners stopped their participation in the tradition of *ukuthwala* and *ukuqoma* while they were still at school. They discouraged parents from allowing this kind of behaviour while their children were still young. They tried to show parents the importance of supporting their children to complete schooling and that thereafter children could involve themselves in these traditions. All these stakeholders encouraged the learners to focus on their studies and to complete their schooling. They encouraged the parents not to allow learners to drop out of school due to pregnancy. They asked community support in ensuring that pregnant learners come back to school after delivery.

This strategy of using other stakeholders is very important in such that these leaders were respected in the community and were very influential when it comes to the community affairs. Therefore, it was a correct move by the SMTs to involve these stakeholders in the prevention of learner pregnancy. There were two main contributing factors to high sexual activity, and the first had to do with the stage of poverty and the other had to do with social vulnerabilities relating to learners being orphans and seeking emotional and financial support. With regards to the first one, more awareness campaigns were organised. With regards to the second one, vulnerable learners were referred to social workers who came to help them with food parcels and organised social grants. All these efforts were made to prevent learner pregnancy.

The government had made it easier for the schools to work with other stakeholders by introducing Integrated School Health Programme in schools whereby Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Social Development work together in schools to address health and social related issues (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014). Therefore it was easy for these schools to make use of these services. Hence, after all these efforts, learner pregnancy persisted in these schools.

9.4.3.2 Promotion of peer education programme within the school

The findings indicate that SMT members in the participating schools promoted peer education programmes. Such peer education programmes took the form of groups of learners in a school who educated; role modelled; advocated and referred other learners for professional help (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoalo, 2009). Such initiatives proved to be beneficial in the sense that learners found it easier to listen to other learners who were of similar age because they understood one another as they were experiencing similar challenges. Again, peer educators educated other learners in many ways other than delivering speeches which in some instances bored other learners. They also used drama, poems, story-telling and so forth as an approach to address the spread of learner pregnancy. This approach made other learners to learn in an entertaining way to draw their attention to this problem. Peer educators in these schools were given time to do all these during assembly and sometimes during LO lessons.

Peer education programme is a very good approach into decreasing learner pregnancy because these learners role model good behaviour in schools and they referred learners for professional help if need be. The peer educators educate learners on Lifeskills and HIV/AIDS even though these were taught during LO lessons but being taught by peer educators made some difference, at least from the perspectives of the participants in the study. Even when the SMTs organised learner pregnancy awareness campaigns, they involved these peer educators and organised with them so that they had a grip of what learners were expecting in these campaigns. Again the Department of Education had appointment a Learner Support Agent (LSA) in these schools to work with peer educators in eradicating social ills within the school. These LSAs were approachable to the learners because they came to them when experiencing problems other than going to an educator who is judgemental at times. These LSAs were useful to the school because they went an extra mile and visited the homes of these learners and tried to make sure that learners complete their schooling. They asked the parents to allow learners to come back to school after delivery even when the learner is living in her boyfriend's family. What the findings indicate is the when the LSAs visited schools, it was due to the invitation of the SMTs, and they extended such invitations as part of a strategy to help address the challenges faced in the implementation of the policy on pregnant learners.

9.4.3.3 Academic support given to pregnant learners during and after delivery

The schools that were involved in the study were situated in deep rural areas and the homes of the learners were very scattered and far away from the schools. The policy on learner pregnancy states that learners should be given academic support during and after pregnancy (DoE, 2007). Due to the above situation of learners' homes that are far away from schools and also the challenge of unsupportive parents, it was not easier for educators to support a learners while still at home. The parents could not come and fetch the learners' work while they were still on leave. Nevertheless, educators tried to send the school work by giving it to the learners who were living near the homes of those learners; unfortunately, nothing came back; no assessments; no projects, and feedback whatsoever. This was posing a big challenge to the SMTs and educators in trying to support these learners in their academic work so that they would not be left out in what others were continually doing in classes.

The SMTs then decided that they were not going to give up on these learners. They supported them academically after giving birth; when they came back to school. That strategy seemed to bear fruits. The educators with the support of the SMTs arranged extra classes for these learners, that is, morning and afternoon classes. The educators also tried to give those learners additional time for them to submit work for assessment in order to make it for the continuous assessment results needed before the examination times. Many of those learners who were performing well before pregnancy had no problems in catching up. But the problem was that some learners especially those who were performing badly even before pregnancy were not able to catch with the work. Some even had tendencies of not even attending those extra classes claiming that they did not have time; they had to take care of their babies. Many of those learners who could not catch up with the work done while they were absent ended up dropping out of school saying that it was too much work for them. But most of them did come back the following year to continue with their schooling. All schools had no problem with accepting them to repeat the same grade they were in the past year.

