

CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS IN OMUTHIYA

CIRCUIT OF NAMIBIA

A MINI THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

(LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

HILJA IITA

200736817

MARCH 2021

MAIN SUPERVISOR: DR. R N. AMAAMBO

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. J. MUSHAANDJA

ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this research was to explore the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya education circuit of Namibia. The study aims at contributing better insights to strategies that can improve the learner-mother freedom in schools. The study resolute the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit. It further explored how the learner-mothers cope with these challenges as well as the strategies in place that guide school management in implementing the learner pregnant policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers. Moreover, the study focused on some ways on how the learner-mothers can be supported to cope with motherhood and learning. The study further looked at how the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management could be addressed. A qualitative research approach using a case study design was employed, whereby the researcher used interview guides and covert observations to collect the data on the challenges faced by learner-mothers. The targeted population of this study was learner-mothers, teacher-counsellors and school principals in Omuthiya inspection circuit of the Oshikoto Region in Namibia. A purposive sampling method was employed in this study.

The study concluded that the main challenges faced by learner-mothers are coping with motherhood and learning simultaneously, teased and bullied by other learners, missing classes and examinations while attending to motherhood demands. The study further established that most learner-mothers do not disclose their pregnancy conditions and lose concentration in the studies, react negatively to the challenges, and unprepared to cope with the challenges they are facing in the educational mainstream, and eventually drop out of school. The results of this study found out strategies like utilising school records for all learner-mothers and use of confirmation letters from health care-providers that detail the fitness of the learner-mothers on the mainstream as a means to overcome some challenges. It is clear that the empowering of teacher counsellors could result in the success of the policy. Working together with class teachers of all learner-mothers could lead to the effective implementation of the policy. The study also established that learner-mothers need support in the form of counselling and moral support. The study recommends the educational policymakers to come up with strategies or policies on how to supplement lessons or exams missed by learner-mothers due to a well assessed pregnant complication. The study seeks provision to be made on administrative documents such that teasing and bullying learner-mother will be regarded as serious indiscipline with strict measures in place.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.2. Statement of the problem	7
1.3. Research objectives	10
1.4. Research questions	10
1.4 Significance of the study	10
1.5. Limitation and delimitation of the study	11
1.6. Definition of terms	12
1.7. Summary	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE ON EXPERIENCES OF LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS	13
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. Theoretical framework	13
2.3. Learner-mothers' reactions to pregnancy	15
2.4. Disruption in academic learning	17
2.5. Health implications for learner-mothers and their babies	20
2.6. The learner-mothers' prepared to be in schools during pregnancy and after confinement	21
2.7. The teachers' preparedness to accommodate learner-mothers in school?	22
2.8. Perceptions towards Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy	23
2.9. Gap in literature	25
2.10. Summary	26
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	27
3.1. Introduction	27
3.2. Research approach	27
3.3. Research paradigm	28
3.4. Research design	29
3.5. Population	31
3.6. Sample and sampling procedures	31
3.7. Research tools	32
3.8. Data collection procedure	34

3.9. Data analysis	34
3.9.1. Tesch’s approach to analysing data	35
3.10. Ethical Consideration	36
3.11. Summary	38
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	39
4.1. Introduction	39
4.2. Presentation and discussion of Findings	40
4.2.1. Challenges faced by learner-mothers (LM) at school	40
4.2.1.1. The nature of challenges	40
4.2.1.2. How the learner-mothers react to the challenges	43
4.2.1.3. How well learner-mothers prepared to cope	44
4.2.2. Strategies in place to guide school management in implementing the pregnancy policy	46
4.2.2.1. Tools in place to evaluate the policy	46
4.2.2.2. Effectiveness of the tools used to evaluate the policy	48
4.2.2.3. The reaction of educational stakeholders on the tools	52
4.2.3. Support needed by learner mother to cope with motherhood and learning	59
4.2.3.1. Kind of support received by learner-mothers	59
4.2.3.2. How the school ensures that the necessary support reach the learner mother	61
4.2.3.3. The stage at which an intensified support is mostly needed	63
4.2.4. Mechanisms to address challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management	64
4.2.4.1. What is supposed to be done by the Ministry of Education?	64
4.2.3.2. How to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management	68
4.2.3.3. Input to the pregnancy policy	71
4.3. Summary	73
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74
5.1. Introduction	74
5.2. Summary of findings	74
5.2.1. Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit and how do they cope with these challenges	74
5.2.2. Strategies in place to guide school management to implement the learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers	74
5.2.3. How learner-mothers can be supported to cope with motherhood and learning	75
5.2.4. How the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management can be addressed	75
5.4. Recommendations for improvements	77
5.5. Recommendations for further research	78
5.6. Summary	78

REFERENCES	80
APPENDICES	84
APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA RESEARCH PERMISSSION LETTER	84
APPENDIX B: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER	85
APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	86
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHER-COUNSELLORS	87
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNER-MOTHERS	92
APPENDIX F: COVERT OBSERVATIONS CHECKLIST	97
APPENDIX G: PARENT CONSENT LETTER	100
ANNEXURE D: LEARNER’S ASSENT (PLEASE, RETURN SLIP)	103

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Primarily, I thank the Almighty for His grace and guidance throughout my study and for giving me the ability and mental and physical health to complete my study.

I wish to extend my gratitude to my main Supervisor Dr. Rachel Ndinela Amaambo and my Co-Supervisor Dr. John Mushaandja for their professional support, effort and valuable advice. I will always be grateful to them all.

My sincere gratitude goes to all my participants for agreeing to respond and be part of my study. I also thank the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as well as the Oshikoto Education Region for allowing me to access the participants.

Special thanks go to my sister Taimi Muchi, my mother Martha Nekongo and my daughters Hilda and Aina for their patience during my absence from them when I was doing my study.

I am sincerely grateful to our former Education Inspector Mr. Fillemon Nangolo and my friends Julius Amukongo and Trofimus Kaongo for their moral support.

Finally, yet importantly, I am grateful to all my friends and classmates at the University of Namibia for their support and friendship.

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this thesis to my dear and loving uncle Shaanika Nekongo, who has been my source of inspiration since my childhood and throughout my academic achievements.

DECLARATION

I, Hilja Iita, declare that, “Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit in Namibia” is a true reflection of original research and initiative and that this work, or any other part thereof, has not been submitted for a degree in any other higher education institution.

No part of this may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by means without prior permission of the author.

I, Hilja, granted the right to the University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or in part, in any manner of format, which the University of Namibia may consider fit for any person or institution requiring it for study or research.

.....

Hilja Iita

.....

March 2021

ACRONYMS

LM	- Learner mother
MoE	- Ministry of Education
PL	- Participant learner
PS	- Participant staff
EFA	- Education for all
MDG	- Millennium Development goals
CA	- Continuous Assessment

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Namibian annual national statistics of learner-pregnancy.....	3
Table 2: Oshikoto Regional School statistics for 2017.....	5
Table 3: Pregnancies for learners in Omuthiya circuit schools and dropouts resulted from pregnancy for 2015 and 2016.....	6
Table 4: Results of the findings from school staff.....	40
Table 5: Results of the findings from learner-mothers.....	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Number of learner-mother pregnancies (2010-2017) in Oshana Region.....4

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Pregnancy during school-age remains the topic of intense debate worldwide and therefore several scholars have researched on the issue of learner pregnancy like Mogotsi (1996), Iimene (2015), Losper (2004), Karimi (2015) and many others. In the past, girls' education was limited and there have been gender inequalities in education as girls were denied opportunities to take charge in their career.

Before South African independence, the apartheid education regulated the suspension and expulsion of pregnant learners from the public school system (Morrel, Bhana & Shefer 2012). This means that the apartheid policy did not consider pregnant and parenting learners as these learners were removed from schools. Upon realising this unfair situation, several attempts were made on equality and inclusion. In 1996, the South African Constitution established the Bill of rights affirming rights of children and rights to education. Moreover, apart from South Africa's attempt, several attempts made worldwide to help young mothers to complete their basic education after giving birth such as in Botswana and Kenya (Meekers & Ahmend, 2010; Karimi, 2015).

Before Namibian independence, if a Namibian learner fell pregnant, this learner would stay home, as she would not be allowed to attend school, a situation that would lead to the termination of her study. When a pregnant learner could not further her study, her future and that of her unborn baby will be negatively affected. However, many countries such as South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, just to mention few, tried to retain pregnant learners in schools to avoid dropout resulting from pregnancy (Iimene, 2015).

Another attempt was made in section 5.1.3 of Article 16 of the African Charter (1999) (Article 16, section 5.1.3) on rights and welfare of the children fundamental rights to education. The

African Charter highlights that, learners who fall pregnant before completing their basic education should continue with their basic education. Since Namibia's independence, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture embarked on the development of educational policy documents to achieve its transformational goals (Shanyanana, 2011). As one of the signatories of the Charter, Namibia, through the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture introduced a Policy on Learner Pregnancy in 1994, which is replaced by another policy called Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (Moe, 2012).

The Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy focused on the strategies to address the challenges of high teenage pregnancies of school-age children in Namibia.

Even if Namibia introduced an Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, the learner pregnancy statistics is still increasing. According to the former Minister of Education Hon. Hanse-Himarwa, learner pregnancy has been a challenge and there has been an outcry against the current policies put in place to address, manage and control teenage pregnancy. The Minister agreed with the reports that most of these pregnancies are from rural areas (Kangootui, 2018).

A study conducted by UNFPA in 2013 reports that more than 46000 teenagers fell pregnant in Namibia in 2013. According to the report, 20 000 teenage girls aged between 15 and 19 fell pregnant daily worldwide while Namibia contributes 157 learner pregnancies daily. Rural areas are the hardest hit in which teenage girls only have primary education (grade 1- 7). This makes girls vulnerable to pregnancy and leads to poverty. Some learners might think it is the end of their lives after realising they are pregnant. (UNFPA, 2013).

The following are national learner pregnancy statistics read by Iipingwe, a member of National Assembly Standing Committee during their visit to Oshana Region, seeing regional input on teenage pregnancy that was tabled in National Assembly in 2017.

Table 1. Namibian annual national statistics of learner-pregnancy

Year	Learner-pregnancies recorded
2014	1 797
2015	1 843
2016	4 000

Source: *Namibia daily news, (2018)*

There are indications that learner pregnancies vary among different regions in Namibia. Oshana Region Education Director revealed that 130 learners fell pregnant in the region during the first term of 2018 (January –April) and 35 of 130 learners dropped out of school. In 2017, the 312 learners with 27 in the first term fell pregnant. The above figures indicate that the number is increasing. The following table shows the annual statistics of learner pregnancy in Oshana Region.

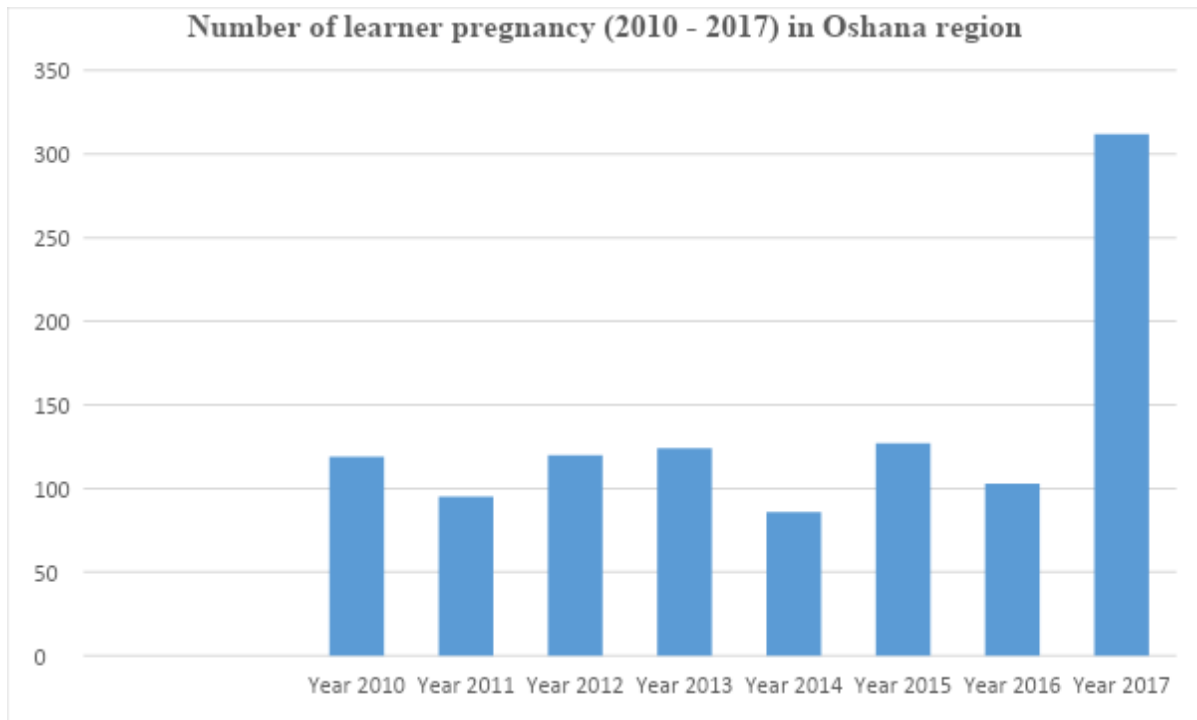


Figure 1. Number of learner mother pregnancy (2010-2017) in Oshana Region

Source: *Namibia daily news, (2018)*

Kavango Region has been regarded as a Region with high learner pregnancy statistics. According to Beukes (2018), the Mayor of Rundu revealed that 6 217 girls between 10-19 fell pregnant since 2010 in Kavango Region while in 2018 alone 978 girls fell pregnant of which 936 are aged between 15-19 and 42 of them are under 15 years.

Oshikoto Region is also one of the most affected Region in Namibia regarding learner pregnancy. The Chief Regional Officer for Oshikoto Region expressed concern about higher teenage pregnancy in the Region, particularly the school-age children at an award ceremony at Ekulo Senior Secondary School in 2018. Furthermore, the Director of Education for Oshikoto Region is gravely concerned about alarming figures of learner pregnancy, which constitute 40% of school dropout in 2017. Following, are Oshikoto regional statistics for 2017 (David, 2018):

Table 2: Oshikoto Regional School statistics for 2017

Enrolment	68 987
Dropout	1 762
Dropout due to pregnancy	253

Source: *Informante, (2018)*

The Regional statistics is a combination of different circuits of the Region. The following table shows the statistics of pregnancy record of schools in Omuthiya circuit as taken from the circuit's Pregnancy termly record from all schools in the circuit.

Table 3. Pregnancies for learners in Omuthiya circuit schools and dropouts resulted from pregnancy for 2015 and 2016

Year	School terms	Pregnant learners in schools	Pregnant learners dropped-out	Total
2015	Term 1	8	6	14
	Term 2	10	13	23
	Term 3	19	10	29
2016	Term 1	22	5	27
	Term 2	21	18	39
	Term 3	19	15	34
Total	2015 & 2016	99	67	166

Source: *Omuthiya Circuit pregnancy statistics, (2015-2016)*

The number of pregnancy record reported by one circuit alone is quite high as there are eight (8) circuits in the region and looking at fourteen (14) regions in Namibia, the situation is frightening.

The Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (2012) was introduced because of the increasing number of girls who forced to terminate their studies because of pregnancy. The policy emphasised that learners should remain in school during as well as after pregnancy, and only given four weeks off before delivery and twelve (12) months after delivery. This policy aimed at reducing pregnancy-related dropouts as well as managing and preventing learners' pregnancies (MOE, 2012). The prevention and management of learner pregnancy seem not effective, as there are still dropouts of schoolgirls because of pregnancy.

Regardless of the 2012 pregnancy policy, the number of dropouts is still increasing due to pregnancies. The data collected from a study done by Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) found that 50% of learners drop out because of pregnancy. They further emphasised that during the time of the study, one school in Kavango Region had already recorded 19 pregnancies of that year.

It seems that the statistics are increasing even if there is a policy at hand and it seems like the policy provoked teenage pregnancy. The study aims to look at the challenges experienced by learner-mothers, the circumstances of these learners, their wishes and aspirations. Most learners' pregnancies are accidental, not planned and the only thing to do about it is to find ways to help and support them to fulfil the tasks of parenting and learning. The implementation of the learner-pregnancy policy is in confusion, uncertainty and implemented with fear because the situations of learner-mothers are different and need to be approached differently.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Although Namibia's Education Sector introduced an Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of learner Pregnancy aimed at anticipation and minimising some challenges associated with learner-pregnancies, the prevention and management mechanisms seem not well effective and articulated as the pregnancy record is still increasing. One of the critical challenges appears that the policy does not emphasise clear directions on who and how to go about the management of learner pregnancies.

