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Einbeck, Anne-Magdalene

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
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AN INVESTIGATION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY IN THREE NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY

BY

ANNE-MAGDALENE EINBECK

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER'S IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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SUPERVISOR: DR GLODEAN TINTSWALO THANI (PhD)

Contents

AUTHOR DECLARATION v
EDITOR DECLARATION vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii
LIST OF ACCRONYMS ix
ABSTRACT x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 11
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 11
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 12
1.3 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY 12
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 15
1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY 15
1.6 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS 16
1.7 KEY CONCEPTS DEFINITIONS 16
1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY 17
1.9 CONCLUSION 17
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 19
2.1 INTRODUCTION 19
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 19
2.3 NAMIBIAN LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT 20
2.4 GLOBAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT 22
2.5 REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT 23
2.6 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION 25
2.7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK 26
2.8 SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER PREGNANCY 28
2.9 CONCLUSION 29
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 30
3.1 INTRODUCTION 30
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND DESIGN 30
3.3 RESEARCH SAMPLING 31
3.4 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS 32
3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS 32

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS 34
3.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 35
3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 35
3.9 CONCLUSION 35
CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION 37
4.1 INTRODUCTION 37
4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION 38
4.2.1 Theme 1 - Scope of Policies (Awareness amongst teachers, learners and parental/community members) 40
4.2.2 Theme 2 - Additional support programmes and policies to facilitate the learner pregnancy policy implementation 42
4.2.3 Theme 3 - Corrective measure to reduce learner pregnancies 48
4.2.4 Theme 4 - Relevant social factors playing a role in learner pregnancies 53
4.3 CONCLUSION 55
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 56
5.1 INTRODUCTION 56
5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 57
5.3 CONCLUSION 60
CHAPTER 6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 62
6.1 INTRODUCTION 62
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 62
6.3 CONCLUSION 64
REFERENCES 66
LIST OF FIGURES 69
APPENDIXES 70
APPENDIX 1 – ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE 70
APPENDIX 2 – PROPOSAL APPROVAL LETTER 71
APPENDIX 3 – PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH 72
APPENDIX 4 – APPROVAL LETTER -EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 74
APPENDIX 5 – PARTICIPANTS INVITATION LETTER 75
APPENDIX 6 – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM 77
APPENDIX 7 – RESEARCH INSTRUMENT 78

APPENDIX 8 - TURNITIN REPORT……..80

AUTHOR DECLARATION

STUDENT NAME: **ANNE-MAGDALENE EINBECK**

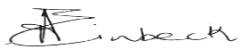
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Mrs Anne-Magdalene Einbeck

30 March 2022

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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Authored by:

EINBECK ANNE-MAGDALENE

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Supervised by: DR GLODEAN TINTSWALO THANI (PhD)



DR RODRIGUE GNITCHOGNA BATOGNA (PhD)

EDITOR

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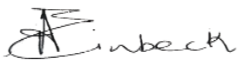
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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FAWENA	Forum for African Women Educationalists Namibia
HR	Human Resource
NAPPA	Namibian Family Planning Association
OMC	One Man Can
SADC	Southern African Development Community

ABSTRACT

Pregnancies of learners between the ages of 14 and 18 years remain a great concern around the globe and in Namibia in particular. To address the learner pregnancies in schools and the corollary dropout of girls, Namibia embarked on the implementation of the Learner pregnancy policy drafted to respond to the problem. The policy's main goal is to improve the prevention and management of learner pregnancy, decrease the number of learner pregnancies and assist learner-parents to complete their high school education. A review of the literature on the current state of the research, reveals a lack of knowledge of learner pregnancy policies, mediocre to non-existent awareness of what is expected from teachers, schools and parents of pregnant learners. Numbers of teachers are apprehensive about learner pregnancies and approach them with mixed feelings. They therefore tend to show negative attitudes towards pregnant learners in schools.

This study explores the impact of the learner pregnancy policy after 9 years of its implementation. What is the effect of the policy on learner pregnancies and their consequential afflictions? How effective is the prevention policy in contributing to the decrease of learners' pregnancies in schools? Does it rather play a role to the increase of learner pregnancies? The investigation maps out the scope of the existing policy and its understanding by stakeholders. By capturing understanding, experiences and emotional responses of teachers and management teams to the occurrences of learner pregnancies in the selected schools, the analysis will deconstruct underlining logics that structure stakeholders' actions in relation to the implementation of the pregnancy prevention policy, and the observed and prevailing learner pregnancy dynamics.

The study is qualitative and employed purposive sampling to select the three schools. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide the process of data gathering by means of one-on-one interview. Thematic analysis of Braun and Clark (2006) is used to ensure deeper insight of the data, while the research paradigm that informs interpretation, extraction of findings and results is located in the theoretical framework of Bandura social cognitive theory.

Key concepts

Learner; Learner pregnancy; Learner parents; Learner pregnancy policy; Parents; Pregnancy

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Pregnancies among school-going, females are a very important concern in many countries across the globe including Namibia. In general, learner-pregnancy is closely connected to dropout rates. Many of the young female learners between the ages of 14 and 18 drop out of school due to pregnancy, and seldom return to complete their schooling or training. To provide school-going female learners who fall pregnant the opportunity to complete their education, countries around the world introduce and implement learner-pregnancy policies. Several of those policies are aligned with basic human and citizen rights, recognizing to all the right to education. This is also the case in the Namibian context. As cited in Hubbard (2009) the pregnancy policy was developed and implemented in accordance with precepts of the Namibian Constitution Article 20(1), which states: "all persons shall have the right to education" (Hubbard, 2009, p 223). Goals of such policies are to carve a pathway to not only ensure that pregnant learners complete their secondary education, but to prevent and to ultimately altogether eliminate the occurrences of unplanned pregnancies. In Namibia, the Ministry of Education policy in question is called *The education sector policy for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy*. The learner-pregnancy policy stipulates that its goal is to "improve the prevention and management of learner-pregnancy in Namibia" and ultimately through the policy implementation decrease the number of learner-pregnancy in the country as well as increase the number of learner-parents successfully completing their high school curriculum (Republic of Namibia,2012) .

The scourge of the learners' pregnancies and the concomitant corollary of negative effects in the society, incited the introduction of management control and eradication policies. It is therefore an obvious necessity that the impact, effectiveness of such a policy be assessed. How well did the introduction and implementation of the learner pregnancy policy respond to the problem? What is, if any, the direct impact of the learner pregnancy policy on learner pregnancy rates, on learners' academic success rates, or school completion rates? Did learner pregnancy rates decline or increase

as a result of the policy? This investigation will use the case study of selected Namibian schools in an attempt to answer these questions.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ministry of education learner pregnancy policy came with the aim to mitigate the afflictions caused by learner pregnancies. It comes naturally to question the effectiveness of the policy in addressing the problem it was meant to tackle. How effective are the pregnancy management and prevention policy in eliminating learners' pregnancies and associated social ills? On the question of learner pregnancy, the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education Mrs. Steenkamp (2021), was indicating that a research report showed 59% of the girls interviewed, age between 15 to 19 years old, had knowledge of a pregnant classmate. The report was also pointing that 79% of early pregnancies could have been avoided (Steenkamp, 2021, p 7). This study intends to explore and understand whether the pregnancy rates in schools declined or escalated after the implementation of the pregnancy policy. This was achieved by mapping out the scope of existing pregnancy policy and interrogating stakeholders understanding of the policy, life skills teachers in particular. By understanding how school management teams implement specific policy goals on the prevention of learners' pregnancy in schools, understanding from the life skills teachers, principals of the selected schools and other community members, whether any major social patterns might have an impact on the escalation or decline of learner-pregnancies. The third leg of this investigation sought to design and formulate pertinent corrective or blueprint measures, based on the observed failure or success of implemented pregnancy policies; exploring with stakeholders, possible social factors relevant to the prevention of learner pregnancies in schools in Namibia.

1.3 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In his foreword of the learner pregnancy policy document (2012), the former deputy minister of education, Dr. David Namwandi remarked back then that despite the efforts to address the issue in a policy as of 2009 the rate of learners' pregnancy remained constantly high (Republic of Namibia, 2012). He reasserted the need for a policy that will make a real difference in the lives of children in Namibia. According to statistics shared by the Executive Director of Education, Mrs Sanet Steenkamp, at a conference held with several other stakeholders in Windhoek, 22 April 2021 on the theme: "Combating Gender-Based Violence and Learner Pregnancies"; the number of learners

falling pregnant in Namibian schools are increasing yearly and reached its peak in 2020. Learner pregnancies in 2019 were 1560 and in 2020 the figure doubled to 3683 in the country (Steenkamp, 2021, p 3-4). There is currently little research on whether the specific policy goal as mentioned above was achieved.

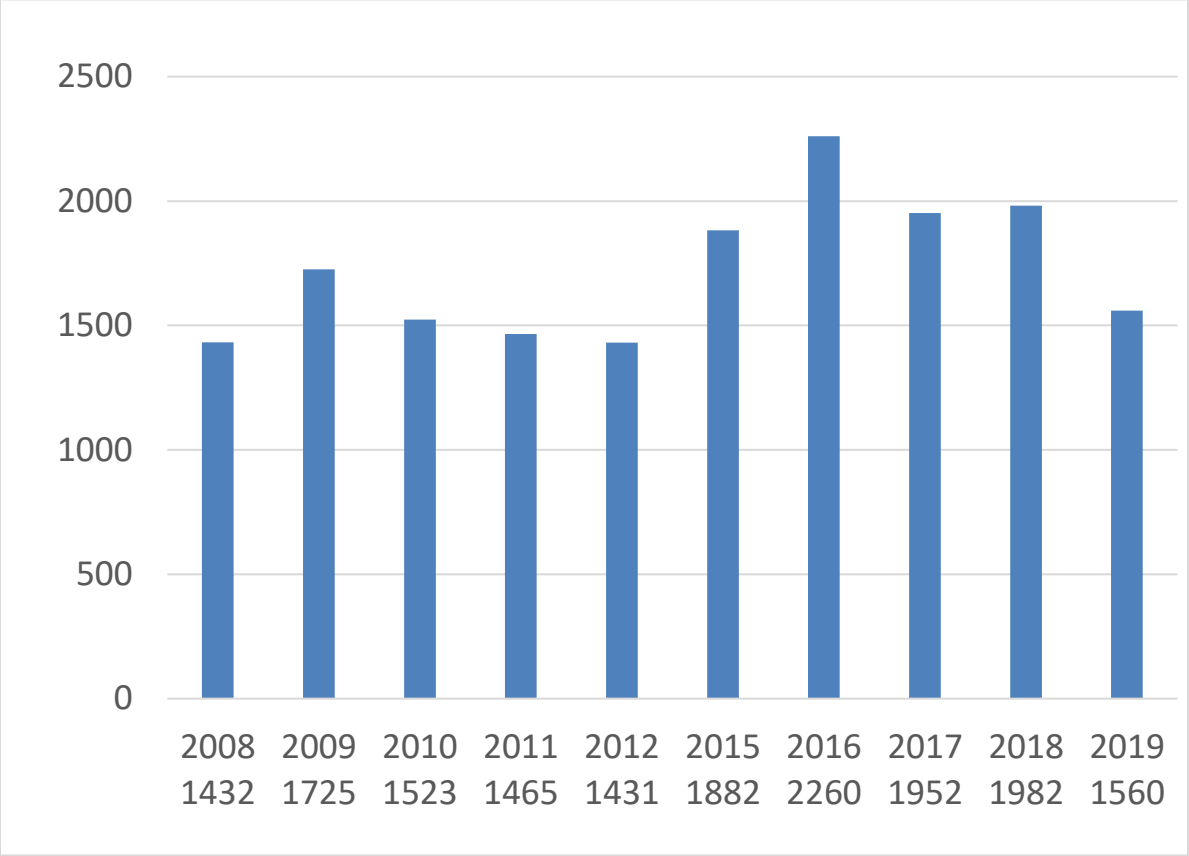
It is therefore of paramount importance for this study to help filling in the gap in the literature after nine years of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. To determine whether there was a decline or an increase of learner pregnancies in the three selected schools of our case study and explore the reasons for the decline or increase of learner pregnancies in these schools. At a personal level, several newspaper articles from 2017 heightened the attention and fed the interest for this research. They gave factual evidence of the alarming increase in pregnancy rate, especially in the northern regions of the country. It was quite a shocking reality for many observers of the socio-cultural and educational scene in the country. The articles reignited curiosity. As the main investigator of this research, serves as a school principal in the region designated as one of the most affected, the intrigue about underlining dynamics responsible for such a poor state of affairs was twice fold.

Is there a link between the rising of the learner-pregnancy figures with the policy implementation or its lack thereof, or is there any other contributing factor that we might not be aware of? As per the words of the deputy minister in the foreword of the learner pregnancy policy document "it is time to implement a new policy that will make a real and sustainable difference to the lives of children in Namibia (Republic of Namibia, 2012, p iii). What are the differences which the learner pregnancy policy makes in the lives of children in Namibia? What theoretical, conceptual constructs allow to seize and explain this dynamic? The rationale and purpose of this study is found at the heart of those questions.