9.5 Implications for research, policy and practice

This research was a case study of only three deep rural combined schools and therefore its findings may not be generalised to other schools in South Africa. This study could not establish how widespread this phenomenon is within the province. It is therefore important for a large quantitative study to be undertaken, and that such a study could include different types of schools and communities that are affected by learner pregnancy. No two communities are the same; similarly, communities do not conceive and respond to a given phenomenon in the similar way. Therefore, it is important that a study that is generalisable can be conducted so that as research community, we can obtain a broader view about the extent of the problem. Moreover, surveys usually employ data gathering instruments and methods that accommodate larger samples compared to case studies.

Although the study had been designed to gather data on the roles played by the SMTs in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in the three combined schools, it included the LO Educators and SGB members in order obtain a balanced view about case study sites. Another study can be conducted among the learners themselves. It emerged from the study that the learner pregnancy policy is silent when it comes to boy learners. The policy implementation is therefore focused on girl learners more especially. Even when the girl was impregnated by the boy in the same school, the policy says nothing about how to manage that situation. Therefore another study should be conducted that will explore the learner pregnancy policy implementation with the focus on boy learners to give a broader perspective on this subject.

9.6 Conclusions

This study had found that there are more similarities than differences in the manner in which three schools played their roles in the implementation of learner pregnancy. At all three schools, parents, educators and learners themselves were made aware of the learner pregnancy policy through meetings for parents and educators and in assemblies for learners. Although one LO Educator mentioned that the newly appointed educators were not made aware of the policy, it was assumed that they have the knowledge of it. The SMTs also were found to be supporting the learners and educators in assisting the pregnant learners to

continue with their studies. They involved health officials and social development officials to address learners on learner pregnancy and also to give counselling sessions especially to pregnant learners and teen mothers. The SMT members showed respect for the right of the learners to education. The promoted the idea that all the learners regardless of their pregnancy status should have access to education. No school was found to be suspending or expelling a pregnant learner, instead pregnant learners were given necessary support during pregnancy and after pregnancy. Learners were allowed to come back to school to continue with their schooling even though many of them voluntarily dropped out and came back the following year.

The challenges experienced by these schools in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy were much bigger. These challenges involved the influence of the Zulu tradition which was promoted in the community. The issue of poverty that was experienced in the community made the community to support these traditions even though their children were young. The parents and learners themselves expected to get something to survive from the boy's family and end up getting pregnant while still at school. Such perceptions by the community increased the rate of learner pregnancy in the school as well as HIV/AIDS. The parents were found not to be supportive of their children in the school. Most of the parents in these communities were illiterate and many were unemployed. Pregnant learners were not supported at home with their school work, and parents believed that it was the responsibility of the school to do so. Furthermore, negative attitude displayed by some teachers, and learners towards pregnant learners undermined the efforts of the SMT members of effectively implementing the policy on pregnant learners.

The SMT members developed some strategies to overcome the challenges experienced during the implementation of learner pregnancy policy. The SMTs supported stakeholders' involvement in prevention of learner pregnancy, promoted of peer education programme within the school and academic support was given to pregnant learners during and after delivery. They involved all stakeholders to help then in the prevention and management of learner pregnancy. Peer educators were also given a chance to address this pandemic and educators were supported in giving academic support to pregnant learners and teen mothers. But through it all these strategies, learner pregnancy still is an issue of concern.

With regards to policy implementation, the findings of this study demonstrated consistency with the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study, namely Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The SMT members demonstrated understanding that in dealing with learner pregnancy phenomenon, the focus should not be on the child and her immediate environment, but also on the interactions with and in the larger environment as well (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). In addition, the SMT members demonstrated their belief in utilising invitational leadership in handling the problem of learner pregnancy. Details about how they applied Invitational leadership theory can be found in Section five of Chapter Seven. The SMT members demonstrated remarkable understanding of the role they should play in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy.

The principle of education as a basic human right was acknowledged and respected by the SMT members in this study. However, this study has also found that while pregnant learners have a right to education, this study has demonstrated that members of the communities where the schools were located played a major role in increasing learner pregnancy rates. The SMT members were still facing a battle in dealing with deep seated socio-cultural life of the communities. One could argue that what the SMT members were doing in implementing the policy on pregnant learners was a losing battle. It has become clear that to win this battle, comprehensive approach involving community leaders and many stakeholders should be instituted and sustained. This is not only a school issue but a societal issue that requires aggressive measures to protect the future of the young girls and boys in these rural schools and communities.