Learner pregnancy crisis appears in literature and social media headlines. Over the past decades, there has been a rising concern on early parenthood and its disadvantages. The phenomenon of learner pregnancy touches the lives of many people around them, the parents, schools and education sector in particular (David, 2012; Iimene, 2015; Smit, 2011). The question remains, how the learner-mothers cope with pregnancy and parenthood while at school. Furthermore, David (2012) argues that in an international context, it is commonly acknowledged that pregnancy and parenthood have negative impacts on young females. Namibian school pregnancy statistics have shown that many school-girls fall pregnant each year. With an Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management at hand in Namibia, most pregnant girls drop out of school while some remain in schools as per pregnant policy.

Most of the learners who fall pregnant and are retained in schools do not complete their basic education successfully (Iimene, 2015). It is an indication that even if the policy is being implemented for the learners to continue with their studies, its aims and objectives might not be met, as the obstacles experienced by learners throughout the process are not addressed.

Even though Moe (2012) indicates that when the pregnancy occurs, the focus will be on supporting the learner-mother to complete her education, there are no clear indications on how to go about such support and learner-mothers are not supported. Karimi (2015) found that many

teen mothers return to school because of their babies. Having learner-mothers remaining in schools does not guarantee good performance as sometimes prove to be a heavy burden. Learners who become mothers before finalising their schooling may not be able to manage and flourish academically if the support they need to complete their studies is not helpful or inadequate (Karimi, 2015). These are learners and mothers who have to fulfil both parenting and learning responsibilities while at the same time going through different challenges that directly affect their studies and their future in particular.

Many negative implications might occur if learner-mothers' challenges are not taken into considerations. It is practically difficult to be responsible for learning and parenting at the same time. Schooling and parenting are both challenging responsibilities that require individual attention. Being a learner-mother is as if serving two masters at the same time, which creates a lot of confusion, hence it should be discouraged. Most pregnant and learner-parents remained in schools as per pregnancy policy but they are experiencing different challenges, physically, emotionally and psychologically. These learners lack support in dealing with the responsibilities of learning and parenting. Learner-mothers who remained in schools lack motivation and support, therefore, their academic performance is worrisome. Scholtz (2018) states that teenagers' ability to return to school after childbirth and catch-up will be difficult. These learners usually have to dedicate their time to school as well as to their babies. They go through different challenges that might negatively affect their studies, their health and that of their babies, as well as their future.

They have to make decisions about what to do as young mothers and learners at the same time. They mostly took leave, away from school to go for check-ups when pregnancy complications noticed as well as when approaching the delivery date and can only join others when pronounced fit by the medical doctor. Hauuanga (2002) emphasises that it is believed that girls who fall

pregnant while at school do not perform academically well and may find their education process disrupted and even drop out of school.

If new mechanisms are not put in place, the learner-mothers' achievements will be low and this could lead to their future being ruined as well as that of their children. It is an indication of how society will be like most of its young mothers' education could not be completed. The rise in the number of learner pregnancy record is a national issue that the available pregnancy policy of 2012 cannot minimise the pregnancy on its own. Cloete (2018) emphasises that the government's teenage pregnancy policy designed to support pupils who fall pregnant to complete their education was not yielding the desired results.

The possible consequences are that at the end of the process, these learner-mothers would not adequately achieve their primary goals (i.e. successfully completing their schooling); as they would not have sufficient time to study and attend to their babies after normal school hours. As a result, such learners would be discouraged to continue with their schooling and would opt for nothing else other than dropping out of school. This is a sad reality as Cloete (2018) indicates that over 4 000 pregnant teens dropped out of school in Namibia in 2016, 1 843 in 2015 and 1 790 in 2014. This shows that the situation is not getting any better but increases from better to worse.

The lack of research on challenges faced by learner-mothers as well as how they are coping with these challenges made this study essential. The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the challenges of being a mother and a learner, and the needs of learner-mothers. It further explores why the implementation of the policy seems not to aid the reduction of learner pregnancy and dropouts related to pregnancy. The study aims to find other alternatives to help learner-mothers to overcome the challenges and tackle the issue of learner pregnancy so that they can complete their studies successfully.

1.3. Research objectives

- To determine the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit and how they cope with these challenges;
- To explore strategies in place to guide school management to implement the learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers;
- To establish how learner-mothers can be supported to cope with motherhood and learning;
- To explore how the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management can be addressed.

1.4. Research questions

To narrow down the study, the following research questions guided the study:

- What are the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit and how do they cope with these challenges?
- What strategies are in place to guide school management to implement the learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers?
- How can learner-mothers be supported to cope with motherhood and learning?
- How can the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management be addressed?

1.4 Significance of the study

Research on policies often contributes to the demand of the policy analysis by raising the visibility of undesirable conditions or by indicating the possible effectiveness of particular policy interventions to address such conditions (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank 2009). Research on policies seeks to influence policy choice. As policy research typically focuses on a single policy (Sykes,

Schneider & Plank 2009), (in this study, learner pregnancy policy) its analysis and contradictions can generate data to assess its impact and influence its implementation.

Learner-pregnancy is a great concern and it hampers the education sector and the future of the young girls in Namibia. Hence this study will be beneficial to many stakeholders in the education sector and provide awareness to teenagers about the consequences and challenges of being a parent and a learner at the same time. Policymakers will also understand how school management are experiencing challenges in attempting to help learner-mothers through the implementation of learner pregnancy policy.

The study is significant as it might help the Ministry of Education realising the challenges and the needs of learner-mothers. The findings will find strategies to minimise challenges faced by learner-mothers and it will inform School Management to overcome strategies in the prevention and management of learner pregnancies.

1.5. Limitation and delimitation of the study

The study was conducted in Oshikoto Region, although Oshikoto Region is not the most affected region by high learner pregnancy. This is due to the financial constraint of the researcher. The study was restricted to four schools of Omuthiya education circuit in Oshikoto Region in Namibia and the findings would not be generalised to other regions. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, pregnancy and sex-related matters made research participants shy to give information. The participants might not feel free to discuss pregnancy matters comfortably as learner-mothers were asked about themselves and more on their personal lives.

Lastly, in terms of the research method, a smaller sample size raises the issue of generalisability to the whole population of the research (Harry & Lipsky, 2014). Having studied the language testing assessment in Hong Kong qualitatively, Gay, (2015) admits that due to the small sample size, the study results do not wish to claim wider generalisation to other contexts.

1.6. Definition of terms

Motherhood

David (2012) defines motherhood as a process that involves both physical and psychological changes during pregnancy, at the giving birth and after birth.

Learner-mothers

Learner-mothers refers to all female learners who are pregnant or having a baby while schooling under basic education from grade 1-12 (Moe, 2012).

Challenges

According to Macmillan English Dictionary (2007), Challenge is defined as “something that needs a lot of skill, energy and determination to deal with or achieve, especially something you have never done before” (p. 234). All forms of obstacles and hardships the female learners are facing as mothers and learners at the same time were regarded as challenges in this study.

1.7. Summary

This chapter gives an introductory background to the study. It presents the statement of the problem, research questions and significance of the study as well as the limitation of the study. Keywords of the study are defined in this chapter. The next chapter will focus on literature review and design a conceptual framework on which the study is based on.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE ON EXPERIENCES OF LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS

2.1. Introduction

Literature review refers to the activities involved in searching for information on the topic and developing a comprehensive picture of the state of knowledge on that topic. The literature is all the written sources relevant to the topic of interest and is useful to expose more about the topic under study (Brink, Walt, & Rensburg, 2012). This chapter presents a comprehensive review of various related literature to expose what other authors said in line with the researcher's study area. The chapter constructs the framework based on Mercer's theory becoming a mother. To answer the research questions and understand learner-mothers' situations, the work of Imene (2015), Losper (2005), Chigona and Chetty (2008) and Karimi (2015) were employed. Themes that emerged from literature are learner-mothers' reaction to pregnancy, disruption in academic learning, health implications for learner-mothers and their babies, the readiness of learner-mothers to be retained in schools, teachers' preparedness to help learner-mothers and perception of education stakeholders about Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy.

2.2. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework consists of concepts and, together with their definitions and reference to relevant scholarly literature, existing theory that is useful for a particular study (Lichtman, 2014). Lichtman (2014) states that theoretical framework demonstrates an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of the research paper and that relate to the broader areas of knowledge. The theory that informed this study is Becoming a Mother theory by Mercer (2004). This is not the only theory that meets the scope of this study but the researcher adopted this theory to limit the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables and defining the specific viewpoint [framework] that the researcher will take in analysing and interpreting the

data to be gathered. It also facilitates the understanding of concepts and variables according to given definitions and builds new knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions.

The main assumptions of the Becoming a Mother Theory is that;

- A relatively stable core self, acquired through lifelong socialization, determines how a mother defines and perceives events; her perceptions of her infant's and others' responses to her mothering, with her life situation, are the real world to which she responds (Mercer, 1986a);
- In addition to the mother's socialization, her developmental level and innate personality characteristics also influence her behavioural responses (Mercer, 1986a);
- The mother's role partner, her infant, will reflect the mother's competence in the mothering role through growth and development (Mercer, 1986a);
- The infant is considered an active partner in the maternal role-taking process, affecting and being affected by the role enactment (Mercer, 1981);
- The father's or mother's intimate partner contributes to role attainment in a way that cannot be duplicated by any other supportive person (Mercer, 1995);
- Maternal identity develops concurrently with maternal attachment and each depends on the other (Mercer, 1995; Rubin, 1977).

Based on the underlining assumptions of the Becoming a Mother theory, this study utilised the theory to determine the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit and how they cope with these challenges. The theory suggests that becoming a mother involves moving from a known, current reality to an unknown, new reality. A transition requires restructuring goals, behaviours, and responsibilities to achieve a new conception of self (Barba & Selder, 1995). Many strategies are used to adapt to a new reality while maintaining one's

personal integrity. Strategies include recognizing the permanency of the required change, seeking information for construction of a new self-definition, seeking models for a new normalization, and competency testing of self in the new role (Deutsch, Ruble, Fleming, Brooks-Gunn, & Stangor, 1988; Mercer, 1995). The theory explains that, transitions may be facilitated or inhibited by the woman's personal conditions, cultural beliefs and attitudes, socioeconomic status (SES), preparation and knowledge, and community and societal conditions (Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Messias, & Schumacher, 2000).

Learner pregnancy is a phenomenon that directly affects young girls and it leads to motherhood. As young as the learners are, they have to learn new pros and cons in a process of becoming a mother at their age level, which might be quite challenging because of simultaneous roles of learning and mothering. To understand the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools, “Becoming a Mother Theory” is adopted in this study. Mercer believed that women’s experiences from pregnancy up to the confinement period should be understood and taken into consideration.

Becoming a Mother Theory looks at increasingly complex situations faced by adolescent mothers and it encompasses dynamic transformation and development of women into motherhood (Mercer, 2004). Mercer (2004) further outlines that women undergo changes in a pregnancy process, hence women have to commit most of their time to find ways to cope throughout the motherhood process. Childbearing and learning are two different processes that need separate attention and therefore the challenges and experiences of learner-mothers who are schooling will be understood better from the angle of Becoming a Mother Theory.

2.3. Learner-mothers’ reactions to pregnancy

Pregnancy discovery can be either a joyful experience or frightening and causing stress to a woman (Mogotsi, 1996). Learner-mothers might be overloaded with lots of thoughts upon

realising that they are pregnant. Mogotsi (1996) also stresses that most teenagers hide their pregnancies and avoid people to notice their pregnancies and usually doubt if they can afford the cost of caring for the baby. According to Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2011), the main concern is how the baby affects their goals and dreams; and whether they will complete their studies successfully. It is important to note however that, these are the learners who supposed to concentrate on their studies rather than being stressed by the process of coping with learning and motherhood.

Learner-mothers often worry about their parents' reaction to their pregnancies and primarily worry more about parents' anger and all other possibilities that might result from parents' anger. During this process, they might put aside their academic work, which will not yield the outcome targeted by the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learners Pregnancy.

Learners' reaction to pregnancy might vary greatly. All reactions can have a physical and emotional effect on learner-mothers. Underachievement and dropout are only some of the wrong action that results from pregnancy. The worst action and frightening fact are that the learner-mothers might opt to have an abortion or commit suicide as indicated by Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2011) by stating that when the learner-mothers are unable to cope with pregnancy, they may become depressed, underachieve in schools, worry excessively, become anxious and attempt suicide.

Pregnancy discovery for learners might lead to health problems, poor concentration at school and rejection in families. Teenage pregnancy and poverty are interrelated as poverty can lead to teenage pregnancy and teenage pregnancy can lead to poverty. The adolescent life is very difficult and becoming a learner-mother makes life even harder for female learners. David (2012) states that when these adolescents discover that they are pregnant and the realities and responsibilities of motherhood finally dawn on them, they often become frustrated and this in

return may increase risk of child neglect and maltreatment. This point is also sustained by Matshotyana (2010) who indicates that teenage mothers might abuse their babies mistakenly thinking that babies are reasons for their suffering and pain.

2.4. Disruption in academic learning

Grounded on the study research questions and with little knowledge on other past studies, the above theme was selected for this study and shall be discussed as follows: The birth of the baby comes along with changes and new responsibilities, change in work schedules and new concerns. In most cases, a learner-mother has to sacrifice and put aside her schoolwork such as preparing for examinations to attend to a sick or crying baby. Consequently, disruption might be a challenge to the learner-mother.

Mokgalabone (as cited in Karimi, 2015) maintains that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of disruption among girls. However, Mokgalabone does not specify how exactly pregnancy causes school disruption. Correspondingly, Matshotyana (2010) indicates that teenage pregnancy can greatly disrupt the education of girls. Moreover, Matshotyana does not point out how practically the disruption of education of young girls can be. Besides, David (2012) states that early motherhood has a disruption tendency in girls' education which results in fewer educational and employment attainment that are failing learner-mothers to be productive civil servants in their adulthood. However, David's (2012) work does not explain how girls' education can be disrupted and lead to the consequences pointed out. For these reasons, there is no evidence on what exactly makes pregnancy disrupt the education of learner-mothers.

Motherhood is a process that starts from pregnancy and having considered the health examinations and check-ups, it is reasonable to look at how learner-mothers who are supposed to be at school during school hours cope with these responsibilities as mothers and learners. Van der Walter (2004) maintains that more often, pregnant women have to attend antenatal care, and

they undergo more tests and interventions, all at their own risk and even spend more time in hospitals. As a result, if a learner-mother spends more time in the hospital, for instance, she is likely to miss lessons including continuous assessment activities, which leads to the disruption in her academic progress.

All learner-mothers usually take some days off from school before and after confinement. Section 5.1.3 of the Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of learner pregnancy policy states that:

The girl may continue with her education at the school, until the time of her confinement or an earlier date on the advice of a medical doctor or clinic nurse. After giving birth and provided that a Social worker is satisfied that the infant will be cared for by a reasonable adult, the girl shall have the right of readmission to the same school within twelve months of date in which she left school, irrespective of her age. She shall have the option, within the same period to return to another school, if space is available. Should the girl decide not to return to full-time schooling, she should be counselled about the options available to her for continuing with her education (MoE, 2012, p.20).

According to this policy, it is clear that the girls who fall pregnant before completing education are subjected to be absent from school a month before confinement and a year after confinement (12 months) provided that the Social worker is satisfied with an adult who will take care of the baby. This might lead to the possibility of a total dropout from school and further increase dependence on parents and other long-term consequences for these learners and their children. Although Shanyanana (2011) argues that there is a need for skilled and well-educated women to take part in the development of the country, the situation of young girls terminating their studies due to pregnancy will be an obstacle to reach this goal.

NSSO/H (grade 12), JSC (grade 10 ending 2018) and grade 9 learners (starting 2018) as per new Educational Curriculum in Namibia (2015) only have two terms in which they are required to cover all subject syllabi as well as accumulating continuous assessment marks (grade 9 and 10). Learners always commence with external examinations earlier in the third term. When a pregnant learner at this critical grades is given days off before and after delivery, she only has to attend few classes and might miss out on continuous assessment activities and examination, depending on her date of confinement.