At a professional level, as a teacher, interactions with other colleagues on learner-pregnancy reveal perceptions and attitudes that call for this investigation. Debatable if not outrightly derogatory expressions from teachers, 'schools have now become maternity wards', mostly consecrated in their Afrikaans declination "kraamsale" (maternity wards), put to the central stage the role of education professionals in relation to the learner-pregnancy policy in Namibia.

Figure 1: Pregnancy related dropouts in Namibian schools 2008-2019

(Extract from Steenkamp, 2021)



At the above-mentioned conference, the Executive Director Mrs Steenkamp, explained the following about Figure 1:

- Data does not include learners who are pregnant and in school
- Many principals do not report/give correct data because they are meant to be implementing the new policy
- From the overall trend over the past 10 years, the total amount for 2020 is double, standing at 3683
- What is important to note is that these are learners who reported their pregnancy to the school, which shows a positive trend towards openness and coming forward; (Steenkamp, 2021, p 3-4)

What adjustments should be made in terms of curriculum contents to facilitate the realization of the objectives of the learner pregnancy? Segalo (2020), Matlala, Nolte and Temane (2014b:85), allude to the pedagogy of sex education in public schools, the focus on aspects of life skills and sex education in relation to the rising numbers of learners' pregnancy (Segalo, 2020).

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will shed more light on dynamics that determine movements in the pregnancy rates in school. In its diagnosis and recommendations that will be formulated, the study will benefit all stakeholders of the education sector in Namibia. In terms of curriculum content, the study will positively impact the education system as a whole. Although the size and study case cannot be statistically seen as representative, the study will reveal key findings that lead to better insights into the learner pregnancy challenge. In its attempt to circumscribe notional contents that will ameliorate the pedagogy of sex education, the study will contribute to prevent learner pregnancy. The study will also benefit the school management teams enlightening them on how to better guide and assist Life Skills teacher to carry out sex education programmes and information in a more open, though sensitive way. The results of the study might further influence school management to redesign the strategy on learner pregnancy prevention.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aimed at exploring the effects of learner pregnancy policies on pregnancies among school going children. The aim was to assess the impact of implemented policies on the prevalence of learners' pregnancies and their various social consequences.

The main objectives were to:

1. Map out the scope of the existing pregnancy policy and its understanding by stakeholders, life skills teachers in particular and management teams.
2. How stakeholders implement specific policy goals on the prevention of learners' pregnancy in schools.
3. Determine what additional policies or programmes do schools have in place, assessing thereby the effectiveness or not of their interventions and that of the overall implemented measures. While capturing at once the understanding, experiences and emotional responses of teachers, school management teams and other stakeholders to occurrences of pregnancies among learners, in relation to pregnancy policies.

4. Design or formulate pertinent corrective or blueprint measures respectively, based on the observed failure/success of implemented pregnancy policies; explore with stakeholders, life skills teachers, possible social factors relevant to the prevention of learner pregnancies in schools in Namibia.

1.6 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Key questions to answer by this investigation were whether the learner pregnancy management and prevention policies were effective in eliminating learners' pregnancies and associated ills in the school system? Did learner pregnancies decrease or increase in relation to the implementation of the learner pregnancy management policy in the selected schools in Namibia? What can be perceived if any as the implementation impact of the learner pregnancy prevention and management policy.

1.7 KEY CONCEPTS DEFINITIONS

To achieve such an undertaking the following key concepts essential to the intellectual deconstruction of learner pregnancy need to be precisely understood.

A *Learner* in the context of this research refers to a school going boy or girl receiving an education in a school of the formal education system, as regulated by a tutor authority, usually a Ministry of education or basic education. A learner for the purpose of this research does not designate legally married people, matured adults, or persons of the third age that might still be attending the same school, receiving the same education as younger teenagers or children, for one reason or another. It refers primarily to younger children still under the care and responsibility of a parental figure.

Learner pregnancy defines the increasingly important phenomenon of early pregnancy among female learners as defined above. It describes the unwanted pregnancies among pre-adult learners, female children falling pregnant in the middle of their education journey.

Learner parents are learners who fall pregnant and become biological genitor. Mostly female leaners that also now have to care or for the least look after a baby child.

Learner pregnancy policy refers to the policy by the Ministry of education setting a framework enforcing some principles, establishing measures, rules and guidance to prevent and manage the

occurrence of learner pregnancy in order to mitigate associated negative consequences such as school dropouts among others.

By *Parent* in this work, it is meant an adult bearing the charge and responsibility to care and provide for a learner' needs, while she or he is completing her or his education. Non-adults and teenagers who are biological parents are referred here by learner-parent.

The term *Pregnancy* in this work refers to its medical declination, as the state in which the female body harbours and carries a developing life for a period of usually 9 months for human beings. In its most common and natural way, pregnancy is a condition that occurs after sexual intercourse between a male and a female which are thereby the biological genitors of the growing life that for humans, will eventually result in a child.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation is organised in chapters addressing specific aspects of the overall study in order to make sure that the research questions are answered, thereby meeting its intended objectives. In the *first chapter* of this research report a panoramic view of the study is given in the motivations and rationale that call for it, its significance, in the practical utility it carries its aims and objectives, the definitions of key concepts necessary so that a concise understanding of the topic is achieved, as well the delimitations to clarify the extent to which the investigation will go. In the following *chapter 2*, the academic literature relevant to the topic discussed is reviewed, the theoretical and conceptual tool framework that will guide the analysis is presented. *Chapter 3* details the methodological approach used and presents the tools and instruments utilised. To start with the identification of recurring trends, key concepts and thematic playing a role in answering research questions, the data collected are presented and briefly discussed in *Chapter 4*. The results of the study are discussed in *Chapter 5*, and a synopsis of all the work carried, perspectives and outlook are given in conclusion in *Chapter 6*.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Roughly speaking, the topic of this study could be described as an impact assessment of the implementation of the learner pregnancy and management policy on current happenings of learner pregnancies in the school system, with an illustrative case study of three particular schools in the Erongo region of Namibia. This introductory chapter gave a landscape view of the study,

specifying the reasons that motivate the research and justify its relevance, specifying the approach as well that will guarantee its scientific validity. The whole structure and the entire articulations of this report are also outlined in detail. The next chapter focuses on breaking down the scientific literature that relate to the study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The persistence of learner pregnancy around the world kept it topical to issues of education. The fact that learner pregnancies are ever rising in many countries despite the intensified interventions and prevention policies, put the question central to preoccupations in education policies landscape and to many researchers. As cited in Kapapelo (2019) Pandey (2009) rightfully pointed out that it is worrisome that the African continent has the highest learner pregnancy rates in the world (Kapapelo, 2019, p 18). The reference here is made to children between the ages of 14 and 18 and sometimes even younger. The question remains for the African continent, what should be done to eliminate and prevent pregnancies amongst school going children between 14 and 18 years old? Why are the response policies and interventions initiated so far seem to be ineffective?

At first this chapter will briefly elaborate on the theoretical framework that establishes the notions, theories, postulates and axioms that permit the analysis and deconstruction of any relevant facts or artefacts in relation to learner pregnancy and policy implementation thereof. The chapter will review the existing corpus of research work in education studies relevant to the question of learner pregnancy. Doing so, as the case study topic of this investigation is geographically delimited in Namibia, the review will be anchored around the Namibian Legislative, comparing it to the Regional and Global context. Lastly the review will seek to highlight what the existing research literature on learner pregnancy says about policy implementation in the regional context, and thereby its impact on the affliction that learner pregnancy is.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The lenses through which the understanding of learner pregnancy dynamics will be apprehended are given by the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986). This chosen theoretical framework will enable the researcher to narrate the experiences of stakeholders. To apprehend how life skills teachers, management team members perceive the policy and implement it in order to decrease

pregnancies in their schools. The approach will allow exploration of their experiences, their influences on social factors related to the escalation or decline of learner pregnancy in their schools. In choosing the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986) the researcher can narrate and explore experiences, influences, social factors related to the escalation or decline of learner pregnancy in schools.

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory is concerned with the psychosocial functioning of adults, as it is directly linked to their childhood and other experiences as a human being. In the view of Bandura (1986) the social practices of human beings develop different capabilities, patterns and changes. Some of these social practices are sometimes cultivated and some remain underdeveloped. The social cognitive perspective also acknowledges the fact that the most valuable knowledge of a human being is constructed socially (Bandura, 1986, p 11).

Bandura (1986) explains that people's beliefs develop from their social experiences and interactions and these beliefs at the end become a pattern of behaviours (Bandura, 1986 p 5-6). This means people basically act on their interpretation of a certain matter, such as their views on the phenomenon of what learner pregnancy is, their interpretation of the learner pregnancy policy in place. In order to understand the process, participants' own perspectives of the learner pregnancy policy need to be well seized. This involves the discovery and the exploration of the phenomenon of learner pregnancy, as a manifestation whose perception is reciprocally influenced, updated, understood and lived through fabrics of each actor's or interviewee's own social reality and construct. The case of selected schools will be examined closely, in an attempt to establish or dismiss a significant relation in the fluctuations of pregnancy numbers or rates to policy implementation and behavioural factors which could influence the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy and attainment of its goals thereby.

2.3 NAMIBIAN LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Namibian learner pregnancy policy was developed in line with the Namibian Constitution (2001) Article 20 (1) which consecrates the right to education for all children in Namibia. Pregnant learners in the early 1900s were excluded from schools. After Independence, between 1995 and 1997 a draft policy was circulated to schools. It still prevented school-going girls from attending school when they fall pregnant. It was again strengthened in 1999 when Cabinet approved temporary guidelines that stayed in place for almost ten years. The temporary guidelines were

outlined in a Formal Education Circular 5/2001 stating that girls will be allowed to attend school until the pregnancy becomes visible and after delivery parent-girls will be allowed to return to school, though only "after spending at least a year with the baby" (Hubbard, 2009, p 228).

It was only in 2008 after the complaints from parents, criticisms from different social movement groups such as the Forum for African Woman Educationalists in Namibia (FAWENA) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), that petitioned against the discrimination of pregnant girls in schools that the Ministry of Education with the Legal Assistance Centre was tasked to work on a new policy (Hubbard, 2009, p 232). It became a critical matter for Namibia to embark on a new pregnancy policy for learners due to evolving attitudes, cultural perceptions and beliefs in the society.

The Ministry of Education was tasked to develop a new learner pregnancy policy as from 2009. This policy was only implemented in 2012. This new policy advocates six guiding principles and goals:

- The right to education for all children
- The prevention of learner pregnancies
- The provision of relevant information on reproductive health matters in schools
- The respect of the right to freedom of choice as well as the dignity of the individual
- The support to the learner-parent to complete education while taking into account the welfare of the new-born child
- The respect for culture and family values (Republic of Namibia, 2012, p 3).

In order to attain the guiding principles for prevention and management of learner pregnancy in Namibia, the Education Sector Policy makes provision for young pregnant learners to continue with their school attendance until four weeks before delivery. There is a requirement to provide a medical certificate that the pregnant learner is medically fit to attend school. The learner pregnancy policy also requires from the parents of the pregnant learner to provide satisfactory proof that the learner parent and the new-born infant are healthy, that the infant is under good care before the learner parent can return to school. The school on the other hand is obligated to provide education and psychosocial support for the pregnant learner or parent learner for the time missed

at school by availing for example learning material, arranged relaxed attendance requirements, as well as providing health and nutritional support (Fredman et al., 2018, p 8).

It is important to highlight that the Namibian Education Sector Policy for prevention and management of learner pregnancy does not make provision for access to sexual and reproductive health services before pregnancy. Meaning there is no requirement to allow learners the access to condoms, the use of contraceptives, provision for open talks about sexual abstinence or any other protecting mechanisms against unwanted pregnancy.

2.4 GLOBAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

According to Jamal (2014) in 1920-1960 in the United States, pregnant learners were expelled by the school office as soon as the pregnancy became known or visible. In most cases, the teen mothers will drop out of school and only a few pregnant learners from low socio-economic and middle-class families will further their studies at home with the help of a teacher (Jamal, 2014, p 28).

After the civil rights movement in the early 1970's the United States Education Department with Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 helped to "protect the education rights of pregnant learners and parenting teens". With the Act in place, more pregnant learners were allowed to attend school, although they were placed in separate classes. One of the guiding principles in Title IX was to ensure that pregnant learners have an equal right to education, that there should be no discrimination against learners based on pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or any other related condition (Jamal, 2014, p 32). In the view of Jamal (2014) after the implementation of Title IX, the pregnancy rates in the United States decline slowly in different states, although the United States continued to have the highest rate of learner pregnancies (ages 15-19) amongst the developing nations (Jamal, 2014, p 34).

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) statistics reveal that more than 360 000 teenage girls (ages 15-19) give birth every year (Wallace, 2016, p 11). It is most likely that some of the pregnant girls drop out of school. In Wallace study, only 40% of the pregnant learners in the United States completed high school (Wallace, 2016, p 11).