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11. APPENDICES Appendix 1

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane Tel: 033 392 1004 Ref: 2/4/3/345

Ms MBS Molefe
PO Box 1679
EZAKHENI
3381

Dear Ms Molefe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"IMPLEMENTING THE MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER PREGNANCY IN SCHOOLS: PERSPECTIVES FROM SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN UTHUKELA DISTRICT"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 April 2015 to 15 February 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kenologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Uthukela District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 2015/04/09
KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...Dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. ☎ 033 392 1004 ...beyond the call of duty

Appendix 2

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

P.O. BOX 1679

EZAKHENI

3381

02 FEBRUARY 2015

TO: THE PRINCIPAL

_____COMBINED SCHOOL

RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION LETTER/CONSENT FORM

1. Study title and Researcher Details

- Department : Adult Education
- Project title: Implementing the Policy on Learner Pregnancy in schools: Perspectives from Schools in Uthukela District.
- Principal investigator(s): Mausley Barbara Sikhumbuzo Molefe (Miss)
- Subject: Request to utilise _____ Combined School as a research site for a project towards PhD in Education Leadership Management Policy.

Address: Private Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209

Website:http://cae.org.za

Introduction

I am inviting School Management Team members, educators and SGB members of your institution to take part in this educational study. I would like to request your permission to allow them to take part including yourself. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with other institutional members if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you agree that your institution can take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to explore the roles played by SMTs in implementing the Measures for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy policy in schools. The primary focus is on prevention and addressing of learner pregnancy. This will lead to identification, reduction and preventative strategies of learner pregnancy in order to ensure that learner pregnancy is minimised and to ensure that girls access education and are retained in schools without discrimination.

Your institution has been chosen because the focus is on schools which are combined and located in the poorest communities. I also believe that the SMT in this institution are committed to responding to high learner pregnancy.

Data will be generated through individual and group interviews. There will also be a journal entry for HOD in Humanities as another form of data generation. The study will take place between February/March and August/September 2015.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The final research report will be made available at the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, with copies left to the KZN Department of Education.

The results of this study may also be presented at a conference and published in a journal. No real name or address will be used in any report or book, unless specifically requested by individuals involved.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded by the student.

Who has reviewed the study?

The proposed study was reviewed by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal through its Research Funding Committee and Ethics Committee.

Contact(s) for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project please contact:

1. Miss Mausley Barbara Sikhumbuzo Molefe: (Student/Researcher) HIV/AIDS and Lifeskills Coordinator, Uthukela District, Ladysmith. Email: khumbu.molefe@gmail.com; Cell: 0827464657.
2. Dr TT Bhengu: University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education. Email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za; o31-2603534.
3. HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel: 031 260 3587, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

Thank you.

AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Date _____

N.B. Please sign the attached slip if you consent to the involvement of your organization

I/We……consent to the conduct of this study involving my school in relation to the said research project.

I/We understand that no real name will be used in any public report, unless authorized by the participants and that participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences for their status at the university or in the community.

……. …….

Signature and Capacity Date stamp

Appendix 3

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

P.O.Box 1679

EZAKHENI

3381

02 FEBRUARY 2015

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is MBS Molefe; I am an Education Leadership Management Policy PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa.

I am interested in exploring perspectives from School Management Teams in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in combined schools. Your school is one of my case studies. To gather the information, I am interested in asking you some questions in the form of an interview and/or journal entries.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as an SMT member, educator and SGB member opinion.

- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- The research aims at exploring the roles that the SMTs are playing in the implementation of the measures for prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at:

Email: khumbu.molefe@gmail.com

Cell: 036-6385200 or 0827464657.

My supervisor is Dr. TT Bhengu, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 031-2603534.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms P. Ximba

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 3587 E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

…… ……

APPENDIX 4

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH PRINCIPALS

1. How many years of experience do you have in education in general?
2. How many years of experience do you have as a principal?
3. What is a combined school and why are you a combined school?
4. Do you prefer a combined school or a separated school and why?
5. Is having a combined school contribute to the increase of learner pregnancy and why do think so?
6. What kind of learners and community do you work with in the school?
7. Do you have a problem of learner pregnancy in your school?
8. What is the rate of learner pregnancy in your school?
9. Will you consider learner pregnancy a serious problem/concern for your school and surrounding areas?
10. What causes learner pregnancy in your school and community?
11. How do you help learners to deal with the causes of learner pregnancy?
12. Are there any girls who have chosen to leave school due to pregnancy? If yes, what could be the reason? If no, what does the school do to help such learners?
13. Does the school have a policy on learners who fall pregnant while at school?
14. How did you communicate this policy to all stakeholders including learners?
15. What do you think are its strength and weaknesses?
16. What role do you play in implementing the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in your school?
17. What are the attitudes towards the treatment of pregnant learners by parents, other learners and teachers in general considering their culture and religion?
18. What challenges do you come across when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
19. How do you overcome the challenges you face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
20. Do you consider the socio-economic background of learners when implementing this policy and how?