Even if the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (2012) indicates that the learner-mother should take steps to ensure that she receives tasks and assignments during the agreed period of absence from school, the awareness of such useful information might not be known by the learner-mothers. Moreover, in cases where there is no provision of schoolwork during their leave, they might not be aware of what to do, as they are only learners who might think it is their fault for early pregnancy. The sector policy further emphasises that the learner-mother may choose to return to school as soon as she can, after confinement or for one year or more. From the above analysis, it seems that there is no specified and unified period of absence but the choice is up to the learners to decide, which, however, might be done immaturely.

The Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy does not consider the possibility of disrupting the learning process of the learner-mothers since they can take some long leaves equivalent to or more than one year. Moreover, the provision of tasks and assignment to the learner-mother who did not attend lessons might not yield good results. Nevertheless, the tasks completed at home with no formal invigilation might result in poor quality continuous activities. Further, language tasks such as speaking and listening might be difficult to assess while learner-mothers are on leave.

2.5. Health implications for learner-mothers and their babies

Consideration about the health of the learner-mothers and that of their babies during pregnancy and after confinement is of utmost importance. Likewise, Matshotyana (2010) states that when a teenager becomes pregnant, her physical and psychological capabilities interrupted and health support is an important aspect that could boost the physical and psychological capabilities of the learner-mothers. Having considered the health of the learner-mother and the baby, it is also reasonable to look at how exactly the physical and psychological capabilities of learner-mothers are interrupted. Hence, the understanding of the learner pregnancy interrupting their physical and psychological capability might help in the recommendation of specific health support.

Several possible consequences may result if the health of the learner-mothers and their babies are not fully taken into considerations. Pregnancies of learners can result in serious consequences such as premature labour, prolonged labour, congested labour or maternal death and the younger the mother, the greater the risk to her and the baby (De Bell, 2005). De Bell (2005) further sensitises that the risk of maternal death related to pregnancy and childbirth of girls between 15 and 19 years amounts to 70 000 global deaths each year. Given the high global death concerning maternal deaths, it is important however to discuss the health complications, especially for learner-mothers.

Similarly, Ediberto and Liang (2013) state that stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life are 50% among babies born to adolescent mothers than babies born by mothers in their 20s and above. Ediberto and Liang (2013) further argue that first-time mothers face significant risk during pregnancy including maternal deaths and exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Most of the junior secondary phase (grade 8-10), learners are adolescents (15-19 years) and the learner-mothers might be directly affected by all risks involved in the process of pregnancy and therefore, their health should be considered when making decisions affecting them.

The issue of being pregnant at an early age comes with challenges, concerns and different reactions from different people including fellow learners, teachers, parents and the community at large. Therefore, most of the learner-mothers hide their pregnancies for too long up to the extent of missing out health check-ups. Bernadine (2004) asserts that sometimes the teenagers hide their pregnancies for a long period and omit the important prenatal care that is essential and significant to observe the growth of the foetus.

Moreover, it will not be possible to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals particularly if the health of these learner-mothers is not taken into consideration. This argument is supported by a report by Bernadine (2004) as they state that adolescent pregnancy undermines the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. Following, are six (out of eight goals) that may not be achieved successfully if health matters of learner-mothers are not considered.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

2.6. The learner-mothers' prepared to be in schools during pregnancy and after confinement

In Namibia, all children have constitutional rights to education including learner-mothers even though in most cases they face an overwhelming number of difficulties concerning their conditions as mothers and learners. It is however not yielding any desired results if the learner-mothers are provided with chances to come back in schools without being prepared. Chigona and Chetty (2008) state that many teen mothers usually go to school after they deliver, however, the

girls' difficulties in coping with schooling will be attributable to their babies and also to the fact that educators and parents often give up on them and fail to take the plans seriously once the girls have children.

Some of the findings of Chigona and Chetty (2008) have shown that the learner-mothers do not get enough support from school and they are not considered as learners with special needs as they lack support from teachers, lack counselling to combat stigma attached to learner pregnancy. Furthermore, these learner-mothers experience misunderstandings and pressure from both teachers and fellow learners. For these reasons, there is an indication that learners are not well equipped and supported to face some of these challenges.

Several complaints had been received from pregnant learners concerning how schools had been treating them (Matshotyana, 2010). Despite the readiness of learner-mothers to be re-admitted into schools, the school community including teachers and learners should also be made ready to welcome them into schools. The complaints and challenges experienced by these learner-mothers lead to the possibility of physical and psychological challenges that might affect the well-being of the learner-mother in many ways.

2.7. The teachers' preparedness to accommodate learner-mothers in school

One of the critical needs of the learner-mothers is a socially welcoming learning environment. However, Chigona and Chetty (2008) point out that it is unfortunate that some teachers do not understand the teen mothers' situations as learners, teachers expect these teen mothers to perform and behave just like any other learners in their respective classes. Having considered that teachers do not create a conducive environment for learner-mothers, Matshotyana, (2010) argue that the stigma and discrimination by teachers are different and more complex and teachers contribute to the stereotype of describing learner-mothers as lazy, distracted, low performing and risk of contaminating their fellow female learners with their bad behaviour of early pregnancy.

Another significant argument on teachers' behaviours towards learner-mothers is that teachers are often unprepared to deal with pregnant and adolescent mothers in their classes (Frost and Forrest (2015). Similarly, Frost and Forrest (2015) add that some teachers, in reality, lack professionalism while dealing with these vulnerable young mothers by stressing that teachers are not empathetic to young mothers' situations. Chigona and Chetty (2008) indicate that most teachers usually are not willing to go through the lessons the learner-mothers missed due to motherhood process. Noting the compelling nature of this evidence, teachers, however, are usually seen as the first people to motivate learner-mothers to stay in schools rather than contributing to their burden of feeling unwelcome and unwanted in classes

2.8. Perceptions towards Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy

The main aim of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy is to “prevent and manage incidences of learner pregnancy and stop any child missing out on an education that is so vitally needed” (MoE, 2012, p. 2). The policy further indicates that “the prevention aspect of the policy is considered to be the main focus of the policy with hope that over time, fewer and fewer learner pregnancies will occur” (MoE, 2012, p. 5).

Motshotyana (2010) claims that the Namibian learner pregnancy policy provides a good model as the policy development process involved consultation of main stakeholders and further indicates that the whole process is transparent to the public. However, Cloete (2018) at one of the public hearing for inputs on a motion to be tabled in Namibian Parliament, indicated that the government's teenage pregnancy policy designed to support pupils who fall pregnant to complete their education does not yield the desired results. At this point, there is an indication that the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy is under criticism and is being questioned. The policy becomes a topic of national debate from schools to policy

developers themselves. It is for this reason that surprisingly, even the leaders in parliament are questioning the effectiveness of the policy.

Moreover, Sykes, Schneider and Plank (2009) argue that despite the ever-increasing presence of state and centralised agencies in educational policymaking, local conditions still appear critical to policy implementation and it is not surprising that policy implementation still depends on important measures on local conditions and these conditions are often described in terms of capacity and the will of local actors and agencies. It is for this reason that school principals and other school management members might not be included during the input of educational stakeholders' consultation before the policy formulation. Moreover, there might be no induction programmes made for new school principals to be equipped with the content of the policy.

Sanzila (2018) indicates that the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy has many loopholes and it is encouraging the learners to fall pregnant and to make it worse, the organisation called FAWENA provides financial support which seems to encourage other learners to access this source of income. Despite the aim and the focus of the policy, it is quite surprising that the incidences of learner pregnancies in schools not only remained higher but rather increasing as the time goes. It is important to note that the policy is being blamed for the high rate of learner pregnancy, which might also lead to the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Besides, "there is a lack of inclusion and poor participation of all citizens in educational debates, especially policy formulation" (Shanyanana, 2011, p. 108). Shanyanana (2011) further argues that the policy debates exclude the voice of the masses and cannot effectively address the public needs. According to Sanzila (2018), Nauyoma, a member of parliament bemoaned the lack of consultation and involvement by members of the community during the formulation of the policy as a reason for the current policy failure. It is important to note however that there might be some

pros and cons that were not fully agreed by those who supposed to implement this policy at the grassroots level and it might have resulted from poor consultation during policy initiative.

A long-serving senior medical officer at Oshikuku District Hospital noted that challenges such as malnutrition have increased due to young mothers who continuously leave their babies in the care of their grandmothers who might not be able to provide necessary care due to their age. He states that learner-mothers should be compelled to take a break and breastfeed their babies for at least a year. Learner-mothers do not breastfeed their babies sufficiently because the pregnancy policy gave them the right to return to schools immediately. Matshotyana (2010) reveals that in South Africa, the South African Measure for Prevention and Management of Learner pregnancy suggests up to two years waiting period before the learner-mothers return to schools and this is in the interest of the rights of the baby. Matshotyana (2010) claims that there is a significant improvement regarding teenage pregnancy but there is no available study that reveals the public opinion regarding the policy.

2.9. Gap in literature

The reviewed literature revealed that many people, particularly in Namibia believe that the implementation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy is not producing the intended outcomes. One of the evidence is provided by Cloete (2018) who states that the government's policy on teenage pregnancy designed to support pregnant learners to complete their education is not yielding the intended results. Despite the existence of the policy to secure mother-learners from dropping out, the majority of Namibians adolescent girls are still increasingly getting pregnant during school age and dropping their studies both at the primary and secondary level.

According to the Ministry of Health and Social Service (2017), there is dearth of institutionalised and standardised links and cooperation without communication system under which the debates

of the review of the policy information are discussed and complementary service provision is organised to guarantee mutual reinforcement of the policy. Challenges and some benefits brought by this policy have been put forward, especially that of Iimene (2015) who looked at the perception of teachers regarding the policy, but neither of the authors has provided specific insights on how the policy affects Omuthiya Circuit. Even if Iimene (2015) points out some challenges experienced by the learner-mothers, the participants in that study were teachers, so the challenges outlined were only the perceptions of the teachers.

The research findings of Karimi (2015) and that of Chigona and Chetty (2008) have shown that learner-mothers lack financial, psychological and social support needed to complete their studies successfully. It is however of utmost importance to understand the challenges these learner-mothers are facing so that the support pointed out by (Karimi, 2015; Chigona & Chetty, 2008) will be based on learner-mothers' specific needs. This study, therefore, sought to examine the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit of Namibia. Specifically, the study did not examine the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy but only pointed out issues faced by learner-mothers.

2.10. Summary

This chapter presented a literature review of the study. It identified the theoretical framework, disruption caused by pregnancy in academic learning, perceptions towards Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy and the literature gap. From this literature review, it can be concluded that there were so many researches done on this topic about the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools. However, these studies lacked the specific challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya. Because of this gap, an empirical investigation is required, of which the methodology used is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and methods that were adopted for the gathering of data related to answering the study questions. Thus, the chapter explores components such as the research approach, research design, study population, sampling technique, data collection, and data analysis procedures that were used in this study.

3.2. Research approach

This research adopted a qualitative research approach. Silverman, (2011) states that qualitative research is about recording, analysing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours and emotions (Silverman, 2011). Therefore, a qualitative approach was adopted to gain a rich and complex understanding of people's experience and not in obtaining information that could be generalised to the population. To this end, this research was qualitative because it only focus on specific individuals as participants of the study and the results from these participants cannot be generalised to the whole nation. This was done to gain specific knowledge as from the targeted population and not to all mother learners in the nation.

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach because it allows her to produce the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions (Davies & Hughes, 2014). In terms of the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit, for example, Davies and Hughes, (2014) shows in his study that qualitative research results provide the relationship of information processing with performance specifically and deeply. Creswell, (2014) too, argue that a qualitative approach is employed to achieve deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering, and interpreting various perceptions.

Secondly, some, argue that qualitative research approach holistically understands the human experience in specific settings. Davies and Hughes, (2014), for example, mention that qualitative research is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses a wider range of epistemological viewpoints, research methods, and interpretive techniques of understanding human experiences. In this regards, the researcher opted to use this approach.

However, beyond the above advantages, some limitations are obvious. First, Silverman (2011) argues that qualitative research approach sometimes leaves out contextual sensitivities, and focuses more on meanings and experiences. Second, policymakers may give low credibility to results from a qualitative approach. Gay, Mills and Airasian, (2016) found that stakeholders frequently use quantitative research when research is called upon. In terms of educational practice in the United States, national and state policymakers sought to quantify teachers' and students' performance and in many social sciences, quantitative orientations are frequently given much regard (Gay et al, 2016). Besides, purely qualitative research may neglect the social and cultural constructions of the variables studied (Davies & Hughes, 2014). Therefore, the researcher adhered to the assigned supervisor to avoid these disadvantages from affecting the results of this study.

3.3. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is defined as a method, procedure or a research model used in carrying out an approved research in a community of researchers and that has been in existence for many years (Creswell, 2014). Creswell further noted that, positivist approach and interpretivism approach are noted to be the useful approaches that any research paradigm can emerge from. The research approach for this study is called the interpretivism approach. Gay, Mills and Airasian, (2016), stated that interpretivists have a belief that people behaviours involve many factors or are multi-layered and there is no way they can be decided by pre-defined probabilistic models in research. Interpretivists understand that these behaviours depend on different

situations and they are determined by social and environmental factors and not by genes. The human behaviours are believed not be compared to scientific variable as they cannot be controlled. There are different and multiple factors which affect the human behaviour and they mostly occur naturally Gay et al (2016). These assumptions made the researcher to adopt this paradigm. It is believed that interpretivists study the human behaviour on a daily basis rather than in an environment which is controlled and this motivated the researcher to conduct this study in this paradigm.

3.4. Research design

The study used a case study design in which the researcher focused on a unit of study (Creswell, 2014). Creswell explains that a case study design enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Creswell (2014) indicates that case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. Creswell, (2014) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. By unique, it is meant that only a very smaller geographical area or some subjects of interest will be examined in detail.

There are some advantages to using case studies. First, the examination of the data will be most often conducted within the context of its use, according to Creswell, (2014) that is, within the situation the activity takes place. A case study might be interested, for example, in the process by which a subject comprehends an authentic text. To explore the strategies, the reader uses, the researcher will observe the subject within her environment, such as reading in the classroom or reading for leisure. This would contrast with the experiment, for instance, which deliberately

isolates a phenomenon from its context, focusing on a limited number of variables (Gay et al, 2016).

Second, the detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies do not only help to explore or describe the data in a real-life environment but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research. A case study of the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit, for instance, can give access to not only the total problems being encountered by the learners but also the reasons for their challenges, and how their challenges can be used about other strategies. As student challenges involve complex cognitive processes, each challenge cannot be examined in isolation but rather concerning other challenges (Creswell, 2014).

Despite these advantages, case studies have received criticisms. Gay et al, (2016) discusses three types of arguments against case study research. First, case studies are often accused of a lack of rigour. Davies and Hughes, (2014) notes that too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. In this regards, the researcher applied triangulation on data gathering to eliminate the bias in research findings.

Second, case studies provide very little basis for scientific generalisation since they use a small number of subjects, some conducted with only one subject. The question commonly raised is “How can you generalise from a single case?” (Davies & Hughes, 2014). Therefore, the findings of this study shall only apply to the study settings and neither to any school out of the study scope to avoid generalisation of findings generated from a unique subject.

Third, case studies are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing a massive amount of documentation (Creswell, 2014). In particular, case studies of ethnographic

or longitudinal nature can elicit a great deal of data over some time. The danger comes when the data are not managed and organised systematically.

A common criticism of the case study method is its dependency on a single case exploration, making it difficult to reach a generalising conclusion (Gay et al, 2016). Davies and Hughes, (2014) considers case methodology ‘microscopic’ because of the limited sampling cases. Hamel et al. (1993) and Gay et al, (2016) argue that however, parameter establishment and objective setting of the research are far more important in the case study method than a big sample size. The researcher, therefore, avoided selecting a limited number and have just selected the population of the case sample based on data saturation. The design explored how participants’ experiences and attach meanings to the phenomenon. Hence, it is subjective, it enabled the researcher to gain in-depth understanding and meaning and experiences. The central aspect here was that knowledge is socially constructed from the set research objectives.