With the implementation of Title IX and the education regulations of 1972 in the United States discriminations against learners based on pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery from

any pregnancy related condition were forbidden. Schools were required to allow pregnant learners absence from school as long as it was deemed necessary by a medical practitioner. The title catered for the absence induced by pregnancy related conditions, doctors' follow-up appointments, labour, delivery and recovery. Public schools were discouraged to make arrangements for pregnant learners that could be perceived as exclusive, though, when necessary, the school could make adjustments that are reasonable and responsive to the pregnant learner or parent learner school programme. The regulations further allowed separate education programmes to be offered to pregnant learners, though they needed to be of the same standard as the schooling system for non-pregnant learners.

2.5 REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

According to SADC Gender protocol, the high learner pregnancies in the SADC region is the main reason of female dropout from schools. One-third of the girls by the age of 16 becomes pregnant. Lawmakers in the SADC region started to introduce policies to address the problem of learner pregnancies and the dropout of girls from schools at an early age (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2015, p 124). There was a trend of general discrimination against pregnant learners in schools. Learners were immediately expelled from schools when they fall pregnant. Pregnant girls were not allowed to attend schools and could only return to school one or two years after (Davids & Waghid, 2013, p 140). Pressure to embark on a different approach, to implement a new policy for pregnant learners came from several social groups and human rights activists, international and regional treaties which countries were part of required to strengthen and protect pregnant learners' access to basic education (Veriava, et al, 2017, p 163 & 165).

As far as South Africa is concerned, Morifi (2018) points that the country was challenged with the ever-increasing rates of learner pregnancies. A General Household Survey (2013:30) revealed that in the Limpopo Province alone, 13 941 learners fell pregnant in 2013 (Morifi, 2018, p 2). In South Africa the new policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancies in schools was established on the goals in the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, section 29(1) (a) (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p 1257) as well as the Millennium Development Goals which both address the right to education and advocate gender equality (Christie, 2010, p 19). One of the several goals of the South African learner pregnancy policy is to reduce the incidences of learner pregnancies through the provision of quality comprehensive sexual education in school. It also

advocates the right of girls to education, so that they are not denied the opportunity of attending school while pregnant (Republic of South Africa, 2018, p 9).

Similarly, to most Sub-Saharan African countries there was a need to address the high rates of learner pregnancies in Botswana. Botswana became independent in the late 1960s. According to Meekers and Ahmed (1999), 7% of girls fell pregnant before the age of 15 years and 54.3% became sexually active and pregnant between the age of 15 and 17 years old. Data obtained in 1993 revealed that 60% of secondary school girls fall pregnant and leave school. Most of these girl learners never return to school, because school policies made it very difficult for them to return. For example, the "Ministry of Education's policy before and several years after Independence prohibited pregnant learners to attend school" (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999, p 199). It was expected of pregnant learners to withdraw from school immediately (expulsion) with no prospect to return to school. In 1995, a government circular standardised the re-entry procedures for pregnant learners in Botswana. The policy guidelines stipulated that pregnant learners should withdraw from school and could be re-admitted after 12 months. It also dictated restrictive requirements for examinations, such as pregnant learners may not write examinations while pregnant or within six months of delivery. The re-entry to school or the writing of examinations was also subjected to the approval from the Minister of Education (Birungi et al, 2015, p 6). The new policy guidelines for pregnant learners still made it very difficult for learner-parents to return to school because of stringent requirements, besides aggravating facts as the need for the learner-parents to assume responsibility for their new-born child. Most of them will opt to look for a job to provide for the daily needs of the child, while the child lives with the grandmothers or relatives (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999, p 197).

From a regional standpoint, all African countries that adopted Agenda 2063 and became part of the African Union (AU) in 2013 subscribed to a perspective of building Africa's "human capital" (Martinez & Odhiambo, 2018, p 5). As part of the building blocks, sustainable changes through policies were introduced. Elimination of gender disparities in education, no child left behind inclusive and quality education for all, to mention a few. Amidst these policies, most African governments, including Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi and Senegal amongst other countries belonging to the AU have set goals to end child marriage, introduce comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health education, address the high rate of learner pregnancies, compiled

re-entry and continuation policies that can enable pregnant school going girls to resume their education during pregnancy and after childbirth. Research reveals that despite tremendous efforts of governments in conjunction with their respective education department, the implementation and the adherence vary across the African countries.

In most of these African countries the implementation of the policies falls short and the monitoring of pregnant learners as well as the re-entry to education remain a massive obstacle. In some countries, the learner pregnancy re-entry policy is a long and complex process. In Senegal, for re-entry parent learners require a medical certification, in Botswana re-entry to a different school is allowed (Martinez & Odhiambo, 2018, p 6-11). The strenuous requirements for re-entry in schools as well as the ability to catch up with learning, financial difficulties, lack of support and stigmatisation contribute to the unwillingness of parent learners to return to school.

2.6 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Comparing learner pregnancy management historical perspectives between the United States, Namibia, South Africa and Botswana it is noticeable that the USA was one of the forerunners in addressing the increasing pregnancies and the discrimination against pregnant learners in the 1980s already. Nevertheless, the study of Wallace revealed that until recently, the implementation of the policy for learner pregnancy is still different in each school and every state (Wallace, 2016, p 11).

Morifi (2018) focused on views of role players in the implementation of the pregnancy policy in selected schools in the Limpopo Province. His study revealed a lack of knowledge about the pregnancy policy from all the stakeholders, factor contributing to many misinterpretations (Morifi, 2018, p 171). Segalo's (2020) showed that the learner pregnancy policy is still "perceived with mixed feelings" amongst teachers in secondary schools. The study of secondary schools in the Lejweleputswa district of the Free State Province revealed that teachers still have negative attitudes towards learner pregnancies, and they believe as teachers they do not have the necessary skills to manage and deal with learner pregnancy problems at school (Segalo, 2020, p 7). In general terms most teachers still today see pregnant learners as a burden, they feel it is not their core role or problem to handle. Teachers are of the opinion that they are there to complete a subject curriculum and do not have the necessary training to deal with pregnant learners and classrooms should not be turned into maternity wards (Segalo, 2020, p 6). Evidence from the literature show that it is the attitudes of teachers, peers, community members as well as the lack of knowledge concerning the

learner pregnancy policy that discourage pregnant learners to remain in school. A study in the Limpopo Province revealed that the newly implemented learner pregnancy policy is blamed for being too lenient, that it actually encourages learners to become pregnant which leads to moral decay in the society. Teachers, community members and education officials are still of the opinion that the learner pregnancy policy should be sterner and more punitive, in order to discourage learner pregnancies in schools (Mutshaeni et al., 2015, p 101). In layman's terms the new policy is too easy for learners, they see pregnancy as something to rejoice about. There is no more sense of immoral behaviour and shamefulness amongst learners who fall pregnant.

A fairly recent Namibian newspaper article of a study on Pregnancy Policy and Implications for Namibian schools by Nande & Namupala-Shikoha (2019) found that despite the implementation in Namibia of the learner pregnancy prevention and management policy, 127 school going female learners fall pregnant daily in Namibia. The study highlights the fact that communities are of the opinion that the policy rather encourages girls in school to fall pregnant instead of discouraging them. This is ascribed to the fact that schoolgirls are allowed to attend school even when the pregnancy is visible until four weeks before the delivery date. Educators raised their concerns that the pregnant girls do not really perform satisfactorily in their studies, because of reasons such as continuous absenteeism, tiredness in classrooms, peer victimisation, low levels of parental involvement as well as the financial support for learner mothers from the Forum for African Women Educationalists Namibia (FAWENA) amongst other reasons (Nande & Namupala-Shikoha, 2019, p 1-2). The study finds that although the policy was "developed and implemented with good intentions" it left room for exploitation by the pregnant girls who continue to perform extremely below satisfactory levels of academic achievement while pregnant. Therefore, the study recommends that the policy should be revised and take in consideration the consequences pregnancy can have on the overall academic performance and school attendance of the pregnant learner (Nande & Namupala-Shikoha, 2019, p 2-3).

2.7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In a comparative study done of the US, UK and Namibia about learner pregnancy in schools Fredman et al., (2018) found that the education sector plays a key role in the prevention of learner pregnancies also called early unintended pregnancies, as well as in the achievement of the goal of the right to education for these pregnant learners and parent learners (Fredman et al, 2018, p 13).

The report reveals that if girls are exposed to education, it prevents early child marriage and learner pregnancy rates decrease, because in most instances the learner has a vision and is interested in achieving this vision. Girls perceive receiving education as empowerment, therefore, girls who started a formal education at an early age have a better chance not to fall prey of early unintended pregnancy. The evidence collected for the report indicate that if the girl is educated the girl is not keen for early child marriage. One of the reasons amongst several others why girls accept early child marriage is the lack of access to education. In the regional context of Africa most of the girls live in extreme poverty and therefore opt to rather get married early and depend on their husbands (Fredman et al, 2018, p 13).

Findings revealed further that the increase in girls' access to education is linked to a drastic decrease in young unintended pregnancies. It was therefore deemed suitable for countries across the globe to implement learner pregnancy re-entry policies. Re-entry policies were implemented in USA, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia. These policies are in place, though the Question remains whether these policies are implemented effectively, and achieve the goals set to decrease learner pregnancies, as well as the prevention of pregnant learners drop out from the primary or secondary curriculum. In certain countries the re-entry policies are punitive and highly conditional, which make it extremely difficult for parent learners to return to formal schooling.

In a study on experiences of learners regarding the teenage pregnancy prevention programmes in Namibia, Kavango West region the findings revealed an interesting factor regarding the implementation of the learner's pregnancy policy. The implementation of the learner pregnancy policy contributed to the increase of learner pregnancies and school dropout. The participants in the study believe that the cultural credence and difficulties teachers experience themselves contribute to the struggle to implement the policy and the prevention programmes. Reasons such as most "teachers are not comfortable to talk about sexual matters due to cultural beliefs and attitudes of parents" (Kapapelo, 2019, p 107). The study concluded that the effective provision and implementation of comprehensive sexual programmes in schools can definitely prevent girls from falling pregnant and secondly dropping out of school if an unintended pregnancy occurs (Fredman et al, 2018, p 16).

The school based comprehensive sexuality education programmes are effective in the sense that learners are taught to understand the development of their bodies and are better equipped to make

informed decisions when getting to decide on safe sex and the use of contraceptives. School-based programmes should include interventions such as promotion of gender equality, roles and relationships, engagement of boys and girls to assess gender norms and behaviour in schools. The One Man Can (OMC) campaign, launched by the Sonke Gender Justice Network study revealed that including boys in discussion regarding sex and pregnancy leads to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse as well as the clear understanding of consent in a sexual relationship (Fredman et al, 2018, p 16).

2.8 SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER PREGNANCY

Learner pregnancy is not merely a reproductive action and the discovering of a young women's body, even though it is a deeply rooted social phenomenon. Learners' attitudes and actions are mostly shaped by the environment in which they grow up, socialise and the relationships they build with people around them. Panday et al (2009) as cited in Jewkes et al., (2009) explain some social factors that contribute to early pregnancy amongst school going female learners including economic difficulties at home and poor school performance. Learners growing up under extreme poverty conditions are tempted to make trade-offs between health and economic security. Learners lacking parental support when left home to take care of other siblings are exposed to relationships to older men in the society making fragile decisions about sex due to unequal power leading to unprotected and coerced sex. Learners are exposed to peer pressure, social media with pornographic material, drug, and alcohol abuse in the society. The lack of knowledge and opportunities to discuss sexuality and the use of safe sex and contraceptives create a pitfall sucking in learners to fall prey to early pregnancy (Jewkes et al., 2009, p 14). Other social factors that contribute to learner pregnancy are social grants from the government. In a study done by Kanku and Mash (2010) in a poor socio-economic community it has come to attention that child support grants were seen as the means of increasing the household income and an incentive for learner mothers who are faced with unemployment and limited opportunities to complete their education (Kanku and Mash, 2010, p 566).

According to Luker (2006) as cited in Morifi (2018) poverty is one of the major contributing factors for learner pregnancies (Morifi, 2018, p 60). Most other social factors develop as artefacts of poverty. Learners in rural areas have to live without parents, the later having to move to the cities to get a job. Child-headed households, single parent households are a well-known in poor

rural African societies. They are feeding social factors, and a breeding ground for societal afflictions such as learner pregnancy. Conditions of child-headed households are misused by "uncles" and/or "sugar daddies" eager to "assist" these adolescent girls with money to buy food for their siblings when they are in fact preyed and sexually abused in return. These girls' learners are most likely engaged in unprotected sex and face also the danger of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/Aids.

Implementing workable programmes that make a difference in preparing male and female learners for the prevention of pregnancy as early as from 10 years old, is therefore a vital move that schools ought to consider. Doing so will require to address the above-mentioned social factors for what they are. Social causes of learner pregnancy and reasons of the inability to return to school to complete the education curriculum.

2.9 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research literature establishes that challenges that affect the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy and its effectiveness thereof, stem from a wide range of reasons owing to the inadequacy of the policy provisions like in the case of barriers to re-entry, or the absence of comprehensive sexual education for both male and female learners, cultural biases and lack of training of stakeholders, social factors such as poverty and its corollary of ills.