21. How do you involve learners in different activities in the school?
22. What resources (human and physical) do you use in the implementation of this policy and do all stakeholders participate in the implementation of this policy?
23. Do you think the school community support the learner pregnancy policy and why?
24. What qualities do you as SMT need to possess in order to implement this policy effectively and why?
25. What kind of support do you get from the department in implementing the learner pregnancy policy?
26. How do you involve the SGBs and other stakeholders in your school when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
27. May you please share any burning issue, positive or negative that has to do with the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in general?

APPENDIX 5

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH HODs

1. Learner pregnancy
    - Do you have a problem of learner pregnancy in your school?
    - How widespread is learner pregnancy in your school?
    - How does having the pregnant learners in a class hinder the teaching and learning?
    - What impact does learner pregnancy have on the educational performance of those learners?
    - How do you involve teachers in your departments to contribute to the implementation of learner pregnancy policy?
    - Are there any girls who have chosen to leave school due to pregnancy? If yes, what could be the reason? If no, what does the school do to help such learners?

2. Mechanisms of dealing with learner pregnancy
    - Does the school have a policy on learners who fall pregnant while at school?
    - What do you think are its strength and weaknesses?
    - What role do you play in implementing the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in your school?
    - What are the attitudes towards the treatment of pregnant learners by parents, other learners and teachers in general considering their culture and religion?
    - What challenges do you come across when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
    - How do you overcome the challenges you face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
    - What are the views that people in the community have towards learner pregnancy policy?
    - Do you consider the socio-economic background of learners when implementing this policy and how?
    - What qualities do you as SMT need to possess in order to implement this policy effectively and why?

- Do you think the school community supports the learner pregnancy policy and why?
- What kind of support do you get from the department in implementing the learner pregnancy policy?
- May you please share any burning issue, positive or negative that has to do with the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in general?