3.5. Population

The targeted population were learner-mothers, teacher-counsellors and school principals in Omuthiya inspection circuit of the Oshikoto Region in Namibia. Population plays a very great role in any research and is defined as, “all the people or items with the characteristics that one wishes to study” (Creswell, 2014. p. 35). Johnson and Christensen (2012) define a population as the total group that you are interested in learning more about. The study population is a group being studied and to which conclusion was drawn. The target population was selected as follows:

3.6. Sample and sampling procedures

A sample is any subset of the elements of the population that is obtained to be studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). A purposive non-probability sampling method was employed in this study. In purposive non-probability sampling, not all members of the population have a chance of participating in the study (Creswell, 2014). In short, only learner-mothers were selected purposively by calling each per time or observing one at a time. The sample size was based on

data saturation, which is the point at which newly collected data no longer provides additional insights (Silverman, 2011). A total of twenty learner-mothers, four teacher-counsellors and four school principals was found sufficient for this study based on the data saturation technique that was adopted under this study.

3.7. Research tools

Document analysis was used to understand the documents regarding the learners that are available at schools such as 15th day school statistics, pregnancy record in schools, school dropout statistics, promotional schedules, Continuous Assessment (CA) records and attendance registers. The researcher used this data to identify what other scholars said about her research problem and to see whether there is any gap between the theoretical and empirical evidence. It involves transferring significant data or quotations from documents to a field note and later to analysis and interpretation of data. Usually, these documents are readily available and provide access to the information that is difficult to obtain using interviews and observations.

Also, interview schedules were used to get information from the learner-mothers. An interview is a conversation with a purpose and it is one of the means of gathering rich and relevant data (Briggs & Coleman, 2007). The interviews aim to find out what is in somebody's mind and this often requires respect. In this study, participants were provided with a framework within which they express their views in their terms. This was enhanced through open discussions to allow the respondents to say what they feel open without being confined to a certain subject.

Semi-structured interviews were used with both open-ended questions. Lichtman (2014) defines semi-structured interviews as a type of interview with a general set of questions and format to be followed with all participants but can vary if the situation during interview session demands the researcher to do so. The main advantage of this type of interview is for easier analysis of data

(Lichtman, 2014). The researcher was responsible for the management of the interview to produce rich and reliable data by keeping in mind what to ask and how.

Semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to encourage interviewees by asking the right question at the right time, keeping in mind what the research is trying to find out, how sensitive are questions and who is being interviewed (Caswell, 2014). Interviews assure the researcher that questions are well understood. Learners might experience language barriers and therefore an interview suits them so that the researcher clarify and explain questions to learner-mothers.

One of the research tools used was the observation. Most researchers found observation as a research tool to be more powerful, flexible and real. It looks into detail to find some evidence through the eyes of the respondents. Observation is a complex combination of sensation and perception, it involves the systematic viewing of people's actions, the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour (Gray, 2009). A covert observation was used as it aims at seeing what happens and provides evidence. This was enhanced by watching the targeted learners secretly without their knowledge that they are being observed just for less than twenty minutes per day for two weeks. All the targeted learners were informed in advance about the data collection at the school and their assent was obtained although in the process they selected learners were secretly observed. This was done to ensure that the learners will reveal their real life experiences without hiding some experiences through knowing that they are being observed.

According to Gray (2009), in covert observation, those who are being observed are not aware if there is observation taking place. To address the ethical impact for this method of observation, permission was granted by the school principal, informed consent were issued to the parents and all the school staff were aware of this observation. This was done to avoid change in behaviour that might affect the results of the study. The targeted learners were observed on punctuality to school and to lessons, their participation in lessons, absenteeism, their academic performance in

different subjects and how teachers and their peers treat them. They were also observed on how they interact with others during break time as well as their participation in extramural activities. Results on this perspective will be summarised on the succeeding section of this report.

3.8. Data collection procedure

To get access to all sites, the researcher utilised the ethical clearance obtained from the University of Namibia (UNAM). Besides, authorisation to research education sector was obtained from the Secretary-General for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Moreover, informed consents were obtained from parents before data collection. Appointments were made through offices of school principals and suitable time was arranged for both the researcher and participants to avoid interruption of lessons. Interviews were recorded using voice recorder while notes were taken during observations as well as during analysis of documents.

Face to face in-depth discussions were done individually and in the same manner with every participant until the data collection was completed. An open-ended one-on-one interview was planned to be used to get information from the students. Creswell (2014) states that “one-on-one interviews are useful for asking sensitive questions and enabling interviewees to ask questions or provide comments that go beyond the initial question” (p. 17). This is the main reason why the researcher adopted this instrument in this study.

3.9. Data analysis

Data analysis is an integral part of the research process. According to Briggs and Coleman (2007), data analysis is all about making a series of deliberate, critical choices about the meanings and values of the data gathered and make justified decisions in terms of research. Data collected from qualitative research are often produced in large amounts, hence need to be reduced to a manageable size. Patterns, similarities and differences were discovered to determine

The researcher listened to the audio clips and read the notes taken during the interview and observations. Data was transcribed. Data were analysed by developing colour code concepts with the same meaning into key-themes, sub-themes and emergent themes using Tesch's eight (8) steps of coding.

3.9.1. Tesch's approach to analysing data

The researcher adopted Tesch's approach when analysing the field data. Tesch (in De Vos, 1998, p. 343) proposes eight steps to consider in data analysis:

Step 1: The researcher read the entire transcript carefully to obtain a sense of the whole and to jot down some ideas.

Step 2: The researcher selected one case, asks, "What is this about?" and thought about the underlying meaning in the information. The researcher's thoughts were written in the margin.

Step 3: A list was made of all the themes or topics. Similar themes or topics were clustered together.

Step 4: The researcher applied the list of themes or topics to the data. The themes or topics were abbreviated as codes, which were written next to the appropriate segments of the transcripts. The researcher tried out this preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.

Step 5: The researcher found the most descriptive wording for the themes or topics and categorises them. Lines were drawn between categories to show the relationships.

Step 6: The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetises the codes.

Step 7: The data material belonging to each category was assembled and a preliminary analysis was performed.

Step 8: The researcher finally recodes the existing material (De Vos, 1998). Narrative analysis of data was also used. It is defined by Marilyn (2014) as an ideal way of capturing the lived experiences of participants. The narrative analysis brings forth a variety of perspectives and viewpoints, some that may contradict each other.

3.10. Ethical Consideration

Ethical Form: An ethical form was obtained from UNAM and a permission letter from the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, Oshikoto Region before the commencement of data collection.

Written informed consent: The informed consent provides participants with sufficient detailed information on the study so that they can make informed, voluntary and rational decision to participate. Information regarding the study was provided to participants verbally and in writing where after, participants signed a form. The participants signed assent forms and their parents signed informed consents.

Principle of justice: All the participants were selected fairly for the purpose of this study and a purposive non-probability sampling method was used when selecting the participants. No bias was introduced in this study. The participants were fairly and equally treated.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality was ensured by not recording personal information on the reports or materials. Numbers were used instead of names. The participants were also assured that notes were taken and audio recorded are only for research purposes.

Privacy: Privacy was maintained by not sharing private information and no information shall be shared without the permission of the respondents. The interview was conducted in a closed room where the participants were comfortable to express themselves and only one participant and the researcher was allowed to be present at each session.

Anonymity: Anonymity was ensured by not disclosing participants' information. Participants' names were not linked to the responses. The numbers were used instead of names.

Research integrity and quality: The researcher avoided false statements or an omission that distorts the research record. The researcher maintained a clear and complete record of data

acquired. The reported conclusion is based on accurately recorded data and observations. All source of information was acknowledged.

The use and misuse of data or results: The researcher acquainted with the relevant qualitative methods for processing data, including the verbatim methods of reporting data and measure to ensure trustworthiness.

Researcher competence: The researcher followed the research process and adhere to research methodology within the field of studies such as choosing the right research design, research methods, sampling, pilot testing, data collection methods and data analysis.

Responsibility of intervention: The researcher was honest and trustworthy throughout the study. There was no deliberate mislead or deception of misrepresentation, selective omissions or any other mean.

Principle of respect for a person: The researcher treated all participants with respect and dignity regardless of sex, race or nationality. Religious and cultural practices were respected at all times throughout the study.

Autonomy: The participants were given the right to decide whether or not to participate in the study, without risk of penalty or harmful treatment. Participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to give information with no fear of being punished. Participants also have rights to ask for clarification.

Principle of non-maleficence: The researcher ensured that her actions under this study were not purposely causing any harm to participants either physical, social or psychological. The researcher also provided an opportunity for the participants to voice any concerns or queries they have, regarding the proposed study.

Principle of beneficence: The researcher secured the well-being of the participants by avoiding physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, social or legal discomfort and harm. No direct benefit to the principals and learner-mothers, but the findings will have an indirect benefit to the learners as the MoE will strengthen this approach.

Data ownership: The research data belong to UNAM. The university will take custody of research data in a manner specified by the university. The research data will not be denied to any member of the research group in which the data were collected. Data will be transcribed, stored

in a memory stick and locked up. The records taken during data collection was then destroyed. The data will be stored securely for at least 5 years after completion of the project.

3.11. Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology that was used in the study. The study approach, design, setting, study population and the sampling technique adopted were discussed. It further indicated how ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research study. The data analysis method was also highlighted. The next chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presented and discussed the results of the research findings obtained from fieldwork. The researcher conducted this study using three data collection instruments, which are the interviews with eight school staff and twelve learner-mothers and covert observation to five learner-mothers. The interviews were as follows: four interviews with different school principals, four interviews with four different teacher counsellors from different schools and twelve interviews with learner-mothers, while five learner-mothers were observed using covert observation. The participants of the study were referred to as PS1 to PS8 for school staff, while for learner-mothers it was PL1 to PL12. The main aim of this study was to explore the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit of Namibia, intending to contribute better insights to the improvement in the implementation of learner pregnancy policy in schools. The first step the researcher utilised was to read and re-read the data collected.

Data from self-administered tools were sorted and arranged according to four main themes and twelve sub-themes, then presented. Thereafter, the data was then interpreted upon the different emerged sub-themes.

The researcher identified the main themes and sub-themes. The first main theme is the nature of challenges. How the learner-mother reacts to the challenges, how well the learner-mother is prepared to cope are sub-themes of the first main theme. The second main theme is the tools in place to evaluate the policy, the effectiveness of the tools is the sub-theme. The third main theme is the type of support received by learner-mothers, with sub-themes such as: how the school ensures that the necessary support reaches the learner-mother and the stage for an intensified support. The fourth and last main theme is what is supposed to be done by the Ministry of Education with sub-themes such as, how to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and

school management, and input to the pregnancy policy. The identified main themes and sub-themes are summaries of the presentation of findings as indicated below:

4.2. Presentation and discussion of Findings

4.2.1. Challenges faced by learner-mothers (LM) at school

During the fieldwork, various respondents reached were school principals, teacher counsellors and learner-mothers. Among all these participants of the study, all have revealed some challenges faced by learner-mothers in the educational mainstream. The researcher has summed up the findings in this regards together with the discussions as follows:

4.2.1.1. The nature of challenges

Mokgalabone (as cited in Karimi, 2015) maintains that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of disruption among girls. In support of this notion, PS1 signifies that *“learner-mothers faces a great challenge regarding coping with study and pregnancy or child-rearing at the same time.”* These findings explored that being a learner-mother is very difficult since one will be required to meet two main different responsibilities that will be calling her from different geographical locations. In addition to these findings, PS2 denotes that balancing motherhood and learning is the main challenge faced by the learner-mothers at her school. PS2 concluded that pressure on balancing motherhood and learning end up disrupting the learner-mother learning process. This finding was supported by the Becoming a Mother Theory which also explains that becoming a mother involves moving from a known, current reality to an unknown, new reality. A transition requires restructuring goals, behaviours, and responsibilities to achieve a new conception of self (Barba & Selder, 1995). This means that, failure to adopt the transition will result in complications in balancing the studies and the requirements of the pregnancy.

Additionally, PS3 mentioned that learner-mothers find it difficult to cope with pregnancy while at school without enough food that leads to malnutrition. These findings were supported by

Matshotyana (2010) who indicates that the birth of the baby comes along with changes and new responsibilities, change in work schedules and new concerns. The researcher also confirmed that, in a case where a learner-mother is financially bankrupt and does not like the available food, the LM would suffer from malnutrition that might affect the health of the baby and herself. A long-serving senior medical officer at Oshikuku District Hospital noted that challenges such as malnutrition have increased due to young mothers who continuously leave their babies in the care of the grandmothers who might not be able to provide necessary care due to their age. He states that learner-mothers should be compelled to take a break and breastfeed their babies for at least a year. The learner-mothers do not breastfeed their babies because the pregnancy policy gave them the right to return to schools immediately.

On the other hand, PS3 indicated that LM faces a big challenge when they try to associate with other learners that always bully and tease them. In support of these findings, PL2 indicated that *“in most cases, other learners bully and tease me and this makes me shy to move around outside the classroom during class rotation or during break time.”* This learner concluded that *“the condition I am subjected to in the educational mainstream left me with high stress which leads to sleepless nights and dozing in the classroom.”* The researcher concluded that on this view, LMs are subjected to a tough time during their school life, which might affect their performance if action is not taken by the responsible ministry. Mpanza and Nzima (2010) argue that teachers are often unprepared to deal with pregnancy and adolescent mothers in their classes and this was found to be the rooting factor of some of the challenges faced by LMs in schools.

Apart from the aforementioned discussion, PS4 specified that *“most LMs experience labour at school due to the wrong information they provide to health care providers.”* This was found to be one of the greatest challenges faced by LMs since most of them proved not to be interested in sharing their pregnancy information comfortably with anyone including parents, fellow friends, teacher counsellors and the health care providers. In support of these findings, Mogotsi (1996)

stresses that most teenagers hide their pregnancies and avoid people to notice their pregnancies and usually doubt if they can afford the cost of caring for the baby. The researcher synthesised these findings and concluded that failure to disclose proper information leads to worsening of the situation faced by learner mother during their school time. One learner-mother (PL1) indicated that *“due to no money to support kid, no enough uniform that can fit the gaining in weight, no one to take care of the kid after birth and lack of consideration in class it’s better to keep my situation as my confidentiality since disclosing it doesn’t help the situation.”* PL1 claimed that *“to all the school stockholder I might share my situation with, no one can bring something tangible on the table unless just gasping me which seems like adding salt to the bleeding wound.”* To this end, holding pregnancy condition as a personal secret was found to be common to many learner-mothers though it worsened their situation as this was also confirmed by (PL3, PL4, PL5, PL6, PL7, PL8 & PL10) who were reached under this study.

The researcher observed that some learner-mothers were not moving out of their classrooms from the morning to the last lesson. This finding confirmed that the prior findings could be true, particularly with issues like being shy, being bullied by other learners and being tired. Additionally, the researcher observed that some learner-mothers do not interact with their peers, seemed not to be free and have low self-esteem. Considerably, these observations have been found consolidating prior findings from the school staff and other learner-mothers.

PS5 signifies that *“some of the LMs leave school unwillingly due to failure to get someone to take care of their kids.”* PS5 explained that in some circumstances, the LM would be absent due to illness of the baby. Apart from this, PS6 indicated that LMs feel uncomfortable with other learners while PS7 and PS8 mentioned that LMs cannot attend study session as they will be breast-feeding. To rule on this, the researcher found that managing time as a learner-mother is very hard due to demanding responsibilities. Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2011) state that when the learner-mothers are unable to cope with pregnancy, they might become depressed,

underachieve in schools, worry excessively, become anxious and attempt suicide. All these challenges are true even though under the case study of this study no one (LM) have been recorded to attempt suicide. Runhare and Vendeyar (2012) add that some teachers, in reality, lack professionalism while dealing with these vulnerable young mothers by stressing that teachers are not empathetic to young mothers' situations. The researcher only observed that some LMs run away from classes to attend to their kids which leads to missing of classes while those who remained at school (not yet delivered) were found not participating in class, being isolated and showing negativity towards being LM.

Overly, PL4, PL5, PL6, PL7 and PL8 responded similarly that, *“our main challenges are; sleeping in the classroom during lessons (feeling tired), bullied by other learners, the stress of taking care of the baby at an early age, missing classes to attending to our kids/pregnancy, failure to concentrate in class just thinking about the kids we left behind at home, missing lessons and exam, being gossiped, shy to move from one class to another during rotation and stress due to lack of money to support the kids.”* Due to data saturation, a situation that has been explained by Creswell (2014) as a condition on which additional data from the next participant do not yield any additional information different from the last participant. The researcher left out the nature of challenges being mentioned by PL9, PL10, PL11 and PL12 since the researcher discovered that it was merely as what was discussed above, although they could be slightly different on the view of the readers from the tables drafted on the presentations of the findings.