These exhibits from the literature will constitute the base to analyse and compare similar behavioural or social factors and interrogate any other views emerging from the selected schools that could justify or explain the escalation or decrease of learner pregnancies. To achieve this goal, there is a need for a clear path and a meticulous approach to the design and methods to be used to carry such an inquiry.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The guiding compass that sees the conception and deployment of instruments and analytical tools to deconstruct the phenomenon of learner pregnancy in the context of the existing learner pregnancy policy is rooted in the theoretical framework of Bandura social cognitive theory. We describe below the series of actions undertaken to harvest data, process it to extract meaningful information and analyse the information under the light of chosen concepts.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND DESIGN

The researcher embarked to understand the views of the participants and try to make sense and meaning of what they explain in how they perceive the problem at hand. Their understanding of the learner pregnancy policy, its implementation, how do they contribute to the goal of decreasing the learner pregnancies in their schools? Could this goal be achieved? The study uses the interpretive paradigm, since the researcher's intent to explore the human experiences of the participants in their social context (ontology). The interpretive research paradigm understands the social reality of the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy within the social setting and interpret the reality through sense making (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p 19). Perceptions of a pregnancy when that of learner, both explicit and un-assumed reactions and attitudes towards it, all form part of a contextual social reality that a researcher will have to decode and interpret from the flux of information she will generate.

The method is qualitative. It is important that "the researcher has a clear recognisable focus and specifiable goals" according to Hanel (1993, p 41) as cited in Cropley (2019, p 68). The goals and focus referred to the "object of the study" (Cropley, 2019, p 68) in formal qualitative research where the researcher seeks "theoretical insight" for a specific behavioural phenomenon (Cropley, 2019, p 68).

This study sought to go beyond the description of the setting. To achieve that, a semi-structured interview is used to gather data on interviewees' experiences on how learner pregnancy responds to policy implementation in their school. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask the main questions in the similar wording, which made it easier to compare the data from the different participants (Kielmann et al, 2012, p 28). The main purpose for the semi-structured interview schedule was to ensure that the researcher does not omit some questions in particular interviews. The attached semi-structured interview schedule (annexure 7) features guided interview questions that address aims, objectives as well as the research questions of the study. The semi-structured interview schedule lent itself to less-structured follow up questions and probes to generate more information.

The participants partnered with the researcher in seeking to understand the social influences which might have a role to play in causing the declining or escalation of learner pregnancies in their schools. A fundamental task of the researcher was to gain insight in the construction or reality emerging, to make sense of the cultural and social behaviours, experiences and interpretations of participants, acquired in working or interacting with pregnant learners at their schools.

The case study allowed a small-scale illustration of the global objectives of the research. The paradigm design and approach is the same as described above. The case study offered the advantage that all practical questions of the interviews relative to learner pregnancy could be answered based on the school' experience and observed facts.

3.3 RESEARCH SAMPLING

Sampling is important as it gives rigour and validity to qualitative research (Cropley, 2019, p 72). This study will include three schools in a specific education circuit in Namibia. There are six secondary schools in the specific education circuit which is located close to the researcher. Purposive sampling on professional and self-judgement was applied in selecting the three schools. The goal is to provide the researcher with the most relevant information for the study. It is also the most viable technique to use due to the limited financial and material resources available as well as the time constraints to conduct and obtain authentic and reliable information for the study (Kandel, 2020, p 37-46). The researcher selected one High school from each of the three townships in the vicinity to form the sample. The typical case sampling will allow an outsider to get an

understanding of how learner pregnancies in schools influence and is influenced by the policy implementation. In developing a typical case sample the researcher can liaise closely with life skills teacher and management members to provide an illustration of what is "typical" to the readers of the research report who might be unfamiliar with the subject matter (Saunders et al, 2003, p 240). The qualitative nature of the study enabled more flexible sampling considerations that do not deter the pertinence of the findings. The life skills teachers were chosen, because they are the ones putting the learner pregnancy policy into practice on the ground. The school management teams of the schools are in charge of overseeing the policy's implementation and driving the execution of specific standards pertaining to the procedure.

3.4 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the research procedure, it was paramount to identify and contact selected participants. Before the data collection process begins it was of utmost importance to approach and invite selected individuals to participate in the research project. The purpose and aim of the study were written on the information sheet attached to their consent forms, it was also discussed with potential participants, and their written consent to participate voluntarily in the research project was obtained. Issues surrounding the consent for recorded interviews were discussed and ironed out with the participants, their approval to electronically record the semi-structured interviews was obtained. For the duration of the study ethical principles guiding information privacy were adhered to. Data was collected and treated anonymously. It is important to highlight the fact that there were no financial implications for participants as well as the researcher (Dudovskiy, 2018, p 4).

Ethical clearance from the Witwatersrand University Ethical Clearance Committee was sought and obtained before proceeding with the research. Data was recorded and managed in accordance with research best practices, FAIR (Findable Accessible Interoperable and Reusable) principles, the University of Witwatersrand ethical guidelines and any specific verbal non-disclosure agreement with participants.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data for this study was collected by using a semi-structured interview process. As it is the most suitable method to apply since the researcher administered some general questions aiming at a

deep exploration of the interviewees thoughts and experience in order to not only gather the key information relevant to the research questions but gain access to the respondent's personal perspectives. Specific questions about awareness, implementation and effectiveness of pregnancy management and prevention measures, helped the participants to stick to the issues of learner pregnancy rates in their schools (Cropley, 2019, p 97).

During the interview process the researcher upheld strictly the Covid19 regulations. The researcher had only one participant per interview session. All participants had to sanitize their hands, maintain social distancing and wear masks at all times.

With semi-structured interviews it is always better to electronically record and write down brief notes of the responses. Electronic recording is extremely valuable, as the researcher could always access the richness of the responses after the interviews (Cropley, 2019, p 97). This data collection method was very helpful when transcribing the electronic recordings, analysing and identifying follow-up sessions with the participants where needed.

The data collection process included transcribing the electronic recordings of each consenting participant (see appendix 5 and 6 attached), using the smooth verbatim Jeffersonian transcription style. The transcripts include filler words, interjections, stutters, original content with no paraphrasing or grammar corrections. Writing the transcript in literary style might facilitate authenticity and communicating the meaning of the semi-structured interviews to the readers (Kvale, 2012, p 98). Participants had the choice of language between English and Afrikaans, the two most widely spoken languages in the region. The investigator is more than fluent in both languages and translated and transcribed Afrikaans expressions when they occurred during the semi-structured interview process as correctly as possible

A thematic analysis was part of the analysing process. The approach is very reachable and lithe to new qualitative researchers. It allows the qualitative researcher to make use of steps mechanisms such as coding, transcription of participants' recordings and subsequent essential inferences. It permits during and after the transcription process the identification of patterns or themes that emerge as well as the selection of contents that is most relevant to the research questions. The six steps of thematic analysis of Braun and Clark (2006) were used to get "deeper

insights into the data during the familiarisation" process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p 60-69). The six steps include (a) Familiarisation which involves reading and re-reading as well as listening to electronic recordings of the data. (b) Generating codes which demonstrate features linked to the research questions. (c) Constructing codes which is an active process that involves looking at the coded data and identifying areas of similarities and overlaps within the codes. (d) Reviewing the themes, important step for quality checking, questions such as does the theme tells me useful information about my data and research questions. (e) Defining my themes by clearly summarizing in few sentences. (f) Producing the research report, this includes writing up a descriptive report that makes and argument and answers the research questions.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

This analysis paid a careful attention to issues and considerations ensuring the validity of the research findings.

- *Credibility*: Data was accurately described, interpreted and explained as truthful and precise, in order to be useful to other researchers (Cropley, 2019, p 114-115). The study involved three schools, their management teams, life skills teachers and other stakeholders, when necessary, to get prevailing learner pregnancy rates and explore the social factors that influenced policy implementation to ensure original views, data and correct interpretation (Korstjens & Mosser, 2018, p 121).
- *Transferability:* The researcher ensured that the findings of the research *"make* sense" to the other researchers (Cropley, 2019, p 115). The study is rooted in a theoretical framework and the researcher facilitated a thick description of data to ensure transferability (Korstjens & Mosser, 2018, p 121).
- *Dependability:* The study is dependable since all research steps and information records were kept throughout the research study (Korstjens & Mosser, 2018, p 121).
- *Confirmability:* The final interpretations and data was shared with the participants, so that they have the opportunity to clarify and verify that their intentions were correctly interpreted, to correct any errors and or provide additional information if needed. This process ensured that data and interpretations of the findings derived from the participants in the semi-structured interview (Korstjens & Mosser, 2018, p 121).

3.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study in its structure is qualitative. The ambition is to excerpt holistic findings about learner pregnancy in Namibia, and the factors influencing the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of the learner pregnancy management policy, the interactions are demarcated in a specific geographical area the Walvis Bay circuit in the Erongo Region of Namibia and will be limited to three schools. The ambition was to assess the effectiveness of the learner pregnancy prevention and management policy in relation to the observed pregnancies in schools. The extent to which the investigation goes is the perimeter of influence of the pregnancy policy, on the to-be-assessed volume of learner pregnancies that are happening in schools after its introduction. Although the study aimed at excerpting some wholistic findings about learner pregnancy, the investigation did not set out to study exhaustively learner pregnancy as a standalone problem. The nuance here is that the latter case would involve a much more extensive study, requiring a costly probe covering anthropological, cultural, social and societal elements forming the school system, and the ecosystems at large, in which learners, teachers, parents and education stakeholders in general deploy themselves on a daily basis.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the impact of the learner prevention and management policy on the pregnancy rate in three Secondary schools in the Erongo region in Namibia, via case studies. It was limited to examine fluctuations of learner pregnancy rate in relation to the implementation of the learner pregnancy policy. The study did not do a full assessment of the implementation level of the policy, neither an autonomous analysis of its adequacy to respond to the problem at hand.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The drive of this case study was to investigate the impact of the learner pregnancy policy implementation on pregnancies among school going children. The researcher anticipated that the outcome would reveal structuring dynamics of learner pregnancy and benefit all the stakeholders of education in Namibia understanding fluctuations of pregnancy rates in the selected schools. It was envisaged that the data from this case study capture the understanding, experiences and emotional responses of teachers, school management teams to occurrences of pregnancies among learners, in relation to the implementation of learner pregnancy prevention and management

policy. Having provided a thorough description of the methodological doings of this research, we present and discuss in the next chapter the data that was collected.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an exposing light was put on the canvas of research design and methodology utilized for this investigation. The researcher explained the interpretive paradigm and qualitative method which were appropriately chosen for this study. In seeking answers, the researcher followed a specific goal and sought theoretical insight for specific phenomenon referred to by Cropley (2019) as "object of the study" (Cropley,2019, p 68). This chapter will present and discuss the information extracted from the interviews.

The main objectives of the study were to:

(a) Map out the scope of the existing pregnancy policy and its understanding by stakeholders, life skills teachers in particular and management teams.
(b) How stakeholders implement specific policy goals on the prevention of learners' pregnancy in schools.
(c) Determine what additional policies or programmes do schools have in place, assessing thereby the effectiveness or not of their interventions and that of the overall implemented measures. While capturing at once the understanding, experiences and emotional responses of teachers, school management teams and other stakeholders to occurrences of pregnancies among learners, in relation to pregnancy policies.
(d) Design or formulate pertinent corrective or blueprint measures respectively, based on the observed failure/success of implemented pregnancy policies; explore with stakeholders, life skills teachers, possible social factors relevant to the prevention of learner pregnancies in schools in Namibia.

The researcher conducted personal one-on-one semi-structured interviews, the process was recorded, recordings transferred to the researcher's computer and each of the interviews was listened to and transcribed by the researcher. The transcripts were printed, and the researcher tirelessly invested time and efforts to analyse the themes derived from the interview transcripts.

This personal engagement with the data provided the researcher in-depth insight of all the interview participants understanding, perspectives, feelings and explanations, all contributing positively to the analysing process.

In embarking on presenting and discussing data, the researcher will elaborate and address the key research questions such as whether the learner pregnancy management and prevention policy in Namibia is effective in eliminating learner pregnancy and associated corollaries? Additionally, elaborate on whether after the implementation of the learner management and prevention policy in 2012 the pregnancy rate decreased as it was one of the two major goals of implementing the policy in Namibian schools. The presentation here is in the form of themes linked to the interview questions, and the sub themes that emerged from interviewees' data collected. The data presentation will include direct quotes, to give power of speech and meaning to the feelings and experiences of the interview participants on their views.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The semi-structured interview questions yielded four primary themes which were used to categorize the data analysis (see figure 2 below):

Figure 2: Emerging themes from semi-structured interviews and data analysis

Theme 1 Scope of Policies (Awareness amongst teachers, learners and parents)	•Teacher awareness •Learner awareness •Parental/community awareness
Theme 2 Additional support programmes and policies	•Internal policy •Learner awareness •Programmes •Pregnancy trend 3-5 years after implementation •Opinions of interviewees on learner pregnancy •Factors / challenges for the implementation
Theme 3 Corrective measures to reduce learner pregnancies	•Reasons for decline or increase of pregnancies •Possible adjustment measures to reduce learner pregnancies suggested by interview participants •What are the challenges and recommendations for changes in the learner pregnancy policy?
Theme 4 Relevant social factors playing a role in learner pregnancies	• Poverty, single parent households, learner households, sugar daddy's, transactional sex, peer group pressure, alcohol and drugs

4.2.1 Theme 1 - Scope of Policies (Awareness amongst teachers, learners and parental/community members)

(a) *Teacher awareness*

All six of the respondents confirm that teachers in general are aware of the pregnancy policy. One respondent confirmed that he knows about the policy and was also part of the implementation process. Respondent 1 says "I *am aware when it was drafted and implemented". Respondent 2 says "yes, I am aware, we use various platforms to discuss the policy, it is mostly done by the life skill teacher during lessons". Further respondent 6 replied: "yes, I am aware of the education pregnancy policy a document that each life skills teacher receives at workshops held often.*

Notable is the fact that all the respondents are aware of the learner pregnancy policy, though nobody made reference to any of the content. All the respondents confirmed the awareness of the policy though the extent of the knowledge regarding the content of the learner pregnancy policy is debatable.