APPENDIX 6

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH EDUCATORS

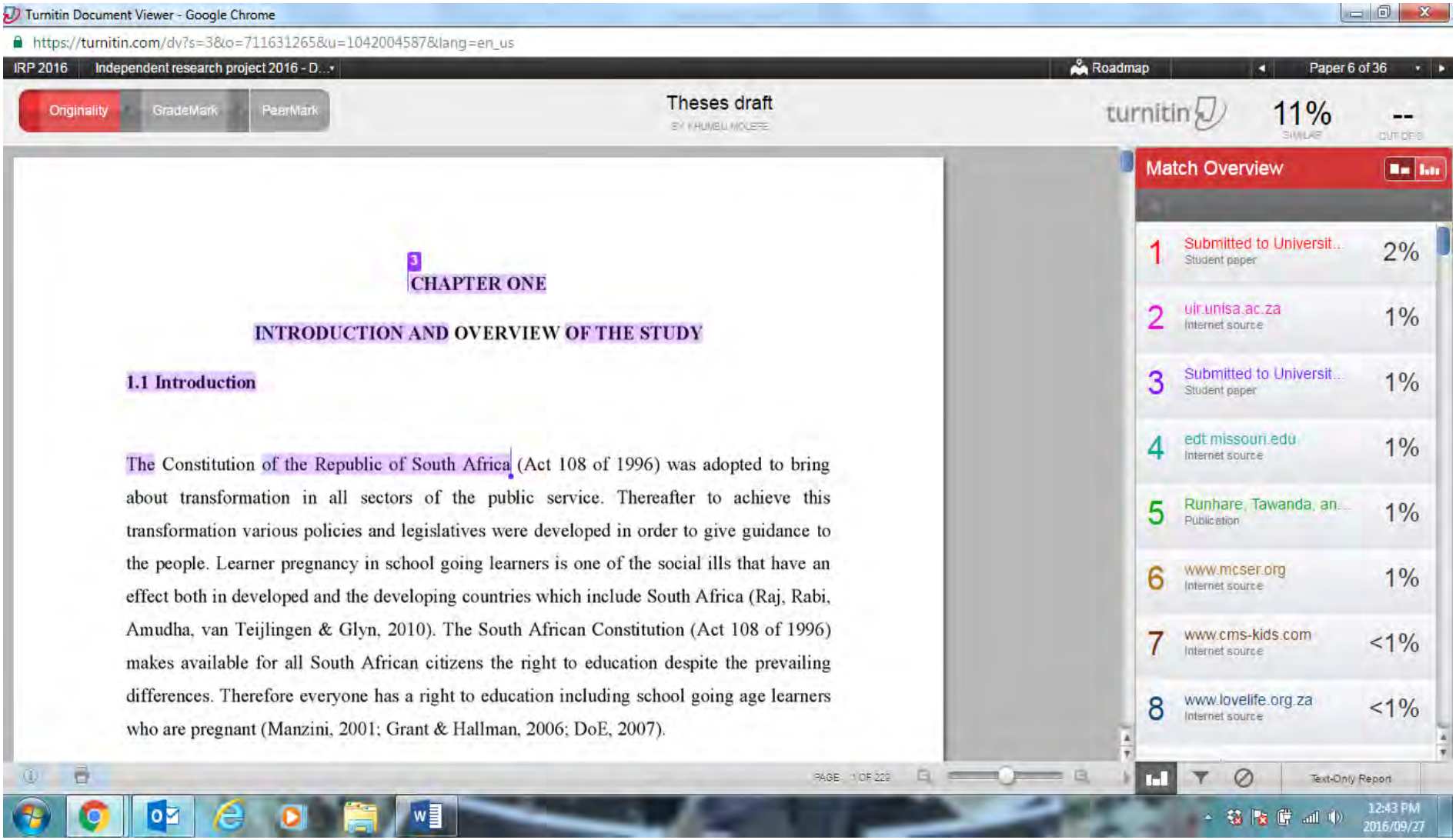
1. What is the rate of teenage pregnancy in your school?
2. How often do you deal directly with pregnant learners?
3. How do having pregnant learners in your class hinder the teaching and learning for that class?
4. What impact does learner pregnancy have on the educational performance of those learners?
5. Does the school have a policy on learners who fall pregnant while at school?
6. How was this policy communicated to all stakeholders including, educators, learners and parents?
7. What do you think are its strength and weaknesses?
8. What role the SMTs play in implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
9. What challenges have the SMTs come across when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
10. How have the SMTs overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
11. How do the SMTs involve the SGBs and other stakeholders in your school when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
12. What are the attitudes towards the treatment of pregnant learners by parents, other learners and teachers in general considering their culture and religion?
13. Do SMTs consider the socio-economic background of learners when implementing this policy and how?
14. What qualities do SMTs need to possess in order to implement this policy effectively and why?

15. Do you think the school community support the learner pregnancy policy and why?
16. What kind of support do you get from the department in implementing the learner pregnancy policy?
17. May you please share any burning issue, positive or negative that has to do with the implementation of the measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in general?

APPENDIX 7

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH SGB MEMBERS

1. Do you have a problem of learner pregnancy in your school?
2. What is the rate of learner pregnancy in your school?
3. What impact does learner pregnancy have on the educational performance of your children?
4. Does the school have a policy on learners who fall pregnant while at school?
5. Was this policy communicated to parents and how?
6. Do SMTs consider the socio-economic background of learners when implementing the learner pregnancy policy and how?
7. Do you support the inclusion of pregnant learners in schools and why?
8. Do you think the school community supports the learner pregnancy policy and why?
9. What role do SMTs play in implement the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
10. What challenges do the SMTs come across when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
11. How have the SMTs overcome the challenges they face regarding the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
12. Did you as the SGB and general members of the school community participate in the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy and how?
13. How do the SMTs involve the SGBs and other stakeholders in your school when implementing the learner pregnancy policy in your school?
14. What qualities do SMTs need to possess in order to implement this policy effectively and why?
15. May you please share any burning issue, positive or negative that has to do with prevention and management of learner pregnancy policy in general?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3
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY
1.1 Introduction
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) was adopted to bring about transformation in all sectors of the public service. Thereafter to achieve this transformation various policies and legislatives were developed in order to give guidance to the people. Learner pregnancy in school going learners is one of the social ills that have an effect both in developed and the developing countries which include South Africa (Raj, Rabi, Amudha, van Teijlingen & Glyn, 2010). The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) makes available for all South African citizens the right to education despite the prevailing differences. Therefore everyone has a right to education including school going age learners who are pregnant (Manzini, 2001; Grant & Hallman, 2006; DoE, 2007).
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