4.2.1.2. How the learner-mothers react to the challenges

According to the Becoming a Mother Theory, the ability of learner-mother to react to the challenges they face at school depends on the woman's personal conditions, cultural beliefs and attitudes, socioeconomic status (SES), preparation and knowledge, and community and societal conditions. Mogotsi (1996) states that pregnancy discovery can be either a joyful experience or frightening and causing stress to a woman. Mogotsi (1996) further postulates that learner-

mothers might be overloaded with lots of thoughts upon realising that they are pregnant. In this regard, PS1 indicated that *“initially most LM concentration at school falls upon the recognition that they are pregnant and thereafter they drop out of school.”* These findings were supported by PS3, PS4, PS6, PS7 and PS8 while PS5 argued that, *“some LM accept the challenges and forget their situation and concentrate with their studies.”* As from the observation made by the researcher, this finding from PS5 was found very rare to the majority of the LM and this made the researcher conclude that most LMs react negatively to the challenges they experience due to their pregnancy. PS5 confirmed that some of the LMs discuss their challenges with teacher counsellors and this help to heal their experiences. Contrary to this, the researcher observed that most of the LMs isolate themselves from other learners, drop out of school, and run away from some lessons to attend their kids, are shy, are uncooperative and look depressed. These findings reveal that most of the LMs react negatively to the challenges they face at school although PS5 argued that they are some LMs who are coping well with the challenges.

4.2.1.3. How well learner-mothers prepared to cope

The participants of this study were asked to explain how prepared the LMs are in coping with the challenges they are subjected to. In this concern, PS1 signifies that LMs are struggling. PS1 explains that *“LMs are not well prepared because their parents/guardians do not cooperate with school management to jointly prepare the LM and on the other hand the school management feels that it's not an easy topic to discuss without parents' consents.”* Therefore, this controversy left the challenges faced by LMs unsolved and later worsening the ability for the LMs to cope with the challenges. These findings have been supported by Chigona and Chetty (2008) who stated that many teen-mothers usually come to school after they deliver, however, the girls' difficulties in coping with schooling will be attributable to their babies and also to the fact that educators and parents often give up on them. That being the case, the research concluded that LMs are not well prepared to cope with the challenges they face at school, not only because they

do not want to but sometimes because of the controversy between their guardians and school management.

Overly, PL2, PL3, PL4, PL6, PL8, PL10, PL11 and PL12 also confirmed that they are not well prepared to cope with the challenges they are facing. The researcher also observed that most of the LMs were struggling due to failure of coping with the challenges they are subjected to. This was revealed when most of the LMs were observed not participating in all school activities. In support of these findings, PS2 argued that *the LMs are not prepared to cope with the challenges they face at school due to lack of knowledge of the pregnancy policy content.*” This was also found true by the researcher since the LMs and the other learners are not happy with each other, although the policy was set to guide them in the same educational mainstream. This means much is needed to create awareness of the pregnancy policy and improve the coping strategies among all school stakeholders.

Contrary to the above mentioned, PS6 indicated that the LMs are well prepared to cope with the challenges subjected to them due to their pregnancy situations. PS6 explained that *“LMs are engaged in successful counselling sessions where they are helped to accept the situation they are facing and to keep studying hard to complete their studies.”* Despite the counselling sessions mention by PS6, the researcher observed that although the LMs are engaged into counselling not all of them are positively motivated by the counselling and this left others failing to cope with the challenges they will be facing. This was revealed when the researcher observed that some LMs do not move in and out of the classroom often and some also look hungry while others leave school before the last lesson.

To rule on above, the researcher can conclude that although PS6 argued that some LMs are coping well with the challenges they are facing due to counselling session, some of them are not reaping positive results from the counselling sessions and therefore much needs to be done to

enhance the LMs coping strategies. Participants such as PS1, PS2, PS3, PS4, PS5, PS7 and PS8 all agreed on the notion that LMs are not well prepared to cope with the challenges they are facing.

4.2.2. Strategies in place to guide school management in implementing the pregnancy policy

The researcher determined the specific strategies being utilised by various schools that were reached under this study to understand how they implement the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy. The following sub-themes emerged from this notion and they were discussed as follows:

4.2.2.1. Tools in place to evaluate the policy

In the implementation process of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy effective tools are required to be in place for the success of the policy to meet its major aims (Motshotyana, 2010). In this view, PS1 specified that *“at our school, we utilise school records for all learner-mother and we also use confirmation letters from health care provider which details the fitness of the LM on the mainstream.”* These were found to be the tools in place for the effective implementation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy. The researcher will evaluate the effectiveness of these tools at a later stage within this document.

Apart from the tools mentioned by PS1, PS2 indicated that their school management works together with class teachers of all LMs for the effective implementation of the policy while PS3 stipulated that, *“at our school, we empower the teacher counsellor to ensure the success of the policy.”* Additionally, P4 indicated that their school management does a mini-survey end of the last term to evaluate the success of the policy while PS5 explained that their school utilise the statistic records of the LMs to monitor and evaluate the policy under study. All these findings have shown that the schools that were reached under the fieldwork have something in the

ground, which help them in evaluating their implementation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy although we are not sure of the effectiveness of these tools at this state. Therefore, the researcher went further under this study to evaluate the effectiveness of the tools being used by various schools in the evaluation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy.

Overly, PS6 and PS7 reason at the same point that their schools utilise the responsibilities of the teacher counsellor as a tool to evaluate the implementation of Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy at their school. On the other hand, PS8 put it forward differently and indicated that their school uses the evaluation forms to be filled by LMs end of each year as their tool to evaluate the policy under review. To this end, all the tools that were put forward by PS seem to be functioning on the face of the researcher. The policy itself has not specified the evaluation process but only specifies that the prevention aspect which is considered to be the main focus of the policy with hope that over time fewer and fewer learner pregnancies will occur (MoE, 2012).

On the other hand, all the LMs who were reached for the purpose of this study also showed their opinions with regards to the verb in question. PL1 indicated that her school utilises the responsibilities of the teacher counsellor to evaluate the policy while PL3 specified that, "*I am not aware of any tool in place.*" In contrary to this finding, PL2 indicated that their school management frequently talks to LMs and helps in any raising issues through counselling sessions and overall their school management treat the LMs the same way as other learners. This was found to be the tools that were in place at these schools. Additionally, PL4, PL5, PL6 and PL7 also indicated that their school utilises counselling results in evaluating the policy. In this regard, all these four learner-mothers explained that after counselling, all burning issues will be raised. As a matter of evaluation of the policy, the second counselling session assists in evaluating the

results of the prior counselling session which help the school management in reviewing their implementation process.

Sykes, Schneider and Plank (2009) argue that despite the ever-increasing presence of state and centralised agencies in educational policymaking, local conditions still appear critical to policy implementation. It is not surprising that policy implementation still depends on important measures on local conditions and these conditions are often described in terms of capacity and the will of local actors and agencies. In line with this, the researcher, therefore, concluded that despite all the tools mentioned to be in place, the success of the evaluation process of this policy depends much on the interest of the school stakeholders, particularly the school principal, teachers, parents, learner-mothers and other learners. Despite a clear cooperation of the above-mentioned stakeholders, the tools will not hold any water.

In a different note, PL8 indicated that their school implements a very flexible school timetable for LM while PL9 mentioned that their school engages into meetings with LMs on which discussions will be made in connection with LMs challenges and solutions. Under this discussion only, PL10 and PL11 did not mention anything in connection with the tools in place for the evaluation of the policy. The availability of the various tools to evaluate the policy have led the discussion to the following sub-theme, seeking to assess the effectiveness of the tools used by the different schools under study.

4.2.2.2. Effectiveness of the tools used to evaluate the policy

The researcher assessed the effectiveness of the tools used by various schools under this study to evaluate their implementation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy at various schools under study. The findings of the study on this notion revealed that some of the schools are having effective tools in place while others are utilising ineffective tools. As for the former, PS2 indicated that “*the tools in place to evaluate the*

policy are very effective.” PS2 explained that once the pregnancy is detected, the LM class teacher will be engaged and will inform the LM parents about the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy and thereafter the LM will be allowed to continue with their studies as normal. PS2 concluded that, in such circumstances where the class teacher explains the policy to the LM parents, the LM continues with her studies. This reveals that the tool used by this school is very effective in evaluating the policy.

On the other hand, PS1 and PS8 indicated that the tools to evaluate the policy at their schools are not effective. This was revealed when PS1 mentioned that, *“most of the LMs don’t return to school after delivery despite the tools used by my school to evaluate the implementation of the policy.”* PS8 also argued that *“basing on the evaluation we do at the end of each year to obtain feedback from LMs on the effectiveness of the policy, most LMs will not be serious during these sessions and this affects the effectiveness of this tool.”* The findings that show that the tools being used by the school under review are not effective, imply that the policy is facing some challenges on its implementation, which later negatively affects its outcome.

Moreover, PS3 indicated that their empowerment of the teacher counsellor is not always effective but it is, to some extent. This was disclosed when PS3 explained that, *“this tool depends much on one family to another, on which some families are willing to come forth while others don’t prefer to cooperate with the school upon such circumstances of their learner pregnancy.”* In this regard, the teacher counsellor will be ready to engage the parents while the parent will not be interested and eventually the implementation and evaluation of the policy will be negatively affected without the participation of the parents. On a different note, PS4 postulated that the tool is effective to some extent. PS4 argued that *“it helps a little bit as the suggested ideas are not sometimes accepted by all LMs.”* To this end, the researcher concluded that the tool used to evaluate the policy by this school yield either positive or negative results.

However, PS5, PS6 and PS7 confidently indicated that the tools used by their different schools to evaluate the implementation of the policy are very effective. PS5 did not put forward a valid justification on his remarks as what PS6 claimed. PS6 claimed that “*the teacher counsellor helps the school to increase learners’ education about sexual responsibilities and sexual health to help prevent future learners’ pregnancy.*” In this regard, the responsibility of the teacher counsellor was found fruitful in evaluating the policy. Lastly, PS7 specifies that “*sometimes the tools we are using at our school bring desired changes even though in some situations challenges and mistakes are inevitable.*”

In the same note, most of the LMs pointed out that the tools used by their schools are very effective (PL1, PL2, PL4, PL5, PL6 and PL12).

Researcher: Why are you saying the tools are effective? Justify.

PL1 explained that “*... from the counselling session I forget and accept most of the challenges facing me and continue with my studies.*”

PL2 claims that, “*... most of the LMs like me, positively change after being encouraged to work hard, we are succeeding with our studies with little challenges,*”

PL4 denotes that, “*the counselling I got from the school staff help me to restore and make a way to solve my challenges...*”

PL5 states that “*the tool is very helpful to me since it always makes a great improvement in my emotional stress...*”

PL6 claims that, “*... the tool helped me a lot, particularly the counselling since sometimes I will be stressed by missing some classes but due to counselling I will accept my condition and work hard to catch up with other learners...*”

PL12 concluded that, “... *the tool is very effective since it ensures that no LM shall miss her exam despite being in the hospital which enabled me to get all my exams even though I wasn't at school.*”

In contrary to the above mentioned, PL3, PL7, PL8, PL9 and PL10 show little interest in the available tools used by their school management and they ranked them as ineffective. This was revealed when the LM mothers proclaimed that:

Researcher: Why are you saying the tools are ineffective? Justify.

PL3 replied that... *the school management does not consider LMs as they do to other learners and therefore no tool is in place. Thy school management is just selfish and never tried anything to satisfy us.....!*

PL7 mentioned..... *“the tools used by the school are somehow effective because, for example, some LMs still drop out of school while some continue with their studies after counselling is done...As for my case, I am still not ready to fight the battle...”*

PL8 claimed that..... *“At my school, I am allowed to go attend my baby flexibly. Even though they give me a chance to go home, this does not change anything or solve my problem because I don't have money to buy the formula and in some cases, I milk myself and put it in the bottle to feed the baby when I am at school and this is not healthy to my baby but no option.....In this regard, the tool used by my school is yielding null results”*

PL9 indicated that ... *“The school conduct meetings with us (LMs) and encourage us to study hard and complete our study.....Uuumh! I guess this is not enough in my situation since encouraging me to study hard seems to be a general skill that can be done by any learner... I want something specific to my situation....”*

PL10 concluded that... *“the tool doesn’t have any good outcome, I am suffering.....In short, there is no tool in place, I am just treated as other learners and I am just attending my studies as usual...”*

Considering the discussion above in connection with the effectiveness of the various tools used by different schools to evaluate the policy, the researcher can comment that some of the participants are happy while others are not happy with the tools. It has been revealed under this sub-theme that it differs with the schools in Omuthiya, where other schools are doing well with the policy and others still struggling to implement the policy.

4.2.2.3. The reaction of educational stakeholders on the tools

Motshotyana (2010) states that the Namibian learner pregnancy policy provides a good model as the policy development process involved consultation of main stakeholders and it further indicates that the whole process is transparent to the public. Under this sub-theme, the researcher focused much on the reaction of school staff, learner mothers, parents and other learners on the tool used to evaluate the policy under review. The participants of the study explored varying results as they reflected the schools they are representing. In consideration, PS1 indicated that *“staff members feel that they are given much workload.”* PS1 explained that many LMs are usually absent attending to their pregnancies and babies, which forces staff to repeat what they had taught already for the LMs to catch up with others, and this increases the workload of some staff members. PS1 also claimed that some LMs feel ashamed of being recognised as LMs and this reaction affects their performance, while some parents react negatively to the tools since they do not want to take care of the born babies. To rule on this, PS1 has revealed that the tools being used to evaluate the policy are negatively accepted by the majority of the school stakeholders.

Apart from the aforementioned discussions, PS2 denoted that staff members are cooperative to the stipulation of the policy. PS2 further stipulated that some LMs continue with schooling per policy as others react negatively and some parents understand the policy while others don't. These findings revealed that at this school most of the stakeholders react positively to the implementation of the policy. In addition, PS3 specified that "*staff members are very supportive to the policy while LMs are not friendly (open) to school management on anything concerning their pregnancy and parents are not supportive.*" PS3 concluded that it is hard for the success of the policy if both the parent and the LM are not cooperative with school staff in the implementation of the policy. Therefore, the researcher opined that the policy is facing some challenges at this school due to lack of stakeholder coordination. These findings are in line with what Sykes, Schneider and Plank (2009) who specify that despite the ever-increasing presence of state and centralised agencies in educational policymaking, local conditions still appear critical to policy implementation. They further outline that it is not surprising that policy implementation still depends on important measures on local conditions and these conditions are often described in terms of capacity and the will of local actors and agencies. In this regard, the LMs and their guardians (parents) have been found detaining the successful implementation of the policy.

Abruptly, PS4 put it this way, "*some staff members are not happy with the policy demands.*" PS4 explained that "*some LMs don't disclose any information regarding their health condition and this complicates their situation and our duties as teachers.*" PS4 concluded that parents that are not biological ones do not support the policy as they claimed that it encourages learners to get pregnant since they will be accommodated in the educational mainstream. The participant (PS4) mentioned that other learners are not pleased with the policy and they react negatively by bullying LMs. Considerably, these findings explored that the school stakeholders are not comfortable with the implementation of the policy considering its demands. The research concluded that since some of the stakeholders seemed to be interested in the implementation,

something needs to be done to brainwash that portion of the stakeholders who are not interested in the policy. On the same note, PS5 mentioned that staff members are supportive and failed to justify further in regards to other stakeholders. This reaction was also held in silence since there were many participants of the study to conclude.

Matshotyana (2010) indicates that there is a significant improvement regarding teenage pregnancy but also reveals that there is no available study revealing public opinion regarding the policy. In contrary to this notion, the current study has successfully disclosed the reaction of various stakeholders in connection with the implementation of the policy under review. This was explored when PS6 enumerated that:

Staff counsel the LM, meaning that they are supportive to the policy while most LMs keep their conditions as a secret meaning that they are indifferent to the policy since if they were negatively reacting they could drop out of school and if they were positively reacting they could be disclosing their situation and lastly parents were found excluding themselves when it comes to pregnant issues which mean negatively reacting to the policy while other learners bully, tease and avoid to associate with LMs which is a negative reaction.

In this regard, PS6 revealed that teacher counsellors are supportive of the policy while other stakeholders are not supportive. These findings left to debate on the face of the researcher and the researcher will use the majority rule (what many participants will be agreeing with the support of literature) to conclude on the reaction of the school stakeholders on the implementation of the policy under review.