(b) *Learner awareness*

Only 2 respondents asserted that all the learners in the secondary schools are made aware of the learner pregnancy policy (Respondent 1 and 5). The other respondents stated that learners are partially made aware of the learner pregnancy policy. Respondent 1 further explained his stance to say that broadly learners are aware of the learner pregnancy policy though "…*when it comes to dealing with the policy it is mostly learners that are in the situation of pregnancy or the Grade 11 learners that are being educated regarding the policy itself i.e., what it stands for its goals and aims…the rest of the groups only have a broad knowledge regarding the policy*".

Respondent 3, 4 and 6 indicated that they discuss the policy in detail with mostly the Grade 11 and 12's in the school, though other grades are just partially aware of the learner pregnancy policy for example respondent 6 says "...*it is not made publicly aware to the whole school, but it is discussed especially with Grade 11 and 12 and it is up for discussion in the class*". Respondent 3 says "*Grade 11 and 12 they are made aware, as they are prone*

to be more sexually active if we take into consideration all the grades, they are the seniors and are made aware during life skills lessons".

The above responses from the respondents alluded to a gap of communicating about measures, provisions of the policy and what the policy expects. There is a clear indication that the content of the policy is not well known to not known at all by learners in grades 8 to 10.

(c) *Parental/community awareness*

All six respondents indicated that parents and teachers in general are made aware in meetings such as staff meetings, and mostly once a year parents are generally informed about the pregnancy policy. During the meetings the policy is just mentioned in general, and key points such as what should be the procedure if a learner falls pregnant are presented. Respondent 6 explained as follows: "…*the policy is mentioned, and parents are advised it is there, but the content is not discussed*". The policy will only be discussed with the parent when the school becomes aware that the learner is pregnant. Respondent 1 says: "*when it comes to the parents the only time, we inform the parent is when the learner is pregnant then the life skills teacher and management will discuss the policy with the parents, maybe in the future we should try something else, but it is always difficult to explain such policies in a mass meeting*".

In searching for answer whether the pregnancy policy achieved its goals to improve the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in Namibia with the ultimate aim to decrease the number of learner's pregnancies in the schools the researcher wants to understand how the teachers, learners and parents understand the pregnancy policy and how they implement the specific goal to decrease learner pregnancies in their schools? With the above-mentioned responses from the six (6) participants it is evident that there is a lack of knowledge about the content of the policy. None of the participants could clearly describe actions, means of awareness campaigns, divulgation campaigns to make the learners, teachers and parents aware of the pregnancy policy to prevent learner pregnancy with the ultimate effect of decreasing learner pregnancies in schools. There is an evident lack of knowledge of the content of the policy, and more of its self-appropriation by teachers as major stakeholders in the education landscape. The respondents in the three

different schools revealed through their responses that they focus more on the secondary part of the goal such as management of learner pregnancies when the learners are already pregnant assisting the learners with the procedures to follow. This situation impedes the overarching process of implementation of the policy. As emphasis is put on managing pregnancies that have already occurred, the numbers of pregnant learners will not decrease. Even in the eventuality where the preventative dispositions advocated are adequate and pertinent to remediate to the problem of learner pregnancy, the goal of decreasing learner pregnancies is not addressed generally in the participating schools. There is at best some awareness of the existence of the policy, but a partial and mediocre knowledge of its content.

4.2.2 Theme 2 - Additional support programmes and policies to facilitate the learner pregnancy policy implementation

(a) *Internal policy*

All six participants confirmed that they do not have an internal policy on prevention and management of learner pregnancies. They are all guided by the National Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy. Respondent 1 replied as follows: *"No we don't have an internal pregnancy policy, what we normally do is use the National policy to guide us. It is however one thing that I would recommend that we develop an internal policy along with the life skills teacher".*

(b) *Learner awareness*

Since there is no internal policy available as confirmed by all six participants for instance, respondent 1 stated "*no we do not have at this point of time an internal policy*. It is *something we are thinking of, but we have not yet started with it*". Similarly, respondent 2 stated "*no, we don't have an internal policy yet*", therefore teachers and learners in the school cannot be aware of something that does not exist. There is an acknowledgement by some teacher respondents that an internal policy needs to be developed which can help the school and teachers in guiding and ensuring the national policy goals of prevention and management of learner pregnancy are effectively and efficiently addressed in the schools.

(c) *Programmes*

One out of six interview participants indicated that there are continuous programmes at their school. These programmes refer to, are programmes that the Ministry of Education introduced to assist with life skills teaching in Namibian schools. The programmes are Window of Hope for primary schools and My Future My Choice for Secondary schools. The interview respondent 3 said *"the programmes we are implementing in our school is from Grade 4 -12"* lessons are provided on their daily school timetable. Respondent 3 further added*, "Grade 4-7 we have Window of Hope and My Future my Choice Grade 8-12".* Respondent 3 highlighted the fact that during these lessons the teacher responsible discuss learner pregnancy as well as abstinence. She is of the opinion that the school can invite external speaker to talk with the boys and girls regarding prevention of learner pregnancy and abstinence. Respondent 5 also remarked that at their school they have My Future my Choice "*at the beginning of the year with the Grade 8 learners*". It is only for a week either during life skills lessons, or after school and the life skills teacher discusses learner pregnancies, sexual activities and sexual harassment with the Grade 8 learners.

The quests for answers to determine what additional policies or programmes do schools have in place, looking at the effectiveness of those, or any other interventions that the school might have to help learners to gain knowledge and strive to prevent pregnancies during school years seems like searching for a "needle in the hayfield". Respondents' feedback confirmed and highlighted that the programmes are not implemented effectively in schools to assist the learners to understand reasons why it is not good to fall pregnant during school going years. Programmes are done as a once off intervention (in Grade 8) with the intention that now learner do know the information and they should remember the information for all their secondary school years. Respondent 5 confirms this saying "*the programs that we have is My Future My Choice at the beginning of the year with the Grade 8's where pregnancies, sexual harassment and sexual activity is discussed during life skills lessons and after school*". The life skills lessons in Grade 9-12 are only 2 lessons on a 7day timetable, which means the life skills teacher should complete the prescribed curriculum and train or implement strategies to make learners aware and educate them not to fall pregnant. It is worth noting that the Window of Hope programmes is a primary school

programme from Grade 4-7 and since the researcher only collected data at secondary schools it is difficult to determine whether these learners did participate in these programmes during primary school years. The programme that has been prescribed by the Ministry of Education for the secondary schools is only the My Future My Choice programme which only takes place in Grade 8 as a once off intervention as confirmed by respondent 5.

(d) *Pregnancy trend 3- 5 years after implementation*

The respondents did not clearly acknowledge and integrate the timeframe of 3-5 years. They responded on whether the pregnancy numbers decreased or increased overall after implementation of the policy.

Four respondents were of the opinion that the pregnancies increased at their schools. Two respondents at the same school indicated that their pregnancy numbers stayed constant. They highlighted the fact that there was a three years period with no pregnancy case at the specific school. For example, in response to the researcher's question: *In your opinion for the past 3-5 years after the education sector pregnancy policy implementation how did the pregnancy rate at your school respond to the policy goal? Did it increase or decrease?* Respondent 3 replied "for *the past 3 years no cases were reported at our school, since after the school implemented the My Window of Hope programme* from Grade 4 to 7 *and the My Future My Choice in* Grade 8 *programmes this actually also supported the low or no pregnancy rate at our school".* It is worth noting that the school in question offers a school curriculum from Pre-Primary to Grade 12. This makes it easier for the school to ensure that the prescribed pregnancy prevention programmes such as Window of Hope and My Future My Choice are implemented continuously on the daily timetable of the school.

Four out of six respondents indicated that their pregnancy numbers are on an increasing trend although there could be down fluctuations from one year to the other. The four respondents could not clearly provide a specific numerical assessment of the increase. On average around what number was the increase in pregnancies at their school. The respondents could only provide some estimations of what they could remember for example respondent 2 said "…e*very year we have about 10 girls. This year we maybe have 16 or 17*

who became pregnant, it has increased this year after the lockdown". Similarly, respondent 1 replied: "*we reached a point beginning of last year where the rate was reasonable low but unfortunately it has picked up again due to the lockdowns that we had*". Respondent 1 is also of the opinion that the biggest problem of pregnancies the school have is with the Grade 11 and 12 learners, and that it was exacerbated by the pandemic.

In response to the researcher's follow up question: *what do the respondent think about the fluctuation of the pregnancy rates at their school*? Respondent 1 replied that "…*I will link it to the continuous discouragement of learner pregnancy at school*" from the life skills teachers and other staff members. The life skill teacher continuously teaches the topics such as sexual health during the life skills lessons. Sometimes some learners listen and apply the guidance they receive and sometimes they choose not to listen and do their own thing.

(e) *Opinions of interviewees on learner pregnancy*

In general, four out of the six respondents are of the opinion that the pregnancy policy is not effective in schools. All the respondents believe that the pregnancy policy focuses more on the management of the pregnant learners in schools while less effort if any at all is put on prevention. Efforts are directed to address how parents school management and teachers should take care of pregnant learners while they attend school up to four weeks before delivery, as well as the speedy return of the learner parent to school after delivery of the baby. Whilst doing so the pregnancy policy is upholding indeed the education goal to ensure all children get educated, it does so at the expense of the pregnancy prevention goal. Managing learner pregnancy for the learner parent to return to school and get educated is good but preventing altogether the pregnancy eliminates the need for the pregnancy management. Respondent 4 indicated that "*the aim of the learner pregnancy policy is to prevent teenage pregnancy, but as statistic shows especially for my school, it's not doing that the numbers keep increasing. So apart from that the policy implementation, if we fail to prevent, we have to get measurers on how to control or managed that*".

Respondent 5 of another school shared similar sentiment that the policy focusses more on the management of learner pregnancies to educate as much as possible female learner parents. Respondent 5 believed that when the pregnant learners attend school during

pregnancy it "*looks like they are promoting pregnancy to other learners*". Respondent 4 was in agreement with it she said, "*I feel that the only part of the policy that is really working ….at least nowadays we have learners returning to school" "So I think the management part is the only part that I see is working with our learners, as they can return to school after the birth of the baby*".

(f) *Factors/challenges for the implementation of the policy*

Overcrowding factor

Overcrowded classes are a general factor in public schools. In dealing with several subject curriculums that need to be taught, teachers find it problematic to give individual attention to pregnant learners. Even life skills teachers find it difficult in overcrowded classes to discuss areas of concerns with individual learners. For instance, respondent 1 noted "*education of the learners on sex education becomes problematic in overcrowded classes*".

HR factor

Respondents highlighted the *human resource factor*. Respondent 1 says "*since the human resources are not trained properly, they find it difficult to educate the learners and guide them on the pitfalls of pregnancy*". Several times at school's life skills teachers who need to guide the learners in prevention of learner pregnancy are not trained and/or are male teachers and they do not always know how to communicate to girls about pregnancies. Respondent 1 pointed that "…*information that is being discussed by people that are not trained and they do not know how to educate the girls on prevention of teenage pregnancies*".

Transportation factor

One respondent (respondent 3) mentioned that the school finds it difficult to implement pregnancy prevention programmes after school when the academic lessons are done. The afternoon programmes are hampered due to transportation. Most of the learners attending their school commute with public transport and therefore there is limited afternoon programs offered at the school, due to this hampering factor of transportation. Parents are not willing to pay twice a day for learners to attend after school programmes as well.

Respondent 3 said, "*learners come with public transport and there is no after school programs that can be implemented*".

Challenges

All the respondents have different challenges at their respective schools such as a*ttitudes of girls*, respondent 2 noted that for them at their school it is the attitude of the girls. The girls decide what they are going to listen to and what programmes they will participate in. If the girls set their mind to do something, no matter what the teachers or programmes offered at school suggest or advice, the girls will just have an ignorant and non-participatory attitude. Learners also influence each other's attitude. Respondent 4 stated "…*peer influence also plays a major role as these kids don't see it is something they are doing wrong, to them it is 'fashion' because they even praise others when they are pregnant the way they look at other, the way they treat the learner that is pregnant. So, they don't think it's bad or wrong to fall pregnant while you are still in school*".

A second challenge the schools experience is the *secrecy of pregnancy cases*, learners *and parents are not forthcoming* when learners are falling pregnant. The school is usually the last one to find out the learner is pregnant, and in most cases the father is not a school going boy. The greatest concern about secrecy of pregnancy is that these learners are neglected, they receive little to no counselling on how to deal with the pregnancy emotionally, because it is kept as a secret for the entire pregnancy. Respondent 1 said secrecy, "…*this is a huge concern …the learners need to go for counselling at an early stage already but now it is only close to delivery and sometimes after birth".* Respondent 4 reiterated saying "*some of the pregnancies goes unnoticed or they are rarely reported to the school*, …*we often find out from other learners that a learner has delivered a baby, the parents are keeping the information away from the school*".

Thirdly, five of the respondents highlighted the absence of *preventative programmes* in their schools. It is debatable that there might not be enough time to invite groups or guest speaker who can encourage and coach girls on pregnancy preventative measures continuously and consistently. However, respondent 1 believed "*we don't have any programmes, I know the*

life skills teacher discusses these topics in class as mentioned, but we do not have people from outside that visit the school".

One of the respondents (respondent 4) indicated that before the Covid pandemic the life skills teacher used to invite different organisations such as NAPPA (Namibian Family Planning Association) to come and have talks with learners especially during life skills lessons regarding teenage pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse and other life skills topics. These interventions also took place occasionally and were not part of a consistent and continuous programme in the school. They depend on the availability of the organisation presenters, as no measure to systematize the process was taken or thought of.

Lastly, *parental attitudes* often constitute additional barriers to the eradication of learner pregnancies. There are parents that express their discomfort to the school that teaches the learners about sexual education. Respondent 1, "*…the parents are not comfortable with the sexual education been given at school".* The respondent elaborates that those parents feel learners should not learn about sexual education in school. In their view the teacher provokes and ignites something that is still dormant. Some parents are ignorant of the influences of social media, technology and have buried their mind in the social fabric and reality of an era that quickly becomes obsolete. What might have been true 50 years ago, needs to be reinterrogated and reassessed today. Learners nowadays learn from their peer and the internet almost about everything including sexual education. Some parents do not want to believe their children could be anything else but innocent beings, as far as matters of sexual life are concerned.

4.2.3 Theme 3 - Corrective measure to reduce learner pregnancies

(a) Reasons for decline or increase of pregnancies

In response to the researchers question *of what could be the possible reasons for the decline or increase of pregnancies in your school after 9 years of policy implementation*? Respondents 1 and 2 are of the opinion that the informal discussions and interventions such as casual talks and organisations such as NAPPA (Namibian Family Planning Association) could have an impact on learners' attitudes and can be the reason for the slight decrease from a year to the next in their school's pregnancy statistics. Respondent 1 also raised the fact that the constant reminder to the learners of the extra responsibility a baby can put on

the learner also played a major role in the decrease they often experience from a year to the other at their school. Respondent 3 who is from the school where the pregnancy rate is low and remained stagnant for three years consecutively believes that a reason is owed to the fact that the learners have 'strict parents' and pregnancy are not being discussed openly. Their school only discusses the topics of prevention and sexual education related topics in the curriculum with age related learners such as the Grade 11 and 12 learners. Respondent 3 said "…*the topic is actually not openly discussed at school and no attention is drawn to create curiosity amongst learners, so if we don't put too much emphasis on pregnancy, abstinence and prevention then we don't have learners who wants to explore regarding pregnancy".*

Although there appears an obvious paradox in the respondent belief that a solution is restricting sexual education, promoting silence by ignoring pregnancies, not talking about it openly thereby encouraging some form of secrecy, while agreeing at the same that secrecy is a fuelling factor to the problem, perhaps the attention should be drawn to essential mention of 'strict parents' made by the respondent at the beginning of the response as the key to understand or explain the observed desirable trend in learners pregnancies. Family education, family structure, parental environment are decisive parameters determining learner pregnancy outcomes in schools and communities.

For our schools and communities to find solutions and corrective measures to reduce learner pregnancies one must first educate and work on the following hurdles that the interview respondents exposed.

Lack of parental involvement, supervision and care

Four respondents out of the six respondents indicated that the pregnancy rate escalated at their schools regardless of the efforts teachers make to discourage pregnancy amongst learners. Respondent 1,2,4 and 5 highlighted that the lack of parental supervision, care and involvement are the greatest contributing factor towards the increasing of learner pregnancies in their schools. Respondent 1 pointed that there is a "*lack of supervision many of the learners come from single parent homes and this has an effect on teenage pregnancies at school*". Respondent 5 argued "…*most of the times learners stay at home*

alone and some parents start working early or night shift leaving these young learners at home alone without any supervision".

Lack of communication between parents and learners

If there is not a lot of involvement from parents to guide and talk about sexual related matters and learners are left to make their own decisions regarding these matters, the bad learner pregnancy trend will not be curbed. When parents and community members shy away from talking about sexual related matters, learners are left alone and more often turn to wrong sources, persons, peers, for advice or to have some sort of knowledge on the questions. Respondents 1 and 4 noted that sexual education is not a topic for discussion between children and parents all because of the traditional beliefs. Respondent 1 said "*…from the parents and the broader community there is not really much involvement … most of the culture backgrounds where the learner come from it is seen as a taboo subject to be talked about*". In addition, respondent 4 states "*parents are not open with their children about the reality, we are not living in the olden times we are living in modern times where a parent can really engage with the child on sexual education*". "*…if we as parents can at least start having open discussions with our kids maybe it will work out one day*".

Misperception of the Policy as having inducing effects

The misconceptions of some education stakeholders lead them to bear a kind of grudge against the pregnancy management policy. The old-fashioned reflex of punishment makes them see an incentive to pregnancy in the policy's dispositions to not discontinue the education of pregnant learner or having minimal disruption to the education or return to school of learner parent. This state of affairs constitutes a reason for the increase in pregnancies.

Several times, some respondents expressed the concern that the policy encourages learners to become pregnant. Respondent 5 specifically referred to cases at their school where few girls become pregnant in Grade 8, come back to school and fall again pregnant in Grade 10 and 12. She feels this is a problem for the teachers and the school. Respondent 5 stated "The *policy allows learners to come to school and saying they have the right to education. It is a policy, but it promotes more pregnancy than prevention".* Such an example does not

establish any causality between the possibility to return to school and the repeated pregnancies, but it reveals a bit more on the frustrations of teachers who might not be enthusiastic to provide any kind of needed guidance in such a case.

(b) Possible Adjustment measures to reduce learner pregnancies suggested by interview participants

Schools should strive to get the support of the community by mobilising role model mothers who can talk and guide learners on sexual related topics in a consistent way. Respondent 3 advises that parents should become stricter with their children and have talks about the danger and consequences of becoming pregnant while in school. She argues "…*if parents don't have rules at home this can also lead to unwanted pregnancies, so it is important for learners to have curfew and being educated about the dangers of being out late at night*". Ministry of Education in collaboration with the schools should arrange age related awareness programmes to educate the entire nation about sexual education, contraceptives, abstinence through consistent and continuous radio programs, churches involvement and advocacy in newspapers. Respondent 5 notes "…*these programmes must be brought to the community and maybe pregnancy can reduce*" when there is greater awareness amongst learners and parents regarding the pitfalls and disadvantages of falling pregnant while in school.

(c) What are the challenges and recommendations for changes in the *learner pregnancy policy?*

Challenges with the policy

Pregnancy related health risks

Five of the interviewees are concerned with the provision of learner pregnancy policy to allow the pregnant learner at school until four weeks before delivery. They believe school activities put a strain with which their body can barely cope with at that stage. They alluded to the difficulty of keeping up with learning activities at such a stage of the pregnancy. Interviewees all referred to pregnant learners being always tired, not attending school daily well before the four weeks interruption due date. Teachers are witnesses to the fact that pregnant learners who remain in school until four weeks before delivery sleep most of the time in class. They are not interested in completing academic tasks and tests. Some pregnant learners come to school for half of the day and find reasons to go home for the other half.

Interviewees feared what would happen if a pregnant learner went into labour at school. Respondent 2 indicated "*it is a risk also for teachers who are not trained to handle these situations even if the child goes into early labour, we are not going to know what to do". Most of the public schools do not have sickbays where the pregnant learner can be kept until help arrives at the school*.

Recommendations for changes in reviewing the policy

For interviewees there are too many requirements for schools and little responsibilities for the pregnant learner and her parents. Respondent 1 indicates "…*there are loopholes in the whole thing*…" There should be more guidance of what the clear responsibilities of the pregnant learner are, the parents and the school. All the responsibility for the pregnant learners is placed on the schools and life skills teachers are not trained to deal with health-related matters of pregnant learners. In response to the researcher question whether the pregnancy policy is effective in eliminating learner pregnancies in schools? Respondent 4 said "*not at all it is not serving any purpose, otherwise cases would not be increasing so significantly. Especially in my school it is increasing yearly*".

Parents, teachers, learners and the community should have in-dept training and be educated regarding sexual education. This responsibility should be shared with all the line Ministries, like the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Welfare and any other organization that has interest in the wellbeing of school going children. Respondent 1 refers to it as "*at the end of the day, whatever policy is being set up if people that are going to deal with it and people that are affected are not educated on it then as good as a policy is it will never be effective there will always be failings*".

All the interviewees are in accord that the policy should focus more on guiding and developing programmes with all the stakeholders to prevent learner pregnancies. Respondent 2 stipulates that "the *main thing that we should look at is the policy must emphasize on prevention so that is maybe the thing we have to strengthen as a school*".

All six interviewees are of the concern that learners should not be kept in school until 8 months of pregnancy. The timeframe for attendance after the pregnancy, as well as that of the speedy return of learner mothers needs to be re-examined. Respondent 3 for example recommends

that a learner mother should only return to school 6 months after delivery. Respondent 3 suggests "*in my opinion what can be changed or improved about the policy is the fact that pregnant learners may stay at school up until 8 months, I think it is very dangerous not only for the mother but also for the baby. My suggestion pregnant learners can stay until 5-6 months then the expectant mother has to remain at home*.'' She further strengthens her point by saying "*there is the challenge of breast feeding, if the baby becomes sick it is a problem, the learner mother needs time to heal and also needs time to get used to this new change of lifestyle".* Respondent 1 said "*teachers are not equipped on how to treat these pregnant girls, if the child goes into early labour, they are not going to know what to do*".

Interviewees shared the same sentiment that in changing these requirements for pregnant learners it will emotionally be of benefit for the pregnant learners, and they will be more focused on their academic performance and their desire to complete school with good results. The interviewees mentioned examples of learners at their schools that left school for one year and after return the learner mothers performed academically better. For example, respondent 3 narrated "*we had a grade 11 learner who felt pregnant early in the year, she left school gave birth and returned to school the next year. Upon her return she was a top achiever and became head girl in grade 12".* Respondent 6 agreed with all the interviewees that pregnant learners should leave the school earlier, since most pregnant learners are not committed to stay in school for the prescribed time in the policy. Respondent 6 argues "*so, one thing I think they should change is the length of the pregnant learner's presence at school and thereafter it becomes the responsibility of the learner mother to stay up to date with school work along with the help of the teachers".*

Two of the interviewees are of the opinion that there should be strict or stern consequences for the males who impregnate school going children. If it is a learner at school or any other school the male learner should be suspended for some time as well.

4.2.4 Theme 4 - Relevant social factors playing a role in learner pregnancies

Elaborating on the researcher's question, *what do you think are the social factors in the community that contribute towards learners falling pregnant?* The six interview participants commonly identified *poverty, single parent households, learner households, sugar daddy's,*

transactional sex, peer group pressure, alcohol and drugs, as the most influencing social factors in the communities.

It is a shared view amongst the interview participants that poverty has been the major social factor contributing to learner pregnancies. The scene of all the interactions and actions at play leading to learner pregnancies is off school premises, inside the community. Schools have therefore little to no control over what happen at home and outside in the community. Respondent 1 for example says "*poverty, lack of supervision at home many of these learners' parents are single working parents*". Furthermore, lack of communication is mentioned, social stigmas, "*parents do not want to talk about these topics, and they don't report forced sex and sometimes they know the person is a family member and they do not report it or take action".*

Respondent 2 also agreed that "*what's happening at home plays a huge factor and it leads to girls to fall pregnant, if we look at the males that are responsible for the pregnancy it is less than 5% which is school going boys*. Respondent 2 further developed that some girls even move out of their parents' homes to live with boyfriends because they are promised "*to be taken care of*" when almost all indeed just want to get out of their current situation of poverty. Respondent 4 highlighted listed "*poverty, transactional sex, absent fathers, absent mothers"*. She raised the concern that without proper guidance of a mother or father these learners are vulnerable to anything that happens in the community. Since the schools are in a harbour town it is not something strange that some girls participate in transactional sex to provide for their families "*…the learner is forced into sexual acts just to put food on the table for the family*", adding that "*poverty plays a major role – where there is poverty these pregnancies mostly occur especially in our harbour town*". Similarly, respondent 1 noted that poverty drives learners to engage themselves with 'sugar daddies' who can support them financially. Elaborating, respondent 1 remarked that "*overcrowded situations at home, poverty is one of the biggest contributors these girls feel they need money to support either their family's and they then get sugar daddies to support them, and it often happens when someone support you that they demand a child*".

Schools also experience major problems with drug abuse and community members do not always support or assist the schools to eliminate these social ills. The schools participating in this research study are in a harbour town and drugs and alcohol are substances being

misused severely in the community. Respondent 4 referred to the seriousness of these social evils in the community as follows "*we have tuck shops out there selling drugs to our kids and people in the community are aware of this, but they are not doing anything – they even see kids in school uniforms that are bunking school at these tuck shops but say nothing"..., "we take a walk to these tuck shops during break times and often find leaners there smoking…*". Talking of the plight of single parent households, respondent 5 headlined lack of communication and discipline at home, "*there is no control at home, we as a school or life skills teacher we can't go home and tell each and every parent to look after their children or how to behave at home*". Respondent 5 also mentioned peer pressure that leads to learner pregnancy, since learners want to do what others do "*these factors that play a contributing role, poverty in our community is one of the factors that play a role – this makes that girls to go out there and look for money or someone who can support them financially and this leads to pregnancy. Sometimes it is also peer pressure that plays a major role*". Respondent 1 and 2 respectively concurred with the lack of discipline at home "…*some parents don't have control over their children*…" and "*lack of supervision, many of these learners come from single parent homes and this also has an effect on teenage pregnancies at school".*

4.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it came to light that the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner pregnancy have a non-significant effect on the goal of the policy to prevent learner pregnancies in schools. There is a fundamental lack of knowledge of the policy content and an ever bigger dysfunctional implementation of prevention goals. The teachers, schools and school management interpret the policy each one in their own understanding and perspective. Teachers' focus is on the management of learner pregnancies accepting as a premise the ineluctability of those occurrences at the scale the policy is paradoxically meant to change. The harvested data presented here yielded information and uncovered some findings that were summarily discussed as they were presented. In winding up this research, the next chapters synthesizes the findings and give an outlook in recommendations and directions of further investigations.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to launch an investigation of learner pregnancies in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy namely the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancies in Namibia, 2012.

This case study examined answers for the key research questions such as: Did learner pregnancies decrease or increase in relation to the implementation of the learner pregnancy management policy in the selected schools in Namibia? What can be perceived if any as the implementation impact of the learner pregnancy prevention and management policy. The participants interviewed for this case study were three principals and three life skills teachers at the three selected schools. The interviewees shared their views and experiences pertaining to learner pregnancy prevention and management policies. Specific points to address regarded the effectiveness in eliminating learners' pregnancies and all the associated afflictions henceforth. The investigation examined the fluctuations trends in learner pregnancies, decrease/increase in relation to the implementation of the learner pregnancy management policy in the selected schools.

The emphasis was to answer the main objectives of the study, to examine the existing pregnancy policies and its understanding by stakeholders, in particular the management teams and life skills teachers to explore and assess how they implement the specific policy goals on the prevention and management of learners' pregnancy in schools. In order to achieve the aims of the study, it was necessary to determine what additional policies or programmes do schools have in place, to measure the effectiveness or not of those interventions and that of the overall implemented battery of measures. The approach allowed to dive in the understanding, daily experiences and emotions of education stakeholders which are teachers, life skills teachers and school management teams playing a particularly important role in relation to the topic of this study. The successful completion of these initial steps was a condition to envisage redress and correct measures an action, informed by the reality of the analysis. Observed failures or successes in implementation of the Ministry

national pregnancy policy, or lack of implementation, teach us of the determinants of that social reality in Namibian schools.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A qualitative research approach was used. A semi structured questionnaire was designed guided by sound methodological practices and the social cognitive theory framework of Bandura (1986). Data was collected in response to the research questions. The data was analysed thematically advised by the six steps thematic analysis methodology of Braun & Clarke (2006). Before recommendations are formulated in the final articulation of this research study, the findings are synthesized and discuss in this chapter.

As advised by Braun & Clarke (2006) approach, the four key themes that emerged from the data analysis were used to examine the findings and to later make recommendations for improving the Education Sector Policy on Learner Pregnancy Prevention and Management.

Theme 1- Scope of Policies (Awareness amongst teachers, learners and parental/community members)

Theme 2 - Additional support programmes and policies to facilitate the learner pregnancy policy implementation

Theme 3 - Corrective measures to reduce learner pregnancies suggested by interview participants

Theme 4 - Relevant social factors playing a role in learner pregnancies.

The study showed unequivocally that awareness of the existence of the policy as policy document is ambiguous or contentious. While it is certain that most teachers can nominatively refer to the document, there is however a big difference in knowing that something is there, without knowing what it entails? It is evident amongst the life skills teachers and management members in general, that they have heard of the policy document however it was all clearly proven that they are not very familiar with the content of the learner pregnancy policy, and even more so on aspects of pregnancy prevention which is the first and maybe most prominent leg of the policy document. This finding is consistent with literature Morifi (2018), also identified defective knowledge of

existing learner pregnancy prevention policy as one of the contributing factors to the scourge (Morifi, 2018, p 171). Segalo (2020) also revealed the same finding and shared the opinion that knowing the content, dispositions and measures of the learner pregnancy policy will equip stakeholders working for the prevention of learner pregnancy in their schools (Segalo, 2020, p 7).

All the interviewed participants focused on the management of the pregnant learner in schools, they are concerned with how the schools should take care of the pregnant learners while they attend school until four weeks before the delivery date. It is evident that pregnancy management came to take the central place as some pregnant learners and/or their parent claimed the right not to be expelled and denied re-entry as it was the case in the past. This teaches us that the significantly more cognisance and activities in pregnancy management are more explained by the precaution of schools not to be in infringements of regulatory dispositions, than a concerted effort to understand and implement the policy document as a tentative response to the problem at hand. All proofs of knowledge and practice of the prescriptions of the policy were demonstrated as far as management of the pregnancy is concerned. This finding is also corroborated by (Hubbard, 2009, p 232).

Some of the interviewees expressed concerns that the policy provision allowing pregnant learners to stay in school even if they are not performing well academically contributes to the rising number of pregnancies among school-aged children. Any mechanisms or consistent activities are absent in the absence of any prevention dynamic that is executed. Additionally, this concern is perhaps plausible or debatable to say the least. The provision for the return of pregnant learners to school shortly after delivery, might be wrongly perceived by youngsters, as a token for irresponsibility. This finding was also achieved by Kapapelo (2019) who concluded that in some instances, implementation of the pregnancy management policy led to an increase in pregnancies (Kapapelo, 2019, p 107).

The findings of this investigation further revealed that learners and parents are even less made aware of the policy, unless when it is too late, and they are already pregnant, or their child is pregnant. Parents are just being informed about the policy in a general parent meeting. The policy is only being discussed with those parents of pregnant learners that come to school. What will be discussed is also just the management and procedures that will be followed for the pregnant learner.

Learners on the other hand received certain time slots on the timetable during the life skills lessons where the life skills teacher discusses the learner pregnancy policy with them. All six interview participants in this study revealed that they only discuss the policy with the senior grades of the school, which is grade 11 and 12. Most other grades in the secondary schools are not informed about the learner pregnancy policy. This means that the process of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy is partial and dysfunctional at the best, not effective and consistent. There was a unique instance where pregnancies sporadically disappeared, but that could not be assertively related to the rightful implementation of the pregnancy policy. Only the grades where pregnancies occur already are targeted by intervention attempts. The aim of prevention is further defeated as learners that need the pre-emptive measures and sexual education are not targeted. Parents of the school are made aware, and teachers familiarized themselves once a year, during an annual general parent meeting and staff meeting. Findings show that there is not a consistent implementation and awareness process or campaigns which take place in the schools. These are also the shared findings with authors like Morifi (2018), Nande & Nampula-Shikoha (2019) (Morifi, 2018, p 171), (Nande & Namupala-Shikoha, 2019, p 2-3). Schools mostly focus on the management of learner pregnancies and not really on methods on how to achieve the *policy goal to "decreasing the number of learner pregnancies"* rate in their respective schools (Republic of Namibia, 2012, p 3).

There is an overlap in interview respondents' feedback in **theme 2 and theme 3** simultaneously. **S**ince, **Theme 2** resorted among other to additional programmes and policies that schools have to put in place to contribute to the effective support and implementation of the learner pregnancy prevention policy in three selected Namibian schools. **Theme 3** illustrated the understanding, experiences and emotional responses of teachers and school management teams on the occurrences of pregnancies amongst learners, in relation to the national learner pregnancy policy.

Findings showed the extra programme like the one initiated by the Ministry of Education, my Future my Choice is also only completed with Grade 8 learners, when they arrive from the primary school. The program is also punctual a duration of 4 weeks, has no permanency, and even so, the attendance is impeded by transportation issues or say in general lack of resources, for it to be effective. Learners do not show up since the programme is conducted after school. A respondent remarked about it as indicated in chapter 4 that "*in secondary schools we have My Future My Choice which has become very dormant in secondary schools*".

The 'dormancy' of programmes and other extra curriculum activities that would have a difference if conducted properly, is due principally to the lack of financial resources. Both from the learner families and maybe the department of education which could have fully funded all such activities. Non-cooperative parents that accuse the schools of teaching their children volage behaviours in sex education also makes a negative contribution the observed learner pregnancy problem. They see in sex education, the enticement to the early practice of sexual activities and not as pointed by respondent 4 "*we are teaching the child to abstain and be on the safer side rather than to engage in these sexual activities*".

In the one school in this case study where programmes are implemented continuously, the school seems to have a positive impact on stabilising the learner pregnancies in the school. The Ministry of Education programmes Window of Hope and My Future My Choice were integrated as part of lessons in the timetable in the school with the smallest prevalence of learner pregnancy. Interview respondent 3 indicated that the Life skill teacher or sometimes another teacher teaches these lessons on a weekly basis. Teachers are responsible and should ensure they complete the curricula for the programmes as well as create awareness and advocate abstinence amongst the learners.

Analysis establishes that the implementation process of the prescribed programmes is a challenge for schools due to several external factors listed above in chapter 4 ranging from economic factors such as transportation issues, to behavioural patterns with refused parental consent, or simply poor management. Kanku and Mash (2010), Morifi (2018) also evidenced similar findings (Kanku and Mash, 2010, p 566), (Morifi, 2018, p 60). The inconsistency of these interventions is also an issue. In Grade 8, for a limited time, no activity or follow-up training is effectively implemented. Furthermore, from Grade 9 through Grade 12 no activity or follow-up training is properly implemented. Schools that are proactive must launch their own awareness campaigns and programs, which occurs also infrequently.

The analysis showed that none of the schools have an internal policy for learner pregnancy. They all rely on the poorly apprehended National Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Findings of our established that the implementation of the national learner pregnancy prevention and management policy has had a significant effect on occurrences of learner pregnancies. The

intended goals of decreasing learners' pregnancies were not achieved. None of the schools that were part of our case study could factually justify an effective implementation of the policy and the satisfactory outcomes it had on prevalence of learner pregnancies. Pregnancies rates or happenings did not decrease or change significantly after the implementation of the policies owing to reasons such as an egregious knowledge of the policy, a partial implementation of the policy, mostly in pregnancy management dispositions neglecting thereby the second principle that preceded and justified the conception and introduction of the policy, the prevention of learner pregnancies. Findings also showed that a broad range of socio-economic factors among which poverty plays a leading role are fuelling this scourge. Despite the acknowledged constraints of the geographical setting, scope, and size of this study, the findings were mostly in conformity with prior literature.

Below, in the last chapter of this research study, recommendations are formulated in relation to this case study's findings, an outlook is given on matters of relevance to the question of learner pregnancies and further interventions or areas of research.

CHAPTER 6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Findings were discussed in Chapter 5 following the thread provided by themes which derived from the data analysis in Chapter 4. In this last chapter, recommendations are made to correct misdoings and deficiencies exposed in findings, and accordingly draw prospects of investigation areas to develop potential future research initiatives. Lastly, conclusionary remarks are made to close this report.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

All the stakeholders of Education should change their compass and develop and find relevant, workable, reader friendly and implementable self-made and internal learner pregnancy policy with clearly guided programmes that will support the national policy goal to improve the prevention of learner pregnancies in Namibian schools.

All the stakeholders in Education should find solutions on how to constantly communicate pregnancy on prevention programmes to the entire community by using social media, radio and television programmes. These programmes can be of great help and should be broadcast daily after school and non-working hours in order for parents and learners to watch and listen to it together. This mechanism might encourage more open talks in families regarding female learners falling pregnant while in school.

The Ministry of Education should reopen a discussion on the time frame for learners to be in schools during pregnancy and after delivery, due to the danger of the pregnant learner to be at school up and until the eight months of pregnancy, without any adequately trained supporting staff. If things are to be left unchanged the discussion will have to integrate the question of training of teachers or hiring of social workers and nurse to mitigate the health risks. The importance of the baby to be breastfeed and bond with the mother after birth is very crucial for any child's sociological and emotional development and therefore allowing learner parents to return to school soon after delivery is questionable to say the least as it could prove harmful for these new-born

babies and generation of the future. In exercising the current learner pregnancy policy requirements for management of learner pregnancies as stated in the policy "education after giving birth: the girl may continue with her education after giving birth…" (Republic of Namibia, 2012, p 8).

All the stakeholders should be part and puzzle of the policy revision process. The current loopholes should be considered and build upon to rectify as well as the necessary financial needs, friendly and consistent guiding programmes to prevent learner pregnancies should be developed for all the stakeholders involved.

Schools should mobilise support from churches, female community role models who can guide and interact with learners on a continuous basis regarding sexual life related topics, pitfalls and the disadvantages of falling pregnant while in school.

Parents should be made aware and continuously be reminded by all means radio programmes, television programmes and slogans on billboards in the community of the importance of parenthood and the necessary disciplinary measures that need to start at home.

The government should institute more serious consequence for older men who impregnate school going learners. Unless some consequences are brought to these men, they will remain a major burden for communities, and fuel for learner pregnancies.

Future research investigations could observe the following:

- How to align the current learner pregnancy policy to focus on measures to prevent learner pregnancies in schools and find practical ways to ensure all the stakeholders are involved and execute the policy in the same manner
- Define a prototype of actions plan that makes space for schools' specific activities and insertions, while at the same time harmonising and laying out a practical implementation of the national policy goals
- Explore how social media, radio programmes, television programmes and billboard advertisement can be used to systematize education of teachers, learners, parents and the community on learner pregnancy preventative measures

6.3 CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine the response of learner pregnancy to the implementation of the learner pregnancy prevention and management policy, leaning on a case study in the Erongo region of Namibia. Ethical considerations were thoughtfully dealt with and abided for the entire duration of the research study. The approach was endowed in the social cognitive theory framework of Bandura to guide the conception and administration of instruments in this research. A semi-structured questionnaire and leaning on the six thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke to give meaning to the qualitative data collected, extract valid, reliable, dependable, replicable meaningful information. Analysing the findings guided by the soundest practices in qualitative research to answer the research questions. Aided by the chosen methodological canvas, underlining logics that structure dynamics determining learner pregnancy outcomes were deconstructed in a rapprochement to the implementation of the national pregnancy policy prevention and management or its lack thereof.

In response to the research question of whether leaner pregnancy increase or decrease after the implementation of the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, the results showed that there is not a significant response in observed trends in learner pregnancies that can be attributed to the implementation of the policy. Aside its existence, the policy content is not known to education stakeholder and is at best partially implemented, as far as regulatory prescriptions dealing with already pregnant learners are concerned. The prevention leg, which is supposed to take the central role, even judging just by the name of the policy is practically non-existent. Sporadic and inconsistent declinations of prevention activities are observed here and there, with no measurable gauge of their efficiency. It is a solid fact that the implementation of the leaner pregnancy prevention and management policy did not eliminate or curbed learner pregnancies and their disastrous consequences.

Answering, the research question of whether an increase or decline was observed after the implementation of the policy, results showed in this case study that the implementation cannot be causally linked to any observed decline in learners pregnancies. In fact, the overall trends in pregnancy numbers in school remained rising, with observed fluctuating decline from one year to the next. The longest period of relative stability was that of the numbers for one of the schools in the case study, with a minimal fluctuation on three years pregnancy numbers.

On the research question of the policy implementation impact, the results proved that the implementation of the policy had a positive impact on learner parents' readmission in schools, affording them the opportunity to complete their studies, even though the policy does not respond to its main goal of eliminating by prevention learner pregnancy as a prevalent problem in schools.

Causes, aggravating and mitigating factors to learner pregnancy were discussed abundantly still in relation with the national policy implementation, as some of the factors could originate from the policy document. To close off the study an outlook on further areas of investigation was given as the need to practically and fully implement, restructure, realign, and rethink aspects of the Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Namibia.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Pregnancy related dropouts in Namibian schools 2008-2019 (Extract from Steenkamp, 2021). 14
Figure 2:Emerging themes from semi-structured interviews and data analysis..... 39

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1 – ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2021ECE002M**
PROJECT TITLE	**An investigation of learner pregnancy in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of learner pregnancy policy**
INVESTIGATOR	**ANNE MAGDALENE EINBECK**
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DATE CONSIDERED	13th September 2021
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 20th September 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** (Dr Paul Coldschagg)

cc: Supervisor: Dr Glodean Thani

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** emailed to the Ethics Office: Matsie.Mabotja@wits.ac.za .

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Einbeck
Signature

Date 30 September 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX 2 – PROPOSAL APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
POSTGRADUATE OFFICE

20 September 2021
Student Number: 2498107

Mrs. Anne Einbeck
P.O. Box 9097
Walvis Bay Lagoon street 6
Walvis Bay 9000
Namibia
By Email: 2498107@students.wits.ac.za
Cc: Supervisor

Dear Mrs. Einbeck

RESULTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION PROPOSAL

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have approved your proposal entitled ***"AN INVESTIGATION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY IN THREE NAMIBIAN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNER PREGNANCY POLICY"***. The research proposal can pass. I confirm that **Dr. Glodean Thani** has been appointed as your supervisor in the School of Education.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February, if you have started the beginning of the year, and for mid-year the deadline is 31 July. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year.

You are required to submit 2 bound copies and a CD with a word and pdf (Adobe) format of your research report to the Faculty Office. The 2 bound copies go to the examiners and are retained by them and the CD (Not USB) is retained by the Faculty Office as back up.

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February or 31 July you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report.

Kindly keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports. **A student must remain registered at the Faculty Office until graduation.**

Yours Sincerely
Faith Herbert
Faith Herbert
Senior Faculty Officer
Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand
School of Education
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X3
Wits 2050
JOHANNESBURG
SOUTH AFRICA

ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR
MRS E. STEPHANUS
PRIVATE BAG 5024
SWAKOPMUND
20 May 2021

Dear Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN WALVIS BAY CIRCUIT

My name is Anne M. Einbeck

I am studying for an MEd in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to research three selected Secondary schools in Walvis Bay Circuit.

I am required to write a research report, resulting from researching **an investigation of learner pregnancy in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy.** This study intends to explore and understand whether the pregnancy rates in schools declined or escalated after policy implementation. Secondly, the researcher would like to seek understanding from the life skills teachers and principals of the selected schools and possibly other community members whether any major social patterns might have an impact on the escalation or decline of learner-pregnancies. Thirdly, seek understanding of what guidance

or programmes do teachers render during school time to female learners regarding the prevention of pregnancy. Fourthly, is there possibly a lack of understanding amongst teachers regarding the policy requirements and implementation.

The research will entail collecting data from Principals and Life Skills teachers at the three selected schools in the Walvis Bay circuit.
I will invite individuals from the three selected schools to participate in the research study. If they agree, they will be asked to answer questionnaires; be interviewed personally according to a semi-structured schedule. The data collection will take place after school with the participants, and we will ensure that it does not interfere with school activities.

All the responses of the participants will be video recorded with the written or verbal consent of the participants. The responses of all the participants will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The results of the research study will be communicated as a mini-dissertation and all research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by future researchers

I, therefore, request permission in writing to conduct my research at the three selected schools in Walvis Bay circuit. It would be appreciated if you will consider this request favourably and grant written permission on the letterhead of the regional office, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Student: Anne Einbeck
Tel: 081 127 4286
annemagdalene7007@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr Glodean Thani
Lecturer ELPS
Tel: 0027-11 707 3092
Email: glodean.thani@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 4 – APPROVAL LETTER -EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Enquiries: Mr. G. Munene
Tel: +264 61 2933202 2
Fax: +264 61 292392
Email: Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na
File no: 13/2/9/1

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

Ms Anne M. Einbeck
Email: annemagdalene7007@gmail.com

Dear Ms Einbeck,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN ERONGO

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 3 June 2021 seeking for permission to conduct academic research at schools for your Masters' studies which is focusing on: *"How Learner Pregnancy Rates Escalated or Declined after the Learner Pregnancy Policy Implementation in three selected Namibia Schools."*

Permission has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further clearance from the Erongo Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that:

- the school principals are aware of your presence;
- teaching and learning should not be interrupted;
- participation is voluntary.

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely,

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
Office of the Executive Director
09 JUN 2021
Tel: 061-293352/4
Fax: 061-253871
Private Bag 13186, Windhoek, Namibia

Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Page 1 of 1

APPENDIX 5 – PARTICIPANTS INVITATION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand
School of Education
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X3
Wits 2050
JOHANNESBURG
SOUTH AFRICA

ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
THE PRINCIPAL
P.O. BOX 8315
WALVIS BAY
10 June 2021

Dear Sir

RE: PRINCIPALS AND LIFE SKILLS TEACHERS INVITATION AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Anne M. Einbeck, I am studying for an MEd in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my study requirements, I must undertake a research project in a policy of my interest and required to write a research report**.**

The selected research topic is an **investigation of learner pregnancy in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy.**

The aim of the study intends to explore and understand whether the pregnancy rates in schools declined or escalated after policy implementation.

In the research study the main objective is:

1. To determine the understanding of the life skills teachers and management members on how they implement the specific policy goal on prevention of learner pregnancy in schools and what programs do they have in place in school to achieve this goal.

2. To explore with the life skills teachers the possible social factors that might influence the learner pregnancy policy goal of preventing learner pregnancies in schools in Namibia.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you, to take part in an in-depth and semi-structured interview process. This activity will be conducted after school hours to avoid any disturbances in the workplace. It will involve your time and might take an hour or more. With your permission, all interviews will be audio or video recorded. These recordings will be stored in a safe place and only the researcher will have access to all data collection. After transcribing the interview information, I may ask for a follow-up interview just for clarity.

The responses of all the participants will be treated confidentially. Pseudonym (anonymous) names will be used to conceal participants identities, unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

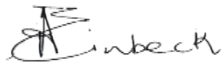
The results of the research study will be communicated as a mini-dissertation and all research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by future researchers in an anonymized format. The information for the research project is only required to assist the researcher to complete her research study.

If you are willing to participate in this research project, kindly sign the attached consent form. Additionally, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions during or after the research process.

Please find attached the approval letter to conduct my research in Walvis Bay Circuit from the Executive Director, Mrs S. Steenkamp attached.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to be a participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,



Student: Anne Einbeck
Tel: 081 127 4286
annemagdalene7007@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr Glodean Thani
Lecturer ELPS
Tel: 0027-11 707 3092
Email: glodean.thani@wits.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPALS AND LIFE SKILLS TEACHERS CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT:

An investigation of learner pregnancy in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy

I, ……. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Einbeck

RESEARCHER: A.M. EINBECK
10 JUNE 2021

APPENDIX 7 – RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

PARTICIPANTS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This topic is titled: ***An investigation of learner pregnancy in three Namibian schools in the context of implementation of the learner pregnancy policy***

The aim of the study is to assess the impact of implemented policies on the afflictions caused by learners' pregnancies.

Key research question

- Are learner pregnancy management and prevention policies effective in eliminating learners' pregnancies and associated ills?
  - Did the learners' pregnancy rate change in two selected schools after the implementation of pregnancy policies, did it increase or decrease?

In this study the main objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of learners' prevention and management policies, with a focus on selected Namibian Schools by:

1.	**Mapping out the scope of existing pregnancy policy and its understanding by stakeholders, life skills teachers, management teams in particular, how they implement specific policy goals on the prevention of learners' pregnancy in schools.**
a.	Are you aware of the Education Sector Policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in your school? (Hereafter referred to only as learner pregnancy policy).
b.	Are the learners in your school aware of the learner pregnancy policy in the school?
c.	How does the school make the learners, teachers, and parents aware of the learner pregnancy policy?

2. Determining what additional policies or programmes do schools have in place, assessing thereby the effectiveness or not of their interventions and overall implemented measures.
a. Does the school have an internal learner pregnancy policy?
b. Are teachers, parents and learners informed about the internal learner pregnancy policy?
c. What are your views about the learner pregnancy policy implementation and programmes in your school?
d. In your opinion for the past 3-5 years after the education sector policy implementation: how did the pregnancy rate at your school respond to the policy? Did it increase or decrease?
e. What could be the possible factors you consider being the challenges for the school to successfully achieve the goals and objectives of the learner pregnancy policy?
f. What are the challenges for the pregnancy prevention programmes in the school?
3. Design or formulate pertinent corrective or blueprint measures respectively, based on the observed failure/success of implemented pregnancy policies; exploring with stakeholders, life skills teachers, possible social factors relevant to the prevention of learner pregnancies in schools in Namibia.
a. What are the possible reasons or factors for this decline or escalation of learners' pregnancies in your school after 9 years of policy implementation?
b. In your view, how do teachers, parents and the community contribute to the success or failure in eradicating learner pregnancies in your school?
c. How do their actions contribute to reducing or increasing the pregnancy rate?
d. In your opinion what should be changed or improved about the pregnancy policy and its implementation?
e. What actions do you consider being challenges for your school to successfully achieve set goals and objectives of the learner pregnancy policy?
f. Do you think there is specific social factors that contributes to learner pregnancies in your school?
g. Any other concerns, comments or recommendations regarding the pregnancy policy and its implementation process in the school?

APPENDIX 8 – TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

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