Participant 7 (PS7) argued differently. PS7 specified that “*at my school, most staff members do not welcome LMs and most LMs appreciate the pregnancy policy while most parents are*

negative to the policy and other learners are partially supportive.” These findings explored that only LMs are happy with the policy at this centre and all other school stakeholders are reacting negatively. On the other version, PS8 indicated that *“most staff members think the teacher-counsellor and principal must deal with LMs while all the LMs feel to be accepted at the school due to the prevalence of this policy.”* Additionally, PS8 indicated that most parents neglect the LMs, especially after birth while other (most) learners do not accept LMs in the educational mainstream. These findings also went in line with what Cloete (2018) specified when he stated that the government’s teenage pregnancy policy designed to support pupils who fell pregnant to complete their education is not yielding the desired results. The main concern is on the acceptance by the public, particularly the school stakeholders who are showing little interest in the policy implementation.

Above all, the responses from the learner-mothers (PL) have shown mixed feelings upon the different school stakeholders’ reactions on the policy under review. PL3, PL4, PL5, PL6, PL7 and PL12 claim that many stakeholders are positively reacting to the policy. This was revealed when participant learners (PL) specified that:

PL3 specified that ... *“Staff members are supportive. Every time I miss a class my teacher try by all means to compensate me with the work covered when I wasn’t there... so due to this consideration, I like the policy very well and even other learners are very happy with the policy since they help me a lot on the challenges I face due to my pregnancy.”*

PL4 claimed that..... *“the staff members are very supportive since they counsel me and encourage me not to quit my studies and this makes me happy with the policy although my parents are not happy with me going to school while I am pregnant...Only few learners (others) isolate themselves from me.....”*

PL5 devoted that..... *“Some teachers are helpful while others are not willing to in the sense that they call me names when they are delivering their lessons but those who are supportive never tease on and this left me partially happy due to different treatment from different teachers... As for parents, some are supportive, while others don’t, especially my extended family and some learners are not happy.”*

PL6 revealed that... *“Some teachers are against the policy while others are supportive which make me feel good with the policy since also my parents are happy with the policy and most of the other learners are happy while few bully me.....”*

PL7 specified that ... *“Some teachers are supportive while others are not but that don’t hurt me much since I have other staff members on my back and this made me happy with the policy since I don’t care about what other learners are thinking about me...”*

PL12 concluded that..... *“staff members are very supportive to my situation as they all help me with advice and anything when I am in need and this makes me happy with the policy..... As for my parents, they are happy with the policy since I am still pursuing their dream despite my situation and that of other learners who are against the policy....”*

The evidence proclaimed by PL3, PL4, PL5, PL6, PL7 and PL12 has partially justified that other school stakeholders are very happy with the implementation of the policy although PL1, PL2, PL8, PL9, PL10 and PL11 repealed. This category of learner participant (PL) who repealed argued that:

PL1 specified that... *“Some teachers discourage me while others encourage me but because some of the things they did it publicly and I end up spending most of my time*

unhappy although being at school is good considering my situation... As for my parents (grandmother), she doesn't like to be left with my kid while I go to school and this forces me to be absent every time and when I went to school most learners tease on me.....”

PL2 contained that... “most staff members are unsupportive since they use me as an example when it comes to topics such as reproductive systems and this left me unhappy throughout the lesson... As for my parents, they are unhappy with the policy and they always blame it to be the cause of my pregnancy and as I am asking them to take care of me, everything is no more like before being pregnant... Here at school, most learners bully me...”

PL8 confirmed that..... “Staff members react differently but the most thing I am sensitive to is when some staff give me names and if I ask a question in class they don't consider my contribution in the lesson... they just treat me differently than before, which left me feeling bad in class with other learners...When I get home my parents look unhappy with my situation as no one takes care of me and my pregnancy's needs.....Hhhhm! ... my situation is very tense.....my usual friends and other learners are discouraging me to continue coming to school...”

PL9 indicated that..... “Some staff members are positive while others are negative to the presents of LM in the educational mainstream and due to those who are negative, I end up not seeing what those who are positive tries to do to me and later I am always unhappy at school... My parents are negative of me being at school they want me to be always with my kid... Other learners are rude to me they just changed the way they used to treat me upon falling pregnant...”

PL10 specified that... *“Staff members are negative and teacher counsellors talk but without solutions to problems on which I will just be only happy that I was given a second opportunity to study though experiencing a lot... At home my guardian wants me to drop out of school and just wait until my baby is grown up and thereafter, try to go for vocational school (centres).....Eish.....other learners, especially boys tease me much to an extent that I will be always crying.....”*

PL11 concluded that *“Few teachers accept the present of LM like me in their class as they used to say I am the one causing other learners to feel asleep... Although I am in a hard situation I am very happy with the implementation of the policy since it allows me to be at school despite my situation... As for my parents mmmmmh... they are not happy with the policy as they say it is the one which caused me to be pregnant knowingly that pregnant won't stop me from doing anything from the life of which that is not the case... Other learners even my old friends tease on me.”*

As far as considering what the learner-mothers put forward as their inputs to this study, the researcher has found out that the implementation of the policy in schools has mixed feelings upon all the school stakeholders. The researcher, therefore, proposed that the ministry of education should have a closer look at the implementation process for the policy to attain its major aim. Ideally, this finding was supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Service (2017), which proclaimed that there is lack of institutionalised and standardised links and cooperation with no communication system through which the debates under the review of the policy information are shared and complementary service provision is organised to ensure mutually reinforcement of the policy. To this end, these weaknesses of the policy are deteriorating its former goals gradually.

4.2.3. Support needed by learner mother to cope with motherhood and learning

Based on the identified challenges faced by LMs in the educational mainstream, it is clear that they need support to cope with motherhood and learning. In this regard, the researcher assessed the support in place, how the school management ensures that the necessary support reaches the LMs and the critical stage of the LM pregnancy where the most support will be required. The findings on this perspective were subdivided into three sub-themes.

4.2.3.1. Kind of support received by learner-mothers

An assessment was done to identify the kind of support being rendered by the various schools' understudy to the LMs at their various educational levels. To be specific, PS1 indicated that, *"at our school, the teacher-counsellor provides counselling and moral support, while the health sector provides formula milk for the baby."* PS1 explained that both of these educational stakeholders encourage LMs to write exams at nearest school centres in a case that exams fall when the LM is absent from the former school. This kind of support to the LM was found very important since it was mentioned before that most of the LMs would be challenged by emotional stress, lack of ideas to raise the bay and missing exams when attending their pregnancy. To rule on this, the schools under review have been found supporting its LMs.

Chigona and Chetty (2008) indicate that most teachers usually are not willing to go through the lessons the learner-mothers missed due to motherhood process. Contrary to this, the study disclosed that although most teachers are not willing to compensate for the missed classes they are various supporting measures in place. PS2 claims that *"at our school upon recognising that one learner is pregnant, the teacher counsellor starts his/her duty to monitor, counsel and guide the LM so that this learner will not give up on her studies."*

Additionally, PS2 indicated that the health care providers educate the LM on anti and post-natal clinical needs while the school management uses continuous assessment marks in case the LM did not manage to write the examination. These findings reveal that the schools supported the LM, as they are part of their learners. The researcher observed that, if schools fail to put these support into consideration many LMs will be disadvantaged and may end up dropping out of school.

On a different note, PS3 specified that at their school teacher-counsellor helps in caring for the newly born baby, nutrition and counselling, while the health providers offer anti-natal support and the school management provides exam to the LM if she is in hospital. PS3 further indicated that nothing is done if she is just at home in the case that exams have been written when the LM is absent from school. This finding was found to be the same as what PS2, PS4, PS5, PS6, PS7 and PS8 have disclosed in the fieldwork.

The researcher also picked that for all the schools that were under review, none of them can compensate the LMs on issues like the final national exam missed due to pregnancy. The participants only emphasised that their capacity to assist the LMs in connection with missed exams is only limited to those exams from the school and the majority of the participant signifies that only if the LM is in hospital. This also revealed that for the majority of the LMs who will be at their home might not sometimes be given the exam but only their continuous assessment marks will be averaged and used as the mark for the final grade to avoid repeating of a grade due to pregnancy. Although the policy is helping LMs to complete their studies despite their situation, the researcher found out that the policy failed to put considerations in case of missed final national examination due to pregnancy and to emphasise much on compensatory classes to those LMs who miss some classes due to pregnancy. To this end, the research proposed for revision of the policy in such perspectives.

On the other side, the LM explored the nature of support they are receiving from their perspective schools. The entire participant learner (PL) indicated that their teacher counsellor support with counselling while the health sector provides them with health advice and guidance to continue with their studies. Considering the nature of challenges being mentioned by both school staff and learner mothers, the aforementioned nature of support granted to LMs was found to be insufficient for the success of the LM in the educational mainstream according to the researcher. Therefore, much is needed to be done in support for the LM education.

4.2.3.2. How the school ensures that the necessary support reach the learner mother

Chigona and Chetty (2008) have shown that the learner mothers do not get enough support from the school and they are not considered as learners with special needs as they lack support from teachers, lack counselling to combat stigma attached to learner pregnancy. Contrary to this notion, the previous sub-theme has disclosed that the LMs in the schools under review are receiving the necessary support from their school management and the health sector. Therefore, this section seeks to determine from both the school staff and the LMs how the school management ensures that all the LMs get the granted support. Considerably, PS1 indicated that *“our school utilises the service provided by the learner support group to ensure that all the necessary support granted to LMs have reached the targeted beneficiaries.”* On the other hand, PS2 specified that their school maintains a close link with the LMs and LMs’ parents to ensure that all necessary needs are readily available as per the call of the LMs. PS3 also reasoned on the same point as PS2 that their school keep on track with the LMs particularly on their leave days to ensure that the LMs get the necessary support from the school.

Furthermore, PS4 signified that their teacher counsellor keeps records while the school management supervises the records to ensure that all their LMs get the necessary support at the right time. These findings were found sounding in ensuring that the necessary support reaches the beneficiaries. At the other school, PS5 stipulated that our school management urges all school stakeholders to render help although their assurance on the delivery of the support to the ideal recipient was not guaranteed. In this regard, the researcher concluded that this approach might have left other LMs' need unattended. Apart from what PS5's school did, PS6 from a different school also stated that at our school the school management encourages all school stakeholders to collaborate in support of the LMs. This method was also found ineffective in ensuring that all the LMs get the necessary support they will be deemed necessary to procure the scene.

Moreover, PS7 revealed that their school utilises continuous assessment of LMs' conditions to ensure that they deliver the necessary support needed by the LMs, while PS8 concluded that at their school they have records of all LMs and the support they offer them at school. This was found to be the best method (by PS8) to ensure that the required support reaches the targeted beneficiaries. The researcher considered that if records are kept, updated and tracked, necessary support could reach the targeted beneficiaries.

On the other version of this sub-theme, the participant learners put it on the other form. All the participant learners (PLs) argued that their school management does nothing to guarantee them that the necessary support reached them. They also agreed on the fact that their school management only leaves all responsibilities to their teacher counsellor who sometimes discusses with them (LMs) but this method does not guarantee the delivery of the necessary support to the beneficiaries.

4.2.3.3. The stage at which an intensified support is mostly needed

This sub-theme seeks to explore the stage at which the most intensified support will be required. In this regard, PS1 indicated that LMs need support at all stages of the pregnant. PS1 explained that having considered the health of the learner-mother and the baby, it is also reasonable to look at how exactly the physical and psychological capabilities of learner-mothers are interrupted from the day the pregnancy has been detected and after birth. On the other hand, PS2 argued, “*the intensified support is needed before giving birth.*” PS2 justified his remarks by specifying that intensified support is very crucial before giving birth so that the LM will be prepared with psychological support to accept the upcoming situation. PS2 urged that after delivery, the LM needs minimum support to raise the child. Considerably, PS3 also supported the fact that intensified support is needed before delivery.

Nevertheless, PS4, PS5, PS6, PS7 and PS8 stipulated that “*an intensified support is needed at all stages, thus prior and after giving birth.*” The category of participant denoted that consideration about the health of the learner-mothers and that of their babies during pregnancy and after confinement is of utmost importance. These findings were found to be in line with what Matshotyana (2010) as he states that a teenager becomes pregnant, her physical and psychological capabilities are being interrupted and health support is an important aspect that could boost the physical and psychological capabilities of the learner-mothers. Having considered the health of the learner-mother and the baby, it is also reasonable to look at how exactly the physical and psychological capabilities of learner-mothers are interrupted. Hence, the understanding of the learner pregnancy interrupts their physical and psychological capability might help in the recommendation of specific health support.

Moreover, PL1, PL2, PL3, PL6, PL8, PL9 and PL12 specified that “*we need to be intensified with support after we gave birth.*” The researcher asked them to justify their request and all of them were found demanding financial support. Therefore, this was considered invalid support since the current policy under review does not give any provision for financial support to any LM. However, PL5, PL7, PL10 and PL11 indicated that they wish to be supported before and after delivery. All the LMs were emphasising on financial support which is not the motive of the pregnancy policy and therefore the school stakeholders are only obliged to provide psychological and emotional support which are lacking in some schools in the previous discussions. Therefore, the researcher suggested that the intensified support to LM should be rendered at both stages for the betterment of the LMs and their babies.

4.2.4. Mechanisms to address challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management

This theme seeks to assess if there are mechanisms in place that are set to assist in addressing challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management in implementing the policy under review. As a subject to this notion, the researcher identified three sub-themes namely: what is supposed to be done by the ministry, how to address the challenges faced by learner-mother and school management and input to the pregnancy policy. Therefore, the emerged sub-themes were discussed as follows:

4.2.4.1. What is supposed to be done by the Ministry of Education?

In a bid to address the various challenges faced by LMs and school management, the researcher asked for the opinion of the participants concerning what is supposed to be done by the Ministry of Education. The participants suggested various assignments to the ministry for the success of the policy. PS1 proposed that the ministry should emphasise and strengthen more on the prevention part of the policy. PS1 argued that the current standing

position of the policy seems like it is now emphasising on how the LMs could be accommodated in the educational mainstream rather than putting much emphasis on the prevention of pregnancy itself.

According to the MoE (2012), the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, the prevention aspect of the policy is considered to be the main focus of the policy with hope that over time, fewer and fewer learner pregnancies will occur. Therefore, PS1 indicated that it seems like the policy is failing to meet its main aim, thus the ministry should revisit the policy. Based on the statistics on learner pregnancy, particularly in Omuthiya circuit, what is being argued by PS1 have been found valid. The researcher also suggested that the Ministry of Education should revisit the policy to ensure that it emphasised much on the prevention of pregnancy rather than to only manage incidences of learner pregnancy and stop any child missing an education that is vitally needed.

Additionally, PS2 suggested that the ministry should consider the work done by the teacher-counsellor. PS2 indicated that “*counselling and attending issues concerned with LMs seems to be extra workload to the teacher counsellor and therefore compensation to teacher counsellors should be also set in place.*” The researcher agreed with the idea that the ministry should consider the work done by the teacher counsellor to eliminate the challenges being experienced in the implementation of the policy under review. On the other hand, PS3 suggested, “*the ministry should link the school management and the health care providers.*” PS3 explained that most health care providers are not aware of the reports required by the school management and this worsens the situation facing the school management, which can only be addressed if the ministry links the two.

Moreover, PS4 indicated that “*the ministry should provide enough full-time life skill teachers, school-based nurses and initiate a national LMs day.*” PS4 further argued that if

nurses are situated at various schools no time would be lost by LMs visiting clinic or hospital for nursing assistance and medical advice. He also claimed that to raise awareness of the policy, the ministry should establish a national LMs day where all LMs will be advised at the same time on how to cope with challenges they will be facing. This finding is a necessity, given prior findings where various schools use different methods to deal with LMs challenges and therefore if anything like LMs national day could be launched in Namibia, coping strategies will turn to be similar.

PS5 suggested that the ministry should provide information about the pregnancy policy. PS5 argued that *“most school stakeholders are not well familiar with the contents of the learner pregnancy policy and therefore the ministry is requested to raise the awareness of the contents of the policy to all the school stakeholders that can help in addressing the challenges being faced by the school management and the LMs.”* Apart from this, PS6 suggested that the ministry should introduce day-care to cater for LMs’ children at the same school where their mothers are schooling to avoid absenteeism and also to encourage teachers to give them all missed activities.

Additionally, PS7 suggested that the ministry should follow up on teachers who do not welcome LMs in their classes. In line with this finding, Chigona and Chetty (2008) point out that it is unfortunate that some teachers do not understand the teen mothers’ situations as learners, teachers expect these teen mothers to perform and behave just like other learners in their respective classes. Therefore, to address this matter, PS7 proposed that the ministry ensures that all teachers welcome learner-mothers to eliminate segregation in mainstream schools based on pregnancy issues. PS7 also added that the ministry should inform parents of their roles to help LMs since some of the parents seem to neglect their girl child after being pregnant.

Lastly, PS8 concluded that *“the ministry should frequently meet up with principals to address different challenges faced by LMs.”* This finding is crucial since the school management might sometimes face new challenges that could not be well addressed in the policy and new provisions should be in place to handle the challenges successfully. PS8 also indicated that an outside party should be established to ensure comfort to LMs upon their discussion. This was established when it was indicated that most LMs are shy to disclose their situations to teacher-counsellors or other staff members they are used to. The researcher also found it sounding to have an external part to enable LMs to be free to disclose their burning issues at school.

The learner-mothers who were reached under the study proposed that *“the Ministry should talk to the principal to implement the existing learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of LMs (PL1).”* PL1 complained that the way the policy is being implemented is not satisfactory in the sense that she is allowed to be at school with her pregnancy but there is no security provided to all school stakeholders who are mistreating her. On the other hand, PL2 also claimed that *“the ministry should be in touch with school principals to ensure the success of the policy.”* The justification of PL2 was found to be in line with what PL1 has put forward. In addition to this, PL3 indicated that *“the ministry should provide the LMs with their baby formula.”* For this study, issues regarding financial assistance were held silent since the policy did not aim to provide any financial assistance to any learner-mother and therefore this suggestion was held silent. On the same note, PL7 was also claiming for financial assistance and the findings in this regard were treated silent.

Besides, PL4 indicated that the ministry should provide health care providers to every school to help LMs at the school. The schools should also be allocated some emergency services like ambulances to help LMs who experience any health-related needs during classes. On the

other hand, PL5, PL9 and PL11 claimed that “*a continuous engagement with school principals to ensure the effectiveness of the policy is needed.*” The researcher believed in what PL5 suggested when regarding the evaluation of the policy because implementing a policy alone without continuous evaluation and monitoring gradually deteriorates the policy from meeting its aims. This finding is supported by PL6 who also suggested that “*the ministry should visit schools regularly to see their policy implementation.*”

Moreover, PL8, PL10 and PL12 proposed that “*the ministry should allow us to have extra classes to compensate the missed classes.*” The policy requires the LMs to proceed with their studies irrespective of their pregnancies but it did not give a provision on what to be done if the LM miss classes attending to her pregnancy, therefore it is crucial that the ministry reinforces the compensation of missed classes.

4.2.3.2. How to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management

Learner mothers and school management have proved to be experiencing some challenges in the implementation of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy as shown in literature and themes established and discussed earlier in this study. Therefore, this theme sub-theme seeks to explore the proposed measures to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management. PS1 disclosed that “*an extensive sensitisation by learners and community.*” This reaction was referred to as a quality response to the arising challenges where the learners and the community thus the school stakeholders will be accepting the requirement of the policy. The research can conclude that if all stakeholders exercise a quality response to the demands of the policy, the policy will be very successful. This can be done by treating the LMs as learners with special needs.

In addition to the above, PS2 indicated that *“to address the challenges faced by LMs and school management effectively, there is need for well-equipped counsellors.”* It has been disclosed in the previous discussion that the teacher counsellors play a major role in handling challenges faced by LMs and therefore for the teacher counsellors to effectively exercise their duties there is a need for them to be resourceful: well equipped with enough time to attend to the LM issues and also to be trained with life skills. In other words, if teacher counsellors are not well equipped they will not perform their duties effectively and they will fail to eliminate the challenges being faced by learner-mothers and school management. PS3, PS7, PS8 stipulated that all school stakeholders must be made familiar with the contents and aims of the policy.

The study disclosed that some stakeholders are not fully participating in the implementation of the policy due to various reasons. Therefore, for the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy to impose minimum challenges to LMs and school management all stakeholders need to be engaged in the implementation by either in form of meetings or workshops to clearly explain to them the contents and importance of the policy. If nothing has been done in this regard, the policy will continue to somehow face rejection by other school stakeholders and the only stakeholder to suffer the consequences will be the learner-mothers and the school management.

Apart from the aforementioned discussion, PS4 alluded that, *“to successfully address the challenges faced by LMs and school management a continuous assessment of the implementation process of the policy is needed, the introduction of the supplementary national exam, reviewing of the policy and reconsidering challenges faced by LMs.”* PS4 explained that a continuous assessment of the policy would enable the policy formulators and those who implement the policy to identify emanating challenges as they arise and this

will assist in formulating strategies to combat the challenges on time and in a well-prescribed manner. The researcher also identified that the policy did not set a provision for supplement national exams for LMs on which something should be done to address the challenge of missing national examinations due to pregnancy.

PS6 proposed the utilisation of use of contraceptives to reduce the level of LMs and this will simultaneously reduce the challenges being faced by the LMs and school management in the implementation of the policy. The researcher found this to be an important measure to address the challenges faced by the LMs and school management, at the same time meeting the main aim of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, which is to reduce the number of LMs in the educational mainstream. The only problem with this measure is that it is only successfully applicable to girls but not to LMs that will be already pregnant.

Further, the LM proposed various solutions to be adopted to address the challenges they face and the school management. PL1, PL2, PL3, PL4, PL5, PL6, PL8, PL10 and PL12 suggested that all school stakeholders should be advised to treat LMs well and this can be enforced by conducting meetings regularly with all stakeholders, educating them how to handle LMs. Education for all stakeholders was found to be the best solution by the researcher so that every stakeholder will treat LMs with sympathy. PL7 proposed for the establishment of special schools for LMs. The researcher rejected this suggestion since it contradicts with other Namibian policies such as Inclusive Education, which emphasises the need for all learners to be in the same educational mainstream despite their capabilities.

Additionally, PL9 proposed the elimination of bullying either by teachers or fellow learners. Guidelines on how to deal with bullies should be in place since it has been established under this study that bullying is one of the main challenges being faced by LMs. Briefly, PL11

suggests taking LMs to hostels and the establishment of day-care for LMs babies that will be paid by the government. The researcher accepted the former strategy in addressing the challenges being faced by LMs and school management but she rejected the latter in the sense that the goal for the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy is not to increase the burden on the government but just to ensure inclusive education despite the pregnancy situation.

4.2.3.3. Input to the pregnancy policy

Participants were asked to add sections they wish to be amended if the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy was to be revised. The participants as discussed under this sub-theme put various suggestions forward. PS1 proposed that the whole policy should be abolished. PS1 justified his concerns by indicating that the policy is encouraging learners to get pregnant since they will not be discharged from school and therefore it should be abolished in a condition that any learner who will get pregnant, will be expelled from the educational mainstream. The suggestions on the amendment of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy was rejected by the researcher since it is violating some existing policies in Namibia such as Gender Equity and Equality, which tries to recognise those who were previously disadvantaged because of their sex. In this regard, the motion put forward by PS1 has been rejected under this study.

PS2 proposed that *“the policy should address the degree of vulnerability among LMs and all parents must be involved in policy revision.”* As for the former, PS2 explained that to ensure the awareness of the public on the aims of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, the policy should stipulate the inclusive and equitability it is trying to solve among different challenges faced by learners due to their sex. For the

latter, PS2 claimed that the policy formulation seemed to lack the inclusion of school stakeholders particularly parents and therefore its revision should call for the aid of parents as a critical input to the policy. The researcher considered this as a necessity for the success of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy.

Moreover, PS3 claimed that *“If the policy was to be revised, important inputs such as a strict measure to discourage pregnancy should be in place.”* PS3 argued that if the policy is there to secure LMs to be in the educational mainstream, in other words, the policy is trying to say contraceptive can be used optionally. In this regard, this participant (PS3) is opining that the policy should encourage the use of contraceptives. This was found as an important amendment which should be done since it will help in meeting the main goal of the policy, thus minimise pregnancies. Much should be done in the form of a separate section in the policy document, which reiterates the use of contraceptives. On the other hand, PS4, PS6 and PS8 suggested that *“LMs should come back to school after one year.”* PS4 and PS6 argued that the period the policy is allowing LMs to get back to school after birth is short which leaves their children at risk and also them (LMs) with pressure to be at school without enough recovery from early pregnancy (teenager pregnancy) deliverance. This finding was supported by the researcher under the consideration that prior findings under this study disclosed that most children of LMs suffer from malnutrition, which could be caused by insufficient breast-feeding.

Consideration of all contributions made by all participants was valued by the researcher. PS5, PS6 and PS7 suggested that *“if the policy was to be reformed, issues on missed national exams, food and health of the LMs should be provided for.”* The policy was found to allow LMs at school but at the same time, it fails to consider that they could be at school the whole time and later fail to write final exams due to pregnancy issues. Therefore, PS4 and PS6

suggested that schooling without accessing the final national exam will be wastage of time and if possible, the policy should consider supplementary exam to LMs who missed their final national exams due to pregnancy issues. The researcher also supported this amendment since it is not reasonable for an LM to spend even one day at school and later did not manage to access the national assessment (exam). The question that will be left unanswered will be, why keeping them (LMs) if you already know they might not write the final exam? It is a waste of their time instead of being somewhere else doing something else for their future. Therefore, to best answer these questions, the policy should put consideration on missed examinations due to pregnancy or any LM challenge be it the baby itself. All in all, contributions made by participant learner (PL) on this sub-theme was hold silent since the researcher had found out that most of the proposed amendments were more likely the same as those proposed by participant staff (PS). Therefore, this concluded the discussions on the findings.

4.3. Summary

The discussion of the findings of this study has disclosed that learner-mothers are facing various challenges in the educational mainstream. This has been explored when it was established in the study that most learners are bullying them and LMs also miss final national examinations and some classes while attending to their motherhood demands. The chapter also highlighted some strategies in place to guide school management in implementing pregnancy policy, support needed by learner-mothers to cope with motherhood and learning, and mechanisms in place for the successful addressing of challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management in implementing the policy under review. The proceeding chapter will explore the recommendations and the conclusion to these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this last chapter of the study, the researcher summarised the key findings of the study and stated the conclusions and recommendations of the study. This study was thriving to explore the challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya Circuit of Namibia, intending to contribute better insights to the strategies that can improve learner-mothers' conditions in the educational mainstream. Several discussions have been made and the researcher summed them up as follows:

5.2. Summary of findings

The summary of the findings of this study were subdivided into the following subheadings:

5.2.1. Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya circuit and how do they cope with these challenges

The study revealed that the main challenges faced by learner-mother are coping up with motherhood and learning simultaneously, being teased and bullied by other learners, missing classes and examinations and attending to motherhood demands. The study further established that most learner-mothers do not disclose their pregnancy conditions as well as the loss of concentration in studies, they react negatively to the challenges they face and they are unprepared to cope with the challenges they are facing in the educational mainstream. Eventually, they drop out of school. The aforementioned challenges are the main barriers preventing learner-mothers from performing well at school.

5.2.2. Strategies in place to guide school management to implement the learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers

The participants indicated that there are various strategies in place to guide school management in implementing pregnancy policy. Some of the strategies pointed out are such as: utilising

school records for all learner-mothers and use of confirmation letters from health care providers, which details the fitness of the LMs on the mainstream. Empowering teacher-counsellors to ensure the success of the policy was also pointed out. Moreover, working together with class teachers of all LMs for the effective implementation of the policy, utilising the statistic records of the LMs to monitor and evaluate the policy and evaluation forms to be filled in by LMs at the end of each year as a tool to evaluate the policy can yield the desired outcome. The response of the participants on the question regarding tools in place to evaluate the policy have disclosed these strategies.

5.2.3. How learner-mothers can be supported to cope with motherhood and learning

The study also established that learner-mothers need support in the form of counselling and moral support. It has been also disclosed under this study that schools in Omutiyya need some mechanisms to be in place to address challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management. Some of the mechanisms are: extensive sensitisation by learners and community, need for well-equipped counsellors, all school stakeholders must be made familiar with the contents and aims of the policy.

5.2.4. How the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management can be addressed

In relation to how the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management can be addressed, the study suggested that, a continuous assessment of the implementation process of the policy is needed as well as the introduction of supplementary national examinations, reviewing the policy and reconsidering challenges faced by LMs. Additionally, the study disclosed that the utilisation of use of contraceptives to reduce the level of LMs and all school stakeholders should be advised to treat LMs well. In line with these findings, specific recommendations have been suggested based on the study findings.

5.3. Conclusions

From the findings, it can be concluded that most of the learner-mothers remain in schools as per ministerial policy and they struggle to make ends meet as mothers and learners, concurrently. Learner-mothers lack social and academic support. The study found that learner-mothers are not provided with learning activities during their leave of absence. Furthermore, no follow-ups are made to check whether teachers are giving learner-mothers learning activities.

Walking long distances to and from schools seems to be the main challenge to most learner-mothers especially during the last three months of pregnancy. Unfortunately, some teachers do not welcome learner-mothers into their classrooms. The study has also revealed that bullying from fellow learners remains a challenge to most learner-mothers and causes shyness during lessons.

The study also identified other challenges such as lack of financial support, no support from parents, no concentration in lessons, absenteeism, being shy in casual clothes, not affording babies' basic needs such as nappies and formula milk. Most of the learner-mothers have difficulties in finding someone to take care of their babies while at school, sleeping during lessons, stressed and missing examinations.

In general, the outcome of this study was the fact that the Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy gives wide choice to pregnant learners and learner-parents to continue with their schooling or to take leave of absence. In nutshell, the Policy allows pregnant learners and or learner-parents to complete their schooling. The Ministry of Education has failed to provide special physical facilities as stipulated by the Education Act; Act 16 of 2001 which requires the provision of physical facilities to entertain learners.

The need exists for the Ministry of Education to provide sick bays to accommodate pregnant learners to reduce their walking distance to and from school. Through the provision of physical facilities and support programs pregnant learners would be assisted to complete their schooling. The Ministry of Education has failed to make provision for dress code of pregnant learners. On the other hand, it seems like the policy encourages teenagers to continue bearing children without being concerned but the reality is that the effectiveness of the policy need collaborative efforts from all stakeholder on which on the view of the researcher the policy lack much of this.

5.4. Recommendations for improvements

The researcher has put forward the following recommendations to the study findings to contribute better insights on the strategies to improve learner-mothers' performance in the educational mainstream:

- The study identified the main challenge faced by learner-mothers (4.2.1) as to balance education and motherhood to an extent that they spend a lot of time struggling but later fail to get assessed due to pregnancy complications. Therefore, the researcher recommends the educational policymakers to come up with strategies or policies on how to supplement lessons or exams missed by learner-mothers due to well-assessed pregnancy complications.
- The study revealed that the teachers and other learners understudy tease and bully learner-mothers (4.2.1). Therefore, the researcher recommends that a document should be compiled that provides teachers and other learners with all the necessary information on how to treat learner-mothers politely. Provision should be made on administrative documents so that teasing and bullying learner-mothers will be regarded as serious indiscipline with strict measures in place.

- The study disclosed that the use of contraceptives should not be optional (4.2.3.3). Therefore, it is recommended that literature should be provided to schools that are in line with the developmental stages of the learners, for example, demonstration of the use of condoms to encourage the use of contraceptives that is appropriate to girls and reduce pregnancy levels.
- The study revealed that some learner-mothers are shy and do not want to disclose their conditions to anyone (4.2.1.1). Therefore, it is recommended that specific actions should be taken to create a speaking culture and speaking “rituals” at the schools, for example always be free when you are talking to the teacher counsellors.

5.5. Recommendations for further research

The researcher made the following recommendations for further research: the study only covered Omuthiya Circuit, therefore, a similar study should be carried out in using other circuits across Namibia since this study covered one circuit amongst other many circuits in Namibia. Therefore, these particular findings cannot be generalised for the whole nation. The researcher suggested that future research should be carried under this topic using a bigger population sample. A pure quantitative methodology should, therefore, be adopted to see the relationship within the challenges faced by learner-mothers and their performances in schools.

5.6. Summary

The study has disclosed various challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya. The finding of this study shall, therefore, help educators and other school stakeholders to work on the identified challenges to improve learner-mother freedom at school. In addition to this, various strategies to cope with the identified challenges have been exposed. Therefore, the schools under study must put such considerations in practice in conjunction with the suggested recommendations. All in all, the application of the results of this study into practice can be

gradual but its fruits are expected to yield better results that can improve the freedom of the learner-mothers. The researcher opted for a well-planned implementation plan to utilise the findings of this study and fine-tune them into real practice for the betterment and improvement of the problem under study. Effective implementation of the Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy will also help in recognising the previously disadvantaged groups in society due to sex or gender issues.

REFERENCES

- Bernadine. V. (2004). *Kids having kids. The impacts of teenage childbearing on the mothers and the consequences of those impacts for government*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Beukes, J. (2018, March 08). Pregnant future - 6 000 learners conceive in Kavango. *The Villager Newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://www.thevillager.com.na>
- Briggs, A. R. J., & Coleman, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Research methods in educational leadership and management*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publication.
- Brink, H., Walt, C., & Rensburg, G. (2012). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology for Healthcare Professionals*, (3rd ed.). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Chigona, A., & Chetty, R. (2008). Teen mothers and schooling: Lacunae and challenges. *South Africa Journal for Education*. 28. 261-281.
- Cloete, F. (2018). Policy indicator consistency and coherence in measuring public sector development programmers in South Africa. *African Evaluation Journal*, 6(2), Accessed 23 Oct. 2020.
- Cloete. G. (2018). *Investigating In-Service Professional Development of Secondary School Principals in Namibia*. (Doctoral thesis). University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). California: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed.). London: Pearson.
- David, M. (2018, March 08). Alarming figures of teenage pregnancy in Oshikoto. *Informante Newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://www.informant.com.na/>
- David, M. (2018, March 08). Oshikoto Regional School statistics for 2017. *Informante Newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://www.informant.com.na/>
- David, S. A. (2012). An educational programme for facilitating adolescent motherhood in Oshana Region of Namibia. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Namibia, Windhoek.
- Davies, M., & Hughes, N. (2014). *Doing a successful research projects: Using qualitative or quantitative methods*. (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

- De Bell, D. (Ed.). (2005). *Public Health Practice & the School-age Population*. London. Edward Arnold.
- Ediberto. B. & Liang. N. (2013). *Teen Pregnancy*. New York: Lerner Publications Company.
- Frost, J. J., & Forrest, J. D. (2015). Family planning perspectives. 27(5). *Understanding the Impact of Effective Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Programs*. Retrieved on 20 October 2014, from <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/journals2718895.html>
- Gay, L. R. (2015). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Merrill Publishing Company
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2016). *Education Research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. New York, NY: Pearsons.
- Gouws, E., Kruger, N., & Burger, S. (2011). *The adolescent*. Heinemann, Johannesburg.
- Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world*. (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publication.
- Harry, B., & Lipsky, M. G. (2014). Qualitative research on special education teacher preparation. *In Handbook of Research on Special Education Teacher Preparation* (p. 445-460). Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203817032>
- Hauuanga, M. (2002). The impact of teenage pregnancy on academic performance. (Bed). University of Namibia.
- Imene, T. (2015). A study on perception of teachers and parents on Education Sector Policy for Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy. (Unpublished master's Thesis). University of Namibia. Windhoek.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, Qualitative and mixed approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Kangootui, N. (2017), July 12). 127 Namibian teenagers fall pregnant daily. *The Namibian Newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenamibian.com.na/>
- Karimi, W. E. (2015). *Challenges experienced by young mother learners upon re-entry to formal primary school: case in one of the divisions of coastal Region, Kenya*. (Master's Thesis). University of Oslo, Kenya.
- Lichtman, M. (2014). *Qualitative research for social sciences*. UK: SAGE Publications.

- Losper, R. B. (2006). A study on teenage mothers in the Khomas Educational Region schools (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Namibia. Windhoek.
- Macmillan, (2007). Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2nd ed.). Retrieved from www.macmillandictionary.com. Accessed on October 23, 2020
- Matshotyana, Z. (2010). *Experiences of Parenting Learners with regards to learner pregnancy policy*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of the Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Meekers D., & Ahmed G. (2010) Pregnancy-related school dropouts in Botswana. *Population Studies*, 53(2), 195-209.
- Mercer, R. T. (2004). Becoming a Mother versus Maternal Role Attainment. *Journal for Nursing*, 36(3), 226-232.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. (2012). *Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*. Windhoek: Government Printers.
- Ministry of Health and Social Services. (2017). *Annual report*. Windhoek: Retrieved from http://www.mhss.gov.na/files/downloads/4f9_MoHSS_AnnualReport_REPRO_WithBleed.pdf, 4 April 2019.
- Mogotsi, R. B. (1996). *A study on possibility of keeping pregnant learners in schools*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Namibia. Windhoek.
- Morrell, R., Bhana, D., & Shefer, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Books and babies: pregnancy and young parents in schools*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Motshotyana. F. (2010). Realizing the right to education for all: School policy on learner pregnancy in Namibia (Unpublished manuscript). Windhoek: Legal Assistance Centre.
- Namibian daily news (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.namibian.com.na/153170/archive-read/127-Namibian-teenagers-fall-pregnant-daily>. 23 October 2020.
- Nekongo-Nielsen, H., & Mbukusa, N., R. (2013). Investigating factors that lead to school dropout in Namibia, *The Namibia CPD Journal for Educators (NCPDJE)*, 11(6), 97-118.
- Omuthiya Circuit pregnancy statistics (2015-2016). Unpublished Circuit pregnancy statistics.
- Sanzila, G. (2018). Increase in Teenage Pregnancy attributed to Policy. *New Era*. Retrieved from www.newera.com.na. Accessed on 20 October 2020

- Scholtz, J. A. (2018). Is there a room for pregnant teenagers? *New Era*, P. 6.
- Shanyanana, R. N. (2011). *Educational programme for democratic citizenship and cosmopolitan: The case study of Republic of Namibia*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Stellenbosch University, Cape Town.
- Silverman, D. (Ed.). (2011). *Qualitative research: Issues of theory, methods & practice*. (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Smit, E. (2011). Alarming teenage pregnancy rate increasing. *Namibian Sun*, Retrieved from://www.namibiansun.com.na/.
- UNFPA (2013). *Sex Imbalances at Birth. Current Trends, Consequences and Policy Implications*, UNFPA, Bangkok.
- Van der Walter. A. (2004). Teen mothers and schooling. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(4), 261-281.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: University of Namibia research permission letter

CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia
340 Main University Avenue, Ploersb Park
☎ +264 61 200 3215/166, Fax +264 61 200 3900, URL <http://www.unam.edu.na>



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Student Name: Ms. Hilija Iisa

Student number: 200736817

Programme: MASTER OF EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & POLICY STUDIES)

Approved research title: CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS IN OMUTHIYA CIRCUIT OF NAMIBIA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

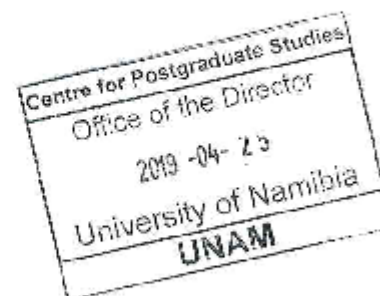
Prof. Martinus Tediwa

Director, Centre for Postgraduate Studies

Tel: +264 61 2063275

E-mail: directorpgs@unam.na

28 April 2019



APPENDIX B: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture research permission letter



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61-2932202
Fax: +264 61-2932222
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: gm12munene@yafina.co.uk

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

Ms Hilja lita
Cell: 081 263 0234

Dear Ms lita

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OSHIKOTO REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's Degree on "The Challenges Faced by Learner-Mothers in Schools in Omuthla Circuit, Oshikoto Region" in Namibia, is here with granted. You are further requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Ministry. You may contact Mr. G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for provision of summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Sincerely yours


SANET L. STEENKAMP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



29.4.19
Date

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Executive Director

APPENDIX C: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE-005-2020 Date: 05 May 2020

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY IN OMUTHIYA CIRCUIT, NAMIBIA.

Nature/Level of Project: MASTERS STUDY

Researcher: HILJA IITA

Student Number: 200736817

Faculty: FACULTY OF EDUCATION


Supervisors: DR. R. N. SHANYANANA-AMAAMBO (MAIN) AND DR. J. MUSHAANDJA (CO)

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

REC wishes you the best in your research.

REC Chairperson
Prof CJ Wilders: HREC-NH: CHAIRPERSON


_____ (Signature)

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHER-COUNSELLORS

Principal's name (Sydo):

School name: (Sydo):

A. Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools and how they cope with these challenges

1. What is the nature of the challenges do learner-mothers face in schools?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. How do learner-mothers react to the challenges they experience in schools?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How well are learner-mothers prepared to cope with learning and parenting challenges?

.....
.....

.....
.....

B. Strategies in place that guide school management implement learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of the learner-mothers

1. What tools does the school management use to evaluate and ensure that the learner-pregnancy policy is implemented to the satisfaction of learner-mothers?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Do the tools or strategies mentioned above yield the required outcome?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How do the following educational stakeholders react to the strategies used by the school management in implementing the pregnancy policy?

i) Staff members

.....
.....
.....
.....

ii) Learner-mothers

.....
.....
.....
.....

iii) Parents of learner-mothers

.....
.....
.....
.....

iv) Other learners at school

.....
.....
.....
.....

C. Support needed by learner-mothers to cope with motherhood and learning

1. What kind of support do learner-mothers receive from the following people?

i) Teacher-Counsellors (Life Skills teachers)

.....
.....

ii) Health Sector

.....
.....

2. How does the school ensure that the necessary support reaches the learner-mothers?

.....
.....
.....

3. During what stage (prior or after giving birth) is there a need for intensified support for learner-mothers?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. In case a learner-mother have the estimated date of delivery in the middle of an examination, what are the necessary arrangements does the school put in place to support the learner-mother?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

D. Mechanisms to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management

1. What should the Ministry do to help school principals implement the existing learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of learner-mothers?

.....
.....
.....

2. How can the challenges experienced by learner-mothers and school management be addressed?

.....
.....

3. If the pregnancy policy is to be revised, what will be your input?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Are there any other ideas to share?

.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your cooperation!

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNER-MOTHERS

Learner-mother's name (Sydo):

School name: (Sydo):

A. Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools and how they cope with these challenges

1. What is the nature of the challenges do you face in school?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How well are you prepared to cope with learning and parenting challenges?

.....
.....
.....
.....

B. Strategies in place that guide school management implement learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of the learner-mothers

1. What tools does the school management use to evaluate and ensure that the learner-pregnancy policy is implemented to your satisfaction as a learner-mother?

.....
.....

.....
.....

2. Do the tools or strategies mentioned above yield the required outcome?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How do the following educational stakeholders react to the strategies used by the school management in implementing the pregnancy policy?

i) Staff members

.....
.....
.....
.....

ii) You as a learner-mother

.....
.....
.....
.....

iii) Your parents

.....
.....
.....
.....

iv) Other learners at school

.....
.....
.....
.....

C. Support needed by learner-mothers to cope with motherhood and learning

1. What kind of support do you receive from the following people?

i) Teacher-Counsellors (Life Skills teachers)

.....
.....

ii) Health Sector

.....
.....

2. How does the school ensure that the necessary support reaches you as a learner-mother?

.....
.....
.....

3. During what stage (prior or after giving birth) do you need intensified support from the school?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. In case your estimated date of delivery is in the middle of the examination, what are the necessary arrangements would you like the school to put in place to support you?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

D. Mechanisms to address the challenges faced by learner-mothers and school management

1. What should the ministry do to help school principals to implement the existing learner pregnancy policy to the satisfaction of the learner-mothers?

.....
.....
.....

2. How can the challenges you face as a learner-mother be addressed?

.....
.....
.....

3. If the pregnancy policy is to be revised, what will be your input?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Are there any other ideas to share?

.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your cooperation!

APPENDIX F: COVERT OBSERVATIONS CHECKLIST

Research topic: Challenges faced by learner-mothers in schools in Omuthiya Circuit of Namibia

Guide for unstructured covert observation

[**Instructions to observer:** Write down the actions you observe under the following headings]

Watching learner-mothers

School no:

Date.....

1. The number of learner-mothers accessed

3. Is the learner-mother punctual in the school setting, in and outside the classroom?

Yes

No

Reason.....

.....

4. How does the learner-mother participate in lessons?

Motivated

Anxiety

Confident

5. Do the teachers give learner-mothers and other learners' equal turns to participate in the school setting: in or outside the classroom?

Yes

No

6. Do learner-mothers come to school every day as required?

Yes

No

If **Yes**, what time do they arrive at school?

.....

.....

If **No**, how many days on average do they miss school per week?

.....
.....

7. Does the learner-mother interact well with other peers?

Yes

No

Reason.....
.....

8. What challenges are the learner-mothers facing when they are at the school?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

9. The mode of help rendered to the learner-mother during school hours, inside or outside the classroom.

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. How are the learner-mothers helped to balance their condition and academic pressure?

.....
.....
.....
.....

11. Strategies in place to help these girls who have been re-admitted into school after pregnancy.

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Are any other unique features observable different from those of learners who do not have pregnancies?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX G: PARENT CONSENT LETTER

Date: 05/20/2020

Title of study: *CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS IN OMUTHIYA CIRCUIT OF NAMIBIA*

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARENT

My name is HILJA IITA and I am doing research under the supervision of DR. R N. AMAAMBO, a lecturer at THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA towards a THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES). Your children are invited to participate in a study entitled CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS IN OMUTHIYA CIRCUIT OF NAMIBIA.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The aim of the study is to explore the CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNER-MOTHERS IN SCHOOLS IN OMUTHIYA CIRCUIT OF NAMIBIA and to establish ways to reduce the occurrence of school dropouts by pregnant learners. Your learners have been selected because it suits the requirements of the research problem, conveniently located closer to the work and home of the researcher. The study will entail interviews and observation of learners.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

Since the learners are regarded as infants (<18years) I am seeking for your permission to allow them to participate in this study. The learner-mothers are invited because they can provide useful information that would help to make sound conclusions on the topic I am investigating. I have obtained your information from the school statistic records provided by the school administration. Participants will be purposively selected until data saturation is achieved.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves the semi-structured interviews with probing questions and observation. Participation in the study will involve being interviewed and observed. Interviews will take approximately 15 minutes. You learners will be asked semi -structured questions such as and also being observed.

During the interview, with your permission I will be taking notes and I may record the interview to ensure correct and accurate collection of information.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and the learners are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide that they can take part, they will be given information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw your kid at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help successfully establish ways to reduce the occurrence of learner pregnancy and school dropouts due to pregnancy issues

in Omuthiya, increasing the knowledge on challenges faced by pregnant learners to the researcher and informing the policy makers on where to allocate funds for successful reduction of the challenges. This could also be an eye opener for the teachers, and other school stakeholders as it will provide an insight of importance of reduction of challenges faced by learner mothers.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE LEARNERS IF THEY PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Please note that as a researcher I do not envisage any potential risk or discomfort for the learners as a participant.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT THE LEARNERS CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THEIR IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The learners have the right to insist that their name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about their involvement in this research. The names of the learners will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect them to the answers they give. Their answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and they will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

The answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcribe, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify the learners will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

The research report may be published but no individual information may be made public.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of the answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at my residence in Windhoek, Namibia for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Be assured that all data in hard copies will be shredded after five years and all the electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the computer's hard drive.

WILL THE LEARNERS RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Please note that there will be no incentives for the participation in this study but I will be responsible for costs they may incur as a result of the participation in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the UNIVERSITY ON NAMIBIA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL THE LEARNERS BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

The meeting will be organised to discuss the findings of the study. However, if you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Lita on +264812630234 or email: hiljaiita@gmail.com. The findings will be accessible for five years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Email: Lita on +264812630234 or email: hiljaiita@gmail.com

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact DR. R N. AMAAMBO.

Thank you for taking time to read this consent sheet requesting your kids to participate in this study.

Thank you.

HILJA IITA

DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA.

ANNEXURE H: Learner’s assent (Please, return slip)

I, _____, confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me and my parents about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet (Parent consent).

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview that I will be part of.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name and Surname (please print):

Participant signature:

Date:

Researcher’s names (please print): HILJA IITA

Researcher’s signature:

Date: