

**EXPLORING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION
OF GIRL MOTHERS' RE-ENTRY POLICY IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
MUNGWI DISTRICT, NORTHERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA**

BY

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EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES**

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate.

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any institution of learning.



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DEDICATION.

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely mother Bernedate Musongo and my father Jeremiah Musongo for their educational support and for being true parents to me.

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ABSTRACT

The girl re-entry policy is a strategic intervention that was introduced in 1997 by the Ministry of Education. It was introduced as an intervention in Zambia to allow girls to have access to education after giving birth in an endeavor to stop or reduce the incidence of girls dropping out of school so that they can attain their rights to education. Despite having the policy to allow girls to have access to education, Zambia has been consistently recording a high rate of pregnancy in primary schools with low re-entries. This study explored the school administrators' and teachers' implementation of girl mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi district, Northern province of Zambia. To answer the main question of this study: What are school administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Northern province of Zambia? Three sub-questions were used (How is the awareness of school administrators and teachers about the re-entry policy in primary schools? What are the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools? What guidelines can be developed to effectively implement the re-entry policy in primary schools?). A qualitative study within the interpretivism paradigm drawing on a phenomenological design was used. Social integration theory was used to guide the study. 5 head-teachers and 5 guidance and counseling teachers in 5 different schools were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Ethical principles were observed throughout the study activities and trustworthiness was ensured. One-on-one interviews, unstructured questionnaires, and drawings were used for data generation and the data was analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that there is no uniform implementation of the re-entry policy among Guidance and Counseling teachers and administrators. Social cultural practices influence girl mothers' re-entry policy implementation which leads to a lack of cooperation between the schools and the community, and primary schools do not have professionally trained counselors. It was also found that primary schools have support mechanisms for girl mothers during and after maternity leave such as home visitation, counseling, and advocacy efforts for re-entry policy awareness and sensitization. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that the re-entry policy is not bearing the expected fruits because of low-levels of awareness by the Guidance and Counseling teachers and the community members. Lack of professionally trained counselors and supporting infrastructure are some of the contributing factors. The study recommended that primary schools should have professionally trained guidance and counseling officers. The Ministry of Education should foster school-community partnerships through Parent/teachers association (PTA) meetings in order to keep the community and teachers informed about changes to re-entry policy and other guidelines. The Ministry of Education and the government should endeavor to build supportive infrastructure to enable the implementation of the re-entry policy.

LIST OF ACRONYMS.

WHO	World Health Organization
UNESCO	United nations education, scientific and cultural organization.
UNFPA	United nation population fund.
UNICEF	United nations children's fund.
MOE	Ministry of Education.
RP	Re-entry Policy.
ECE	Early Childhood Education.
MDG	Millennium Development Goal.
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal.
GPI	Gender parity index.
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition.
CERM-ESA	East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational research and management.
G&C	Guidance and Counselling.
CPU	Child protection unit.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction of the Study.

1.1 Introduction.

Education is critical to the growth and development of an individual and the nation at large. According to Adobo (2013), education, particularly for girls, is a beginning point for bettering one's life and has a big impact on family members.

Zambian educational system is an integration of early childhood education (ECE), primary, secondary, and professional or higher education. In 2011, the institutional structure of the Ministry of General Education was shifted to a 4-7-5-4 (ECE-primary-secondary-higher) respectively from a 4-9-3 structure which was ushered by Educating Our Future National Education policy of 1996 (Ministry of General Education and Ministry of Higher Education, 2021). The Zambian government prioritizes education in its development efforts and through the Ministry of Education and the government ensures that a right to an education is accessed to every Zambian (Ministry of Education, 2008). Despite increased access to education in Zambia by expanding more community schools, many school-age girls have dropped out of school because of early pregnancy. As a result, primary education system must be expanded to include all school-aged girls who have dropped out of school because of different factors (UK Essays, 2018). This chapter will highlight the key issue of early pregnancies in relation to the re-entry of girl-mothers in schools, the problem that is recurring in social settings and literature.

1.2 Background.

Early pregnancy is a worldwide problem. About 16 million girls between the age of 15 and 19, and, under the age of 15, two million become pregnant every year worldwide (United Nations Population Fund, 2015). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019), reported that globally about 262 million or 18% of all children aged 6 to 17 years were out of school in 2017. The dropout rate from Grade 1 to 7 in the year 2018 in Zambia was 1.9 percent for girls. Which indicated high dropout rate than for boys which is 1.4 percent in primary school (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2020). According to United

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019), reported that most countries are falling far short of meeting international educational commitments.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2021), adds that the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic may cause nearly 24 million children and adolescents, including 11 million girls, to drop out of school. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and (UNICEF) (2021), further states that in Uganda restrictions on movement and closure of schools resulted in unwanted and unintended pregnancies among girls, 5 million child brides live in Uganda and 1.3 million of these were married before the age of 15. In Zambia, 1.7 million are child brides and 400,000 of these were married before the age of 15 years. According to United Nations Population Fund (2015), child marriage is a major cause of early pregnancy.

In the report by Human Rights Watch (2018), many African governments have made considerable efforts in recent years to allow pregnant girls and mothers to attend school. Equatorial Guinea, and Sierra Leone, on the other hand, continue to prohibit pregnant girls from attending government schools. A growing number of African Union nations such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Niger have passed education policies and strategies protecting girls' right to continue attending school while pregnant or caring for their children (United Nations Population Fund, 2017). There are several good policies and practices in many countries that allow girl-mothers to go back to school after maternal leave, countries such as Kenya that safeguard young mothers' access to education in national law or policy than discriminate against them. These countries that have policies that allow girl mothers to go back to school (re-entry) can encourage countries that lack such policies. Although there is a strong trend toward more governments deciding to retain girl mothers in school, implementation of laws and policies frequently falls short, and overall supervision of girl mothers' re-entry to education remains insufficient (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Zambia Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary National Review by the Ministry of National Development Planning (2020), states that Zambia has demonstrated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals by endorsing the 2030 Agenda and mainstreaming the Sustainable Development (SDGs) into its national development frameworks, building on the

achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite this, achieving sustainable development goal number 4 on quality education, (SDG 4) in Zambia remains a challenge because SDG4 is about inclusive and equitable quality education. However, many girls are dropping out of school and other several girls who are dropping out cannot access education again. Zambia is categorized as one of most gender unequal country (UN Human Development Report, 2019).

According to the report by Zambia demographic health survey (2018), at the time the survey was conducted, 29% of adolescents had begun childbearing. The 2018 ZDHS collected information on late-adolescent pregnancy (age 15-19). This implies that 29% of girls began childbearing before the age of 15 years. Twenty-four (24%) percent had given birth, and 5% were expecting their first child. Zambia Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary National Review by the Ministry of National Development Planning (2020), adds that early pregnancy infringes on girls' human rights and endangers their ability to realize their socio-economic development potential. Hence, preventing girls from becoming pregnant and allowing them to complete their education is essential to ensuring that girls grow into healthy, skilled, productive, independent, and responsible adults.

It is noted in the education and Skills Sector Plan by the Ministry of General Education and the Ministry of Higher Education (2021), that the gender parity index (GPI) in Zambian schools is declining. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of this decline, especially given that the government has implemented both the re-entry and 50:50 policies, as well as providing financial support to promote girls' attendance in schools. However, early pregnancies, which number over 15,000 per year, have contributed to the expulsion of girls from school. Most Zambian schools are characterized by a GPI that favors boys. The table below indicates the Gender parity index (GPI) in all schools in Zambia by grade and province.

Table 1.1: Gender parity index in all schools by grade and province .

Province/ Grade	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
National	1.05	1.04	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.00	1.04	1.00	0.97	0.96	0.85
Provinces												
Central	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.03	0.98	1.04	1.02	1.00	1.03	0.89
Copperbelt	1.05	1.06	1.02	1.05	1.06	1.05	1.08	1.11	1.13	1.12	1.13	0.91
Eastern	1.13	1.11	1.07	1.11	1.19	1.20	1.06	0.99	0.95	0.88	0.71	0.71
Luapula	1.02	1.02	0.94	0.97	0.99	0.99	0.93	1.16	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.86
Lusaka	1.07	1.10	1.04	0.93	0.94	0.95	0.98	1.04	1.02	0.89	0.92	0.83
Muchinga	1.03	1.01	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.96	0.93	1.02	1.02	0.91	0.94	0.72
North Western	1.05	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.18	1.03	0.99	0.98	1.04	0.93	0.95	0.87
Northern	1.04	0.97	1.00	1.00	0.92	0.96	0.89	0.86	0.90	0.88	0.83	0.74
Southern	1.03	1.03	1.02	1.08	1.03	1.05	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.03	1.04	0.91
Western	1.02	1.03	1.04	1.03	1.03	1.05	1.00	1.06	1.08	1.03	1.09	0.84

Source: (Educational Statistical Bulletin 2020, p.21).

As illustrated in table 1.1, a GPI less than one (1) indicates that more males than females attend school, whereas a GPI more than one indicates that more girls attend school. The ideal GPI is one, indicating that both males and females attend school equally. However, given Zambia's demographic profile, which has slightly more females than males in the population, a GPI of slightly higher than one is desirable, indicating that slightly more females than males attend school, unfortunately, in most of the provinces, the GPI favors boys than girls (Educational Statistical Bulletin, 2017).

The Education and Skills Sector Plan by the Ministry of General Education and the Ministry of Higher Education (2017-2021), states that Zambia remains dedicated to providing every learner with the internationally accepted minimum of nine years of universal basic education and skills training. This proclamation encourages states to provide 12 years of free, publicly supported, equitable primary and secondary education, with at least nine years of obligatory education.

Ministry of Education et al., (2004), states that the Ministry of education had put different strategies to allow girl-mothers access to education, one among these strategies is a girl re-entry policy. Guidelines for re-entry policy by the Ministry of Education (2004), re-entry policy will allow girls to get further education on guidance and counseling on sexual and gender relations and reproductive health education. The policy further states that once it is confirmed that the girl

is pregnant, the school should ensure that the girl receives antenatal care, access to counseling programs, and care during and after pregnancy. At the national level, Zambia has embedded the girl re-entry policy into the Education Act of (2011), Cap 1, section (25), which states that a learner who becomes pregnant while schooling should be re-admitted after the baby is delivered. Zambia is a signatory to the United Nations platforms for action, United Nations Conventions on Elimination against Women, and Millennium Development goals. Hence, the re-entry policy was enacted as a strategy in line with the international policy and national policy declaration (Ministry of Education et al., 2004)

According to Human Right Watch (2018), girl mothers lack the mental health and logistical support that the re-entry policy requires, and many girl-mothers face stigma and mockery in schools. Nsalamba et al., (2019), alluded that some girl mothers suffer humiliation and stigmatization from teachers and pupils. In faith-based schools and state financing schools,' girls who become mothers while schooling, are frequently forced to move to other schools because they are judged as a "negative influence" that they might influence their peers to become pregnant.

According to Mushibwe (2018), one striking discovery was that primary schools had more pregnancies than secondary schools, and only 5,423 of the 11,765 students who became pregnant in primary school in 2016 re-entered. Furthermore, the average number of pregnancies at the primary school level has remained constant, with 11,391 in 2007 and 11,765 in 2016. Pregnancies in primary schools have been persistent for several years.

A big number of girls who are falling pregnant while schooling dropped out of school as compared to those who re-entered. According to the report by Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) (2020), unawareness of the re-entry policy requirements also played a major role in the failure of implementing it, to allow girls to return to school after giving birth.

Banda and Nowanga (2017), present a different perspective of the ruling political party's position by citing the then Minister of Education's submission to parliament on the progress of the re-entry policy in 2012, stating that there's a need for more research to determine the policy's usefulness and to identify any barriers to its implementation. This was followed by a call for the

policy's abolition in 2015 by Kabwe Deputy Mayor, who said that the re-entry policy had not only failed to encourage female education but had also raised dropout rates and early marriages. Many others agreed that female students were abusing the re-entry policy and that the policy was encouraging child immorality. According to Banda and Nowanga (2017), despite negative reactions from various stakeholders to the re-entry policy and the history of the practice of expelling girls who fall pregnant while pursuing a course of study in primary and secondary schools, it will be necessary to develop measures to reduce high rates of pregnancies and to implement the re-entry policy.

According to Sinkala (2021), teenage pregnancies in schools have had a significant impact on the girls' dropout rate in Zambian schools. The failure of some girl mothers to re-enter school has been attributed to several factors associated with the policy implementation challenges. According to Muyunda (2021), application of the re-entry policy is not practical because there is a non-compliance attitude concerning the re-entry policy implementation by the many stakeholders. A lot of work has gone into the policy's implementation. However, very little is done in the policy's implementation in primary schools, and the results on re-entry policy implementation in primary schools are quite low when compared to secondary schools.

Sinkala (2021), states that several challenges associated with re-entry policy guidelines could have unfavorably affected the re-entry of some girl mothers into schools. However, girl mothers have been granted a second chance to complete their studies through the re-entry policy. Enactment of the re-entry policy has been met with conflicting reactions from the different stakeholders. Some groups praise it while others claim it would push students to be unethical. According to the Ministry of National Development Planning (2020), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is regarded as a national agenda in Zambia. Therefore, Zambia should embrace a girl mothers' re-entry policy to help achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) number 4 (quality education) and 5 (Gender equality) as its national agenda.

1.3 Statement of the problem.

In 1997 Zambia enacted the re-entry policy that allows girls to return to school after giving birth. The re-entry policy was enacted based on the concepts of equal education for all and equal opportunities for all, thus expanding the prospects of job opportunities for girls. The statistics below indicate pregnancies and re-admissions by grade groups in the Zambia Gender Status Report by the Ministry of Gender.

Figure 1.1: Number of pregnancies and re-admissions by grade groups, 2014–2020.

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Primary schools	Pregnancies	13 275	11 989	11 765	10 684	11 453	11502	12 330
	Re-admissions	5 322	5 217	5 423	5 527	4 917	5669	5 078
Secondary schools	Pregnancies	3 103	3 136	3 457	2 956	3 576	4222	4 089
	Re-admissions	2 069	2 047	2 230	2 052	2 488	3158	2 876

Source: (Zambia Educational statistical Bulletin 2020, p.28).

Despite the enactment of the re-entry policy many years ago, girl-mothers' re-entry policy seems to be effectively implemented in Zambian secondary schools but not in primary schools as illustrated in table 2 and figure 1.1. The policy that allows girls to re-enter after giving birth both in secondary schools and primary schools in Zambia exists, but many girl mothers in primary schools are not re-entering despite the primary schools experiencing high rate of pregnant cases.

Therefore, this study explored administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools.

1.4 Aim of the study.

The aim was to explore school administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Northern province in Zambia.

1.5 Objectives.

1. To determine the administrators and teachers' awareness about re-entry policy in primary schools
2. To explore the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools

1.6 Research Questions.

Main question.

What are school administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Northern Province in Zambia?

Sub questions.

1. How is the awareness of school administrators and teachers about the re-entry policy in primary schools?
2. What are the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools?

1.7 Justification of the Study.

Primary education is one of the crucial levels of education because it sets the foundation of education. It also determines some of the factors in secondary schools and consequently in tertiary education, such as transition rate, gender parity index, and participation per gender on other levels of education, to mention a few. As **table 1.2** illustrates, Zambian Primary schools have been recording constant high cases of pregnancies and low re-admission (re-entries). As a result of these widespread pregnant cases, many girls are dropping out of school and causing so much absenteeism in secondary school. As a teacher of biology have experienced that most of the learners who got their children in primary school and transitioned to secondary school are not consistent in attending lessons. Early pregnancy affects teaching and learning because every child is important to a teacher in a classroom. Most girl mothers who have transitioned to secondary do not have sufficient knowledge about the nutrition needs of their children and they come from a well not do families thus causing insufficient and lack of proper diet for their children. As a result, the children of the girl mothers are vulnerable to diseases because of poorer nutrition and general health. Once the child of a girl-mother is sick, girl-mother opts to take care of the child than being in a classroom. That is causing girl mothers not receiving quality education. According to World Economic Forum (2022), Education for girls is the one

continuous determinant of advancement for nearly every development outcome, from mortality risk, to growth in the economy. Therefore, the empowerment of girl child through formal and equal-driven education is a critical area to the development of the country. Rihani (2006), adds that a girl's education changes everything, when a girl child is educated, the nation is also educated. The word "Nation" can be used to mean "family". A girl is not a statistic or a piece of property, she's a child who deserves a future (Save the children, 2021). This study is imperative in the sense that it used phenomenological design to allow administrators and teachers to express their lived experience.

1.8 Significance of the Study.

This study is significant in that the findings would be useful to the government of Zambia, in that, the government will be planning adequately after knowing the challenges regarding the girl-mother re-entry policy implementation. The findings would be beneficial to Policy-makers as they play a major role in strengthening the implementation of the policy and coming up with guidelines that can lead to effective girl re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. The findings would also be beneficial in the sense that they would highlight the challenges regarding the re-entries of girl mothers in primary schools after maternity leave. Findings would help policymakers to be aware of the awareness levels of re-entry policy in primary schools. Girl mothers would benefit, in the sense that they would be re-admitted to schools. When the challenges of re-entry policy are known absenteeism might be reduced. Not only that but also, the study adds to the body of literature on girl mothers' re-entry policy in the primary section of Education as many scholars who have contributed to the body of literature in this area,

1.9 Scope of the Study.

The study focused on the primary section of education in 5 selected schools, in the Northern Province, Mungwi District, Zambia. Northern Province was an ideal area for this study in the sense that, it is among the leading provinces with high cases of girl pregnancy and low re-entries. Additionally, Table 1.1 illustrates the gender parity index (GPI) of less than 1 in most grades in Northern, meaning that in most grades gender parity index (GPI) is favoring boys over girls. The participants of this study such as guidance and counseling teachers and head teachers were carefully selected in 5 schools. This study was conducted from September 22- May 23.

1.10 Limitation of the Study.

The study focused on specific group and context, making it challenging to generalize the findings to broader population. The study also relied on the subjective interpretation. Therefore, results may be influenced by the biases of the participants. Additionally, the study involved limited number of participants and this limited the diversity experiences of the school administrators and teachers on the girl mother's re-entry policy implementation.

1.11 Assumption of the Study.

The following were the assumption of the study:

- The study assumed that despite the good intent of supporting the academic progress of girl-mothers, there could be causes that have influenced the smooth implementation of re-entry policy in primary schools.
- The head-teachers, guidance, and counseling are aware of what re-entry policy entails.
- Re-entry policy guides are readily available in schools.

1.12 Theoretical Framework.

This study anchored on social integration theory. Emile Durkheim, a French philosopher, and sociologist was one of the pioneers in developing the concept of social integration. A father of modern sociology, Durkheim is known for having lived from 1858 to 1917. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005), defined Social Integration as a dynamic, ethical process in which all participants engage in conversation to establish and uphold peaceful social relations. Social integration theory can be summed up as a set of rules that govern how individuals and groups interact with one another in a larger society. Jain and Leelaram (2017), define integration as removal of barriers, bringing disparate groups together to participate equally, and fusing parts into a whole. Beresneviciute (2003), adds that social integration refers to relationships among the actors, or how the actors (agents) accept social rules, and it denotes the fundamentals by which people (actors, agents, or subjects) are bound to one another in the social setting.

Stryker (2006) argues that society is a setting for shared experiences or a web of relationships, a web of communication interaction, and the reciprocal influence of people acting with consideration for one another. Members of an integrated community naturally perceive shared norms, beliefs, values, or ideals within the group and form a collective consciousness. Thus, groups can be integrated along familial, tribal, national, racial, political, and religious lines. Individuals are linked together by collective consciousness, which promotes social integration (Jain and Leelaram, 2017). In an increasingly globalized world, meeting the social challenges that all societies face requires group integration and cohesion (Clippinger, 2007).

Some key features of the social integration theory include participation, how people accept and interpret social rules within society and the inclusion of diverse groups in social settings based on gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

Participation: Agarwal (2001), participation is defined as an active, interactive process in which all stakeholders have a voice and a say in how decisions are made. Participation in social life can take many forms and is one of the most important factors in social integration. Social participation is the result of most of the population of various ethnic groups successfully adapting and integrating. The term "social participation" is used here in its broadest sense, encompassing a wide range of issues. For example, ethnically indivisible civic and political participation; participation in society's economic, political, and cultural life; representation at various levels of government; and participation in groups of fellow citizens. Such a view of social participation allows one to maintain that it ensures the stability of integration (of course at different levels of intensity and activity) (Beresnevieiute, 2003),

Daniel et al., (2017) explain how participation by a diverse group is essential in social settings. Diverse groups have extensive historical and local knowledge of previous policies, which can be extremely valuable change agents in supporting policy learning and preventing failed policies from being repeated. They have insights that can aid in the selection of policies that are more likely to be implemented effectively locally. These individuals could be those who hold positions such as management staff, reporting to stakeholder steering committees, and who try to involve people in the process and provide this connecting service. According to Wiener and Diez (2003), the primary goal of stakeholders' participation to effectively implement the policy is to promote inclusion and ownership.

1.13 Conceptual Framework.

The study's conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework of the study.

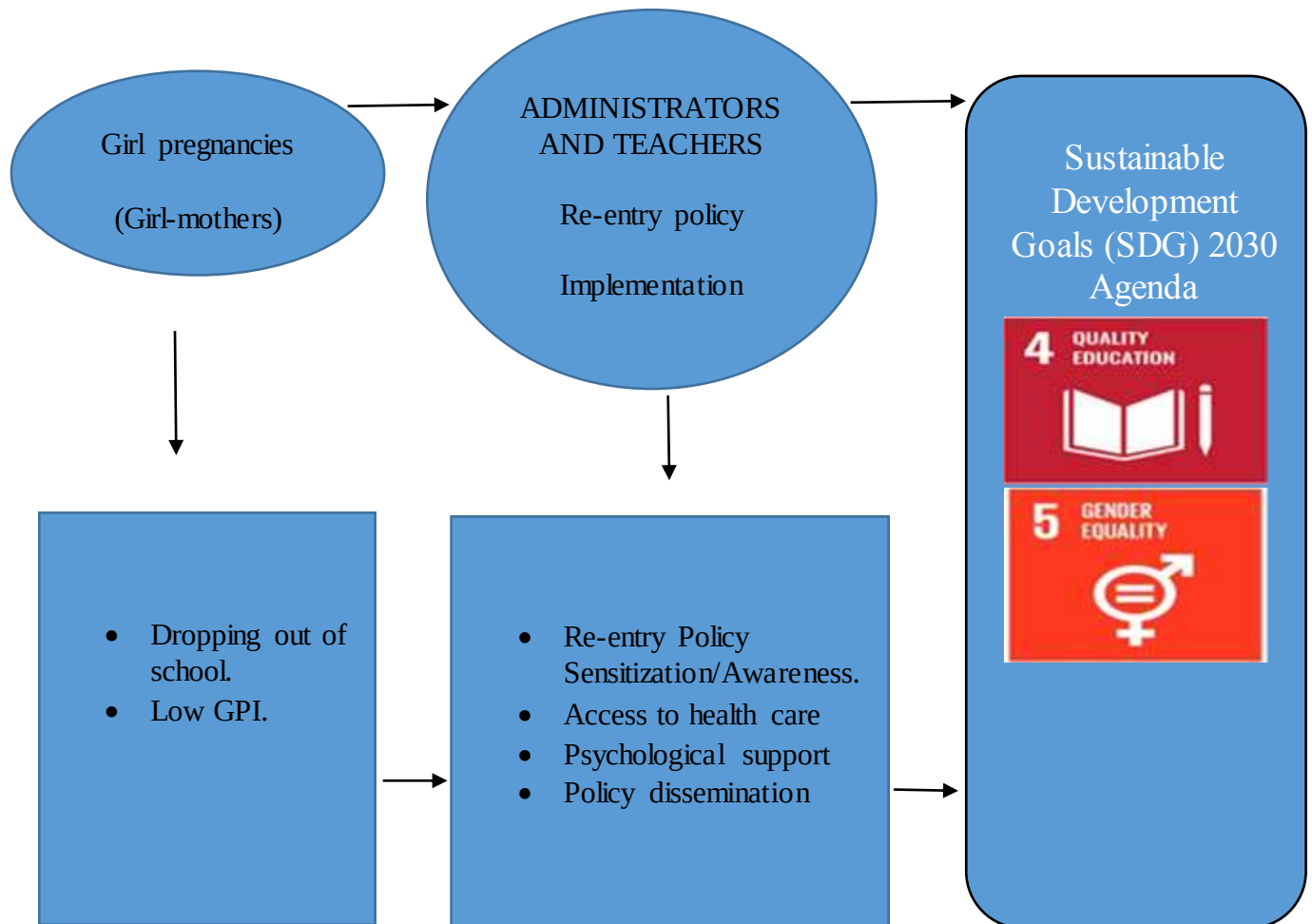


Figure 1.2 is the conceptual frame work of the study. Girls' pregnancy in school are resulting to the dropping out of school which is leading to the low gender parities in primary schools (Parity index favoring boys over girls). To curb this recurring issue of dropping out of school by girls, Stakeholders in the re-entry policy should effectively implement the policy to support equal driven education. Girl mothers and pregnant learners should be sensitized about the re-entry policy, they should have access to health care and teachers and administrator should support them psychologically. Effective implementation of the policy will allow the achievement of SDG number 4 and 5 which supports quality education and inclusivity.

Inclusion/Exclusion: Social exclusion was defined as the act of being excluded from any of the social, economic, political, or cultural systems that develop an individual's integration into society. (Munck, 2009). According to Levitas (1998), social exclusion is basically problematic. It represents the most important societal divide as one between a majority that is included and a minority that is excluded. This has implications for how included and excluded groups are perceived, as well as for society's implicit model.

Different authors define social exclusion differently, but on the whole, it is agreed that this concept is related to a lack of supply of social participation and an absence of skills to effectively participate in economic, social, political, and cultural life, as well as separation from the main part of society (Klasen 1998; Combes 1998; Andersen 1999). However, the term also encompasses the denial and non-realization of civic, political, and social rights of citizenship, and it can be interpreted as an expression of unevenly allocation of various rights (Klasen, 1998). In this sense, social exclusion is a widespread category that encompasses economic, political, cultural, religious, and social aspects, as well as multidimensional mechanisms that exclude individuals or groups from involvement in group interactions and rights to social integration (Andersen 1999).

Ineffectiveness in the re-entry policy implementation is a social phenomenon. It is caused by different factors that involve a wide range of actors from social settings with different values, beliefs, gender identity, age, location, occupation, race, ethnic group, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation. In this study, the administrators and guidance and counseling teachers were identified as the key role players in the girl mothers' re-entry policy. The administrators and guidance and counseling teachers are the ones who enforce the implementation of the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in primary schools with the involvement of various actors from society. Therefore, this study used social integration theory to make meaning of the findings.

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms

Implementation: This is the process of putting a plan or a decision into effect. It involves taking the intended effect actions, steps, or measures outlined in a policy and carry them out in practice.

It usually involves coordinating activities, allocating resources, and ensuring that the intended goals and objectives are achieved

Re-entry Policy: Re-entry policy typically refers to set of guidelines, rules, or procedures that govern the return of learners in school after a prolonged absence. In this study re-entry policy is frame that governs the return of girl mothers in school after a maternity leave

Stakeholders: In this study stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest or concern in a particular system. In a context of Education, stakeholders for the re-entry policy typically includes: learners, parents of the learners, teachers, community members, Ministry of Education and the government.

Administrators: In this study administrators are individuals responsible for managing and overseeing the overall functioning of education institution. Some of the responsibilities of the administrators in this study include: policy implementation and student affairs

Teachers: In this study teachers are individuals who are professionally engaged in practice of education. They play a crucial role in instructing and guiding the learners in various aspects in education, fostering their intellectual, and social development.

Girl mothers: In this study, these are school going girls who become mothers. The term emphasizes their age, highlighting that they are not adolescents or young adults who have taken on the role of motherhood but children or girls in primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter focused on reviewing the related literature to the study from an international, regional and national perspective. Under this section, the review of literature specifically focused on girl-mothers' re-entry policy implementation in schools: administrators and teachers' awareness level about re-entry policy in schools; the challenges and possibilities of re-entry policy implementation in schools.

2.2 Re-entry policy awareness in schools.

2.2.1 Re-entry policy awareness in schools, Western countries perspective.

Many reasons contribute to thousands of girl-mothers' dropping out of school. Surprisingly, teachers and administrators are ignorant that these girl-mothers may and should return to school (Human Rights Watch, 2018). According to Kost and Henshaw (2016), many research findings have confirmed that the United States of America is not immune to early pregnancies and girl-mothers dropping out of school without the knowledge of the possibility of re-admission. Busso et al. (2017), adds that the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) has been established in many U.S. communities to raise awareness about adolescent pregnancy. TOP is a high school-level teen pregnancy and school dropout prevention program that focuses on children who are at high risk of dropping out due to teen mothering or fathering. Teenage pregnancy in Brazil is typically associated with a lack of information and access to programs and services dedicated to teen sexual and reproductive health, which exacerbates socio-economic vulnerabilities and even social identity loss (Cruz et al., 2021).

Pan America Health Organization and United Nations Population Fund (2017), stated that making early pregnancy visible and raising awareness among policymakers, community leaders, and the public makes its drivers, impact, and most impacted populations more visible. According to Almeida and Packard (2018), different public high schools in Ecuador have introduced an intervention program known as "Text Me Maybe". It was introduced to introduce two teenage

pregnancy components among public high school students in the academic year 2013–14. The first was a "peer-to-peer" education program in municipal schools that trained student leaders in sexual and reproductive health, gender roles, and prejudices and stereotypes. The students shared information with their peers through adolescent-friendly events such as tailored workshops, games, and other interactive activities. In the second, behavioral component, information was given via mobile phone text messages at critical periods, such as weekend evenings, to teenagers of their long-term goal. The program was introduced to raise awareness and prevent teenage pregnancy as a school-based intervention. According to Cuevas et al., (2015), attending a Text Me Maybe school boosted the number of people who are currently studying and awareness on re-entry.

2.2.2 Re-entry policy awareness in schools, western Africa perspective.

According to Dorah (2021), two of the questioned head-teachers believe that advocacy efforts for awareness and sensitization are insufficient to effect behavioral change in stakeholders, which is required for the re-entry policy to be implemented successfully. Dorah further states that girl-mothers, students, parents, school heads, instructors, and the MOE official all reported various levels of awareness to the instruction regarding the re-entry policy. Most of the girl-mothers interviewed revealed that their parents were rarely sensitized on the re-entry directive, while some revealed that their parents were not aware of the re-entry regulations, and only a few revealed that their parents were aware and had been sensitized on the policy. Jeffrey (2016), states that among other things, the reason why girl-mothers do not return to school after childbirth was due to parents not being sufficiently educated on the purpose and benefits of the re-entry directive's provisions.

2.2.3 Re-entry policy awareness in schools, Eastern Africa perspective.

According to Kiptanui (2020), there is a lack of information concerning re-entry policy and many of the participants agreed. The interviewed head-teachers indicated that they were ignorant of the policy and emphasized that puberty catches most teenagers off guard, and by the time they are aware of the changes in their bodies, they are already pregnant. According to research conducted by the Population Council (2021), states that in many Kenyan communities, parents of girl-mothers are uninformed of their rights to return to school. Nguru (2017), adds that awareness

of the re-entry policy varied across the region, with many stakeholders unaware of its existence. The survey also indicated that many girls drop out of school and do not seek re-admission, and that their parents in the community were unaware of the policy's existence. According to Kawala (2021), participants acknowledged that they were aware of the re-entry policy, which was implemented as a directive to permit girl mothers to take exams. However, policy management issues remain unresolved.

2.2.4 Re-entry policy awareness in schools, Southern Africa perspective.

Kapasule et al., (2020), reported that girls had heard about re-entry policy. Other girls claimed to have heard it on the radio, while others claimed to have heard it through friends or teachers. Samati (2016), adds that once the readmission policy was established in 1993, the Malawian government, with the assistance of various non-governmental organizations, marketed the re-entry policy campaign in each district for one month and re-entry policy is well-publicized in schools.

According to Kapasule et al., (2020), few questions were asked to the instructors during the re-entry policy campaign (back-to-school program) in Malawi. The first was whether teachers had any views regarding the back-to-school program or the re-entry policy, and the second was whether teachers thought the re-entry policy was good and how it benefited teenage mothers. It was found that all the instructors admitted to being aware of the re-entry policy. The majority of them stated that they had never seen or handled the policy document, while a small percentage stated that they acquired the information from meetings and the media and had no ideas on the procedures to be followed when readmitting the girls. A small percentage also stated that they had read some of the policy text, but not in depth.

According to UNESCO (2018), the learner pregnancy policy authorized by Namibia's Cabinet in 2009, allows pregnant and childbearing girls in school to continue their education as well as re-enter after birth. However, participants in the national EUP dialogue acknowledged that policy understanding among teachers, parents, and students is inconsistent, and implementation is irregular. Some stakeholders, especially parents, openly reject the learner pregnancy Policy, believing it is too permissive and appears to encourage early sexual beginnings and pregnancies. Communities are not completely aware of the policy Circular 35 on pregnant girls and girl

mothers, and school administrators are reluctant to implement and sensitize learners and communities about the policy (Zimbabwe National Dialogue, 2017).

2.2.5 Re-entry policy awareness in schools, national perspective.

Chiyota (2020), reported that several schools did not have re-entry policy rules, and that most teachers were ignorant about the policy. Muyunda (2021), adds that many school heads are unaware of the policy guidelines.

Nsalamba et al. (2019), states that the teachers do not understand the policy rules, the policy's goal, or their role in implementing the policy. Furthermore, findings revealed that the school head-teachers or district educational board secretariat officials had not formally communicated to them the intentions the Ministry of General Education established the policy without providing a clear framework on how the policy will be implemented. On the other hand, schools did not sufficiently educate students on preventing early pregnancy. Most of the learners were uninformed of the re-entry policy and its criteria because the head-teachers and teachers never communicated with them about the re-entry policy.

According to Ntambo and Kabubi (2017), teachers acknowledged awareness of the policy and the ability to define what it was. Most of the re-entered mothers who were interviewed reported that they heard about re-entry policy from their peers and not from their teachers and parents. Some participants also stated that in some cases, even students are unaware, which is why many do not re-enter or return after pregnancy (Chiyota, 2020). Fellow students of girl-mothers were also dissatisfied with the level of awareness of the re-entry policy in schools. Teachers rarely provide extensive information about the policy to students. Girl-mothers who participated in the study, 30 of them heard about the policy from the friend, 3 of them from the media, 2 of them from the circular policy and 10 of them from the teachers and parents. This demonstrates how critical it was for schools to step up advocacy efforts, as child networks appear to be more effective at informing one another (Ntambo and Kabubi, 2017).

2.3 Challenges affecting re-entry policy implementation in schools.

2.3.1 Challenges that affect policy implementation in schools, Western countries perspective.

School dropout due to early pregnancy can cause societal problem such as criminality, and poor job and career growth. Adolescent school dropout is a severe problem in many countries, China's rural areas inclusively (Chang et al. 2016; No et al. 2016; Rosenberg et al. 2015; Zuilkowski et al. 2016). Dropping out of school by teenagers for a variety of reasons, including early pregnancies, has enduring negative implications for individual learners, families, schools, and communities, and they will have substantial detrimental consequences when they approach adulthood (Fernandez-Suarez et al. 2016).

According to Dangal (2018), school dropout due to early pregnancy is a growing societal concern around the world. Many studies have found that the average age of first sexual contact is falling, implying that today's girls are becoming sexually active at an earlier age. Furthermore, few schoolgirls utilize contraception and are at high risk of pregnancy. This results in situations such as dropping out of school, falling into poverty, marrying young, and developing sexually transmitted infections.

The World Bank considers Covid-19 as one of the constraints to the implementation of re-entry policies. World Bank (2021), reported that keeping disadvantaged girls enrolled in school is difficult under normal conditions, but the health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have added challenges to enrolling and keeping learners in schools. Many children have been isolated from a school during lockdowns owing to school closures, financial challenges, a lack of access to technology, illness, or other difficult conditions. Without a deliberate and all-encompassing approach, momentary disengagement can lead to early marriages and permanent dropout. Under these conditions, considerable work will be required to re-enroll most students, and special attention must be devoted to previously vulnerable groups such as girls, refugees, and children with specific educational requirements. Another constraint to re-entry policy implementation is a legal impediment. UNFPA (2020), advocates for a comprehensive approach that combines various interventions, such as removing legal barriers to girls sexual and reproductive health services, continuing to expand their coverage, increase access of modern

contraceptives, and encouraging the use and dissemination of lengthy contraceptive methods. It also campaigns for thorough sexual education in and out of school, sexual abuse prevention and care initiatives, programs concentrating on girls' empowerment and understanding of their rights, and steps to avoid early marriage and unions, among other things

According to UNFPA (2020), adolescent girls, especially those under the age of 15, have the greatest maternal mortality risks connected with pregnancy and birth related problems, both of which are primary causes of death. As a result, the World Health Organization's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescent Health (2016-2030) recommends a set of steps to minimize avoidable fatalities, recognizing that a considerable proportion of pregnancy problems may be addressed through excellent care. Puerperal sepsis, postpartum hemorrhage, Eclampsia, and safe abortion are the most preventable causes of maternal mortality. Every year, 47 women between the ages of 10 and 19 die during pregnancy, birth, or post-partum, according to the Vital Statistics Systems of the nations studied (WHO, 2015).

Masterson et al., (2021), discovered in Arkansas, USA, that early pregnancy can be the primary cause for dropping out of school, posing a challenge to re-entry policy. Girls leave or are removed from educational institutions because they are pregnant or married. Further, early pregnancy has a direct impact on school dropout amongst female learners and leads to the gaps in learning experienced by both female and male learners. UNFPA (2019), and Cruz et al., (2021) confirms that adolescent pregnancy contributes to school dropout and it must be addressed.

Masterson et al., (2021), adds that the problem of early pregnancy in the region demands special attention. In 2016, 14 percent of the 777,000 pregnancies among teenagers under the age of 15 reported in developing nations were carried out by mothers from Latin America and the Caribbean. This figure is important when we consider that women under the age of 15 in the region account for only 8% of the global total. These results should raise red flags about the need for early adolescent and childhood initiatives. Pregnancy-related school dropout is an issue of public concern worldwide nowadays (Dangal, 2018). Many studies have revealed that today's teens are becoming sexually active at an increasingly younger age. On top of that, few schoolgirls use contraceptives because of lack of awareness and are at risk of pregnancy. This

causes scenarios like leaving school, poverty, very early marriage, and contracting sexually transmitted infections. Although early marriage and pregnancy are mostly connected to school dropout, proof confirming a direct and causal connection is limited (Delprato, Akyeampong, Sabates & Hernandez-Fernandez, 2018).

However, Ventura and Freedman (2020), reported that early pregnancy has declined to 42 percent since its peak in 1990, and the teen birth rate in the United States is now at an all-time low. Despite this remarkable progress, nearly three out of every ten girls in the United States will surely become pregnant before the age of twenty. The United States has the highest number of female student pregnancies in the developed world, with approximately 750,000 pregnancies to adolescents each year. According to UNFPA (2020), Latin America and the Caribbean have the world's second-highest adolescent pregnancy rate. Furthermore, it is estimated that 18% of all births in the region are from mothers under the age of 20. Every year, roughly one million and a half teenagers aged 15 to 19 give birth. These statistics become much more concerning when we understand that many of these pregnancies are the consequence of inadequate information, limited availability of contraceptive techniques, and sexual and gender-based violence. Thus, pregnancies that may have been avoided result in limited opportunities for girls.

According to a study conducted by Pareek (2021), sexual category separation persists in India. Despite encouraging regulations, the necessity of changing cultural attitudes, particularly the assumption that girls and boys are equal, has been severely undervalued. The sexual category acts in concert with other social groupings, resulting in a variety of disadvantages for girls. Gender interacts with place aspects (rural/urban), status, age, religion, race, disability, and so on to create a more dynamic reality.

According to Pareek (2021), registering of girls in educational institutions is only the first step. Maintaining consistency is a more difficult challenge because development is hampered by several factors related to family obligations and other issues. Scarcity of school supplies as an impediment, lack of basic civics facilities such as toilets has a serious impact on girls' schooling and leads to a large number of dropouts, especially as puberty approaches. The study also disclosed that some aspects are linked to the safety of the girl's student or child, and this trouble begins as soon as they leave their homes.

2.3.2 Challenges that affect policy implementation in schools, Western Africa perspective.

According to Baafi (2020), forced marriages in Ghana increases because of early pregnancy. Osagiobare (2015) discovered that early marriage hinders girl-child education. The belief that if a woman is well educated, she will dominate her husband; and that misinterpretation of Islam's position on girl-child education hinders girl-child education.

Dual responsibilities and sexual category due to negative cultural beliefs is another challenge for re-entry policy implementation. Baafi (2020), reported that the belief that a girl-child roles and responsibilities are to take care of household tasks with little or no obligation to demand any property belonging to their respective families, becomes complex when they become pregnant, increasing the likelihood of early marriage. A young mother who is still a child with no other sisters to help with household chores seems to have no choice but to continue working in the house combined with caregiving responsibilities and education. As the result, the girl-child will drop out of school due to her dual role in the household as a child and a mother to a new-born baby. Being a parent, a learner, and a child with domestic chores becomes too much for the young mother, causing her to drop out. Osagiobare (2015), discovered that some parents believe that female children are less proficient than male children and thus less worthy of formal schooling, and the cultural belief that the kitchen is the best and highest place for a woman to function. Dorah et al., (2021) also reported that some parents involve their girl child to complete all housework before going to school, teachers and boys always use the wooden stick to beat the girls in their classes and that some male teachers sexually abuse girls, which makes girl children more vulnerable to dropping out. Notwithstanding, all of these gendered roles overlap to limit re-entry to school by girl-mothers. Dorah et al., (2021), further states that some cultural groups believe that having an intense discussion about female sexuality with their children is inappropriate, as it limits the aspirations of the girl-educated child. Some parents do not participate in their girl children's education because they believe they will not benefit from it, and some parents believe that grown-up girl children should be able to provide her own financial needs, which has a negative impact on girl children's educational aspirations.

Okere (2021), negative cultural beliefs about girl-child education are a serious hindrance to male and female children having equal access to education. Traditional beliefs have been found to

promote negative attitudes that limit family and community assistance for girls' education. Parents' belief that having invested in a girl-child education is meaningless because she will marry into another family is the most common negative cultural belief that reinforces gender disparities in access to education. Okere further states that, another significant obstacle to girls having equal access to education as boys is male child preference. The study also identified poverty/financial difficulties as a major barrier to male and female equal access to education. This has frequently been cited as a significant obstacle to a girl's access to education

Dorah et al., (2021), state that schools lack display facilities for girls who give birth. Some schools in Damaturu and Bade Local Government areas do not have chairs or textbooks, which is unacceptable. The study further states that girls who give birth feel stigmatized and do not return to school. Girls are often bullied when arriving to school, that many girls are always late to school, and that girls are shy to come to school with pregnancy. These problems that girl child experiences in school causes them not to stay in school and boys are always aggressive toward girls. According to Ishaku (2020), girls will stay in school if the environment is safe and there are health and sanitary facilities in schools.

According to Baafi (2020), young mothers' resilience to reach their goals is defined by their vision, ambitions, and desires, regardless of the barriers produced by gender roles intersections. School-age girls have a variety of future goals, which can change for the better or worse if they become pregnant. Girl-mothers and pregnant students who are academically strong are eager to enter a variety of occupations that need at least a postsecondary education. They readily grasp the importance of education in providing options for their future.

2.3.3 Challenges that affect re-entry policy implementation in schools, East Africa perspective.

Poverty.

According to Kalee (2020), the most of girls who fell pregnant and never returned to school were from a lower socioeconomic level, whereas those who re-enter after giving birth were from a higher socio-economic class. The bulk of the girls came from large households with many children, showing that the larger the family, the less likely the parents cared about their children's

education. Financial restrictions are another factor that adds considerably to the difficulty in implementing re-entry strategies. According to Kiptanui (2020), health issues caused by pregnancy and motherhood prevent girls from attending school on a daily basis in Kenya, resulting in ineffective curriculum coverage in schools and leaving them unprepared for placement examinations. The headteacher also said that girl-mothers frequently miss school owing to difficulties such as baby sickness or a shortage of caretakers at home, causing them to miss out on academics.

Another factor complicating the implementation of re-entry programs is the lack of information among girl mothers. According to Kiptanui (2020), the study discovered a lack of reproductive health awareness in Kenya, which contributes to teenage pregnancy. Because girls are not educated about sexuality, they engage in sexual relations with married males because they are uninformed of the painful experience and repercussions of being pregnant. Certain communities consider sex to be a taboo subject, and it is never discussed with minors. Girls who are experiencing physiological and other changes in their bodies find it difficult to discuss such topics with their parents, so they seek advice from their peers, increasing the risk of girls experimenting with sex, which can result in an unexpected pregnancy.

2.3.4 Challenges that affect policy implementation in schools, Southern Africa perspective.

Stigma and rejection from the communities and their families is among the factors contributing to ineffective policy implementation (Araz-Ledezma et al., 2020). Early pregnancy is said to generate marital strife between the girl's parents because of the dishonor they believe she has brought on the family (Ruzibiza, 2019).

However, Kapasule et al., (2020) discovered that in Malawi, teachers had differing perspectives on the achievements of teenage mothers. Half of them believed that after their readmission, the girl-mothers became more engaged and hardworking in their academic work, and as a result, their grades increased dramatically. Their conduct, behavior and overall level of discipline improved significantly as well. According to one of the teachers, following readmission, most teenage mothers avoid their male colleagues and focus solely on their schoolwork.

According to Kerina (2020), the South African constitution prohibits excluding pregnant learners from school and allows them to continue their education. Most school governing bodies responded by developing pregnancy policies that prohibit a pregnant learner from continuing her education when her pregnancy is in the seventh to the eighth month.

According to Chingaipe (2021), lockdown due to a pandemic is one of the limits in re-entry policy implementation. Malawi observed a striking surge of over 40, 000 girl pregnancy within the eight months of school break due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The situation is alarming, and stakeholders and authorities must do more to address it, as well as do more to save the female child from harm. Ord (2020), the COVID-19 epidemic is endangering girls' education like never before. School closures make girls more vulnerable to child marriage, early pregnancy, and gender-based violence, all of which reduce their chances of completing their education. With 11 million girls and boys at risk of dropping out. COVID-19 clearly poses a danger to attempts to realize all children's right to an education. World Bank (2021), suggest that in countries where families are still expected to pay fees, awarding enrollment fee waivers or scholarships may encourage students to return to school. School fees can create a barrier to education for students from low-income backgrounds (Global Partnership for Education [GPE] 59 2020). Waiving or subsidizing fees is not unique to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Sierra Leone waived secondary school enrollment and examination fees for two years following an Ebola-related school shutdown (World Bank 2015).

2.3.5 Challenges that affect policy implementation in schools, National perspective.

According to Chitempa (2017), the biggest difficulty limiting the campaign against child marriage in Zambia is the presence of a dual legal system comprised of traditional(customary) and statutory laws. When it comes to combating child marriages and supporting females' rights, our dual legal system is a significant failure. According to customary law, there is nothing wrong with marrying off a girl who has reached puberty because the law automatically qualifies her to a woman who is ready for marriage. you can alert and educate community members about the consequences of child marriage, but you will encounter a lot of opposition and reluctance because customary law permits child marriage to exist. In cases where statutory and customary law overlap, the customary law takes precedence. Aside from the dual legal system, our statutory

law lacks a consistent concept of what a child is. Each Act has its own definition, which complicates the fight against child marriage. We now have a 2016 updated constitution with a definition that is consistent with the internationally accepted definition. Other provisions of the law, on the other hand, are highly helpful in combatting child marriage, but they have varied definitions of what a child is. According to the report, it can be difficult to know which legal system to utilize, especially when dealing with child marriage. In rural areas there are no judges to preside over court cases and other matters. The village headman or headmen preside over the majority of cases.

Girls Not Brides and Plan Zambia (2015) also revealed existing disparities in the statutory law, respondents indicated that the two systems always come into conflict when addressing child marriage and that, in most cases, customary law prevails over statutory law. The responses were correct in stating that marriages in rural areas are never registered with the civic Centre and are instead conducted under customary law. According to Fischer et al. (2015), in Zambia, addressing child marriage is a complex and tough effort. Girls are deciding to marry pose a significant obstacle to the battle against child marriage. It is a significant challenge for parents, and other institutions alike. Another element is the unexpected negative impact of warnings about child marriages, as many warnings encouraging child safety are not accepted or received by some community members.

According to Chitempa (2017), poverty is a cause of child marriage. However, the findings also revealed that a lack of education and low literacy levels contribute to child marriage. Less-educated parents are more likely to marry off their female children because they do not understand the benefits of education or the disadvantages associated with child marriage. According to the study findings, girls who have a parent or guardian who is uneducated or has a low level of education are discouraged from completing their education and instead drop out and marry, just like their forefathers who married before them. In addition to the above-mentioned obstacles, there are high education financing prices, distance to school, a lack of creative activities, and poverty (Fischer et al., 2015).

Lack of co-operation or co-ordination mechanism among service providers has also been reported to be a factor that challenges the fight against child marriage (Fischer et al., (2015).

Banda and Nowanga (2017), reported that very little details on the re-entry policy are one factor the policy has not received much attention. This could be inconsistent dissemination of these materials or a complete lack of effort on the part of the team at the grassroots level to share and engage with the key stakeholders. Teachers have been among those who have been vocal in their opposition to the policy's implementation since its beginning. Such a disposition may nonetheless have an impact on their involvement and, as a result, the seamless implementation of the policy.

Muyunda (2021), states that district educational board secretariat officials had delegated responsibility for implementing the re-entry policy to school heads. Some of the heads did not follow the policy's current rules. The headteachers' failure to follow the re-entry policy guidelines could be linked to the policy's confusion or the district board's lack of policy management procedures. The study's findings

Cultural beliefs and traditions are another hindrance to the effective re-entry policy implementation. According to Phiri and Machila (2020), traditional ideas hold that girls are not designed for education. As a result, no effort is made to re-enter them in school or aid with the child's upkeep in order to get them back on track to complete their education. These are the stories and perspectives of TMs in Zambia. Chitempa (2017), revealed that traditional practices are degrading a girl child and put her at danger of child marriage. One of these customs is the elongation of the labia minora, in which a girl as young as 10 is urged to begin pulling her labia minora to bring more sexual satisfaction to the husband. Once the girl begins pulling, she is persuaded to begin testing on them, which can result to early pregnancy and her becoming a child bride. Another practice is the *nkolola* (female initiation ceremony), which exposes the girl child not only to child marriage but also to early pregnancy, which would later result in child marriage. If damaging traditional and cultural practices persist, most young girls will end up marrying before finishing high school. According to the findings, all groups of respondents saw damaging traditional and cultural practices as impediments to the battle against child marriage.

According to Simaata (2018), the issue of customs and cultures that impede females' advancement in rural areas should be addressed. Some of these factors include initiation ceremonies in which females are isolated, which impede their advancement since they are taught

how to care for homes and spouses when they marry. The societal perception that marriage is a big achievement in the life of a girl is critical to these elements. Hence, being pregnant develops as a venue to enter into marriage rather than education (Mushibwe, 2018). When females approach puberty, they are primarily groomed and taught things that prepare them for marriage rather than education. From this point, some girls lose interest in school and prepare for marriage for the advantage of their parents. Thus, in Zambian culture, girls in families are viewed as a source of wealth not only in rural areas but also in urban places (Simaata, 2018).

The educational atmosphere appears to be unprepared for the returning girl-mothers. According to Ntumbo and Malvin (2017), girls who become pregnant avoid returning to school due to a lack of support systems and unfriendly conditions. Mushibwe (2018), adds that uncondusive school atmosphere, such an environment can generate a lot of negativity in the returning girl-mother who is desperate for help in order to stay in school.

According to Ntumbo and Malvin (2017), there is a lot of stigma among teachers and students. The verbal abuse from teachers and classmates, and rudeness are difficult to tolerate for the already unstable individuals. These teenage mothers have the option of transferring to another school or dropping out entirely. Girl-mothers' self-esteem suffers because of the abuse they endure, as does their ability to participate in class. Other parents named after the child's name (mother of X), for example, are derogatory utterances that influence the re-entry policy. According to Chiyota (2020), some classmates expressed their dissatisfaction with being friends with girl-mothers verbally. Girl-mothers reported experiencing peer discrimination in both society and at school, with the school experience being the worst. According to some participants, teenage mothers were called labels designed to identify them as mothers (e.g., *bana john*, mother to X).

Mushibwe (2018) suggests that well-trained guidance and counsellor mentors, supportive administrators, teachers, and other students may be required. Mufalo and Kabeta (2019) states that secondary schools lacked counseling and guidance services and schools had no trained counselors to handle counseling services. However, Chiyota (2020) states that guidance and services were available in schools despite having some challenges of not having trained counselors and the teachers who have taken a role or have been appointed they usually have

limited time because of overload, teaching, managing examination related work and other tasks. Trained counselors are required to handle arising issues which need proper attention, when a returning student returns, she instantly assumes a different name (returning mother, parent, etc.), which immediately identifies and discriminates her from others. Such a situation may result in loneliness or sadness, necessitating the need for assistance. According to Chitempa (2017), it is a great shame for a family to have an unwanted mother, hence many parents choose to marry off the girl to the man responsible. Nsalamba et al, (2019), state that some girl mothers who got back to school stated that they are embarrassed and stigmatized by teachers and learners. As a result, it is challenging for them to focus on academic tasks, resulting in low school performance. A re-entered girl interviewed admitted to having profited from the policy. It permits teen mothers to attend school, in her opinion. The only issue is the mocking they are subjected to. Another adolescent mother stated that she frequently misses lessons due to pregnancy difficulties.

Muyunda (2021), cites the lack of a well-defined policy guideline as another barrier to the implementation of the re-entry policy. He further states that district educational officers lack a comprehensive policy guideline regarding what role of the district educational board secretariat should play in the implementation of the re-entry policy at the district level, and what actions the board should take to discipline and manage the teachers or head-teachers who do not implement the re-entry policy as per guidelines. The findings also revealed that some teachers encountered numerous difficulties when educating girl-mothers, resulting in the majority of teachers having a negative opinion of the re-entry policy. It was uncovered that the re-entry policy received no support from head-teachers or teachers during its development and implementation. The Ministry of General Education and the DEBS had not established effective measures to materially and economically girl-mothers. As a result, several girl-mothers did not return to school because they believed they had lost track of school activities and that returning to school was a waste of time for them.

According to Nsalamba et al (2019), the Ministry of General Education or District Education Board Secretary did not provide to the teachers the rules and guidelines when they detect a pregnant. Muyunda (2021), adds that the outcomes of the head teachers' interviews showed some of the obstacles in effectively implementing the re-entry strategy in schools. Participants emphasized the absence of clear policy instructions on what to do when a pregnancy is

discovered, as well as a lack of policy ownership due to non-inclusive engagement of important stakeholders during the policy creation process. The re-entry policy has never been explained to instructors, and the lack of rules inhibits the implementation of the program in schools (Nsalamba et al, 2019).

Mushibwe (2018), states that the re-entry policy may not be achieved, allowing for non-uniform implementation in faith-based institutions and the development of non-supportive processes by expected implementers. Religious views and different faiths contribute to policy implementation challenges in Zambia.

2.5 Gap Identification.

A thorough reveal of literature around the globe was conducted, from western countries, regional perspective within Africa and at national level.

A lot of studies on re-entry policy have been conducted around the globe. However, most literature about girl-mothers' re-entry policy explores the secondary education. Most of the literature were collected from the studies that were conducted in secondary schools, very little is done on the policy implementation in primary schools, and the results on re-entry policy implementation in primary schools are low when compared to secondary schools as stated by (Muyunda, 2021). Literature on re-entry policy implementation at an international level, regional level, and national level in primary education is very limited, Secondary education has been the most explored area on re-entry policy implementation. Therefore, this study will bridge the existing population gap on girls' re-entry policy implementation in primary schools and the study will also add to the existing little body of knowledge on re-entry policy implementation in primary education.

2.6 Chapter summary.

A thorough examination of related literature to the topic was conducted all around the world. This chapter focused on reviewing the study's associated literature from an international, regional, and national standpoint. The review of literature in this chapter was specifically focused on re-entry policy implementation in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

The previous chapter presented the literature review on diverse perspectives on the re-entry policy implementation in schools: re-entry policy awareness in schools; challenges affecting re-entry policy implementation and strategic intervention of pregnancies among girls in schools. This chapter consists of research design and methodology, target population, sample size, Research procedures, research instruments, Validity and reliability of the study instruments. Data collection procedure, Data analysis, and ethics.

3.2 Research design.

The qualitative research approach was used in this study. Qualitative research is a method that seeks to explore and comprehend the significance that individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). According to Jones et al., (2006), the goal of qualitative research is to illustrate and understand better the rich lives of humans and the world in which they live through in-depth investigation. A qualitative research method was the most suited to this study because it allowed the researcher to collect thorough contextually relevant data from key participants on re-entry policy implementation in primary schools.

Interpretivism paradigm was adopted for the study. According to Taylor and Medina (2013), Interpretivism paradigm allows researchers to develop deep local understandings of teachers' and students' life-world experiences, as well as classroom, school, and community cultures, when applied to educational research. Interpretivism paradigm is suited for this study in the sense that it focused on a deep understanding of lived experiences of school administrators and teachers on the implementation of the girl re-entry policy in primary schools.

The study was a Phenomenological study. The phenomenology study design allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the school administrators and teachers on re-entry policy implementation. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the inquirer for this research design seeks to build the essence of lived experiences of the participants. Frederick. J et al., (2011), adds that phenomenology is the study of people's ways of being in the world, ways of

experiencing, and the meaningful ways in which the world is experienced. The researcher used phenomenology design in the sense that it provides the lived meaningful experiences of the participants in the study.

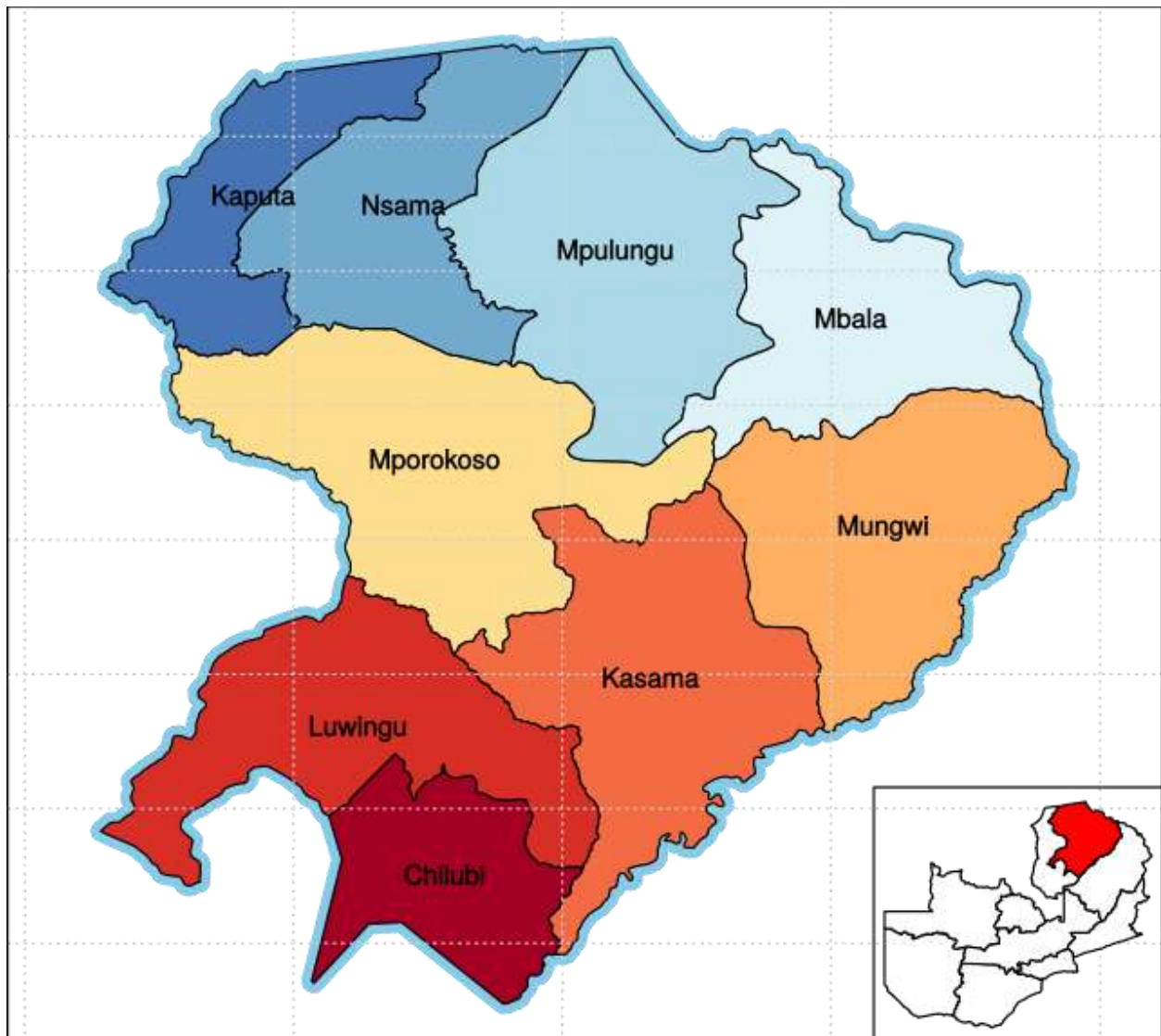
3.3 Location of the study

In choosing the research site, the researcher depended on the principle that the decision to use a particular research site is tied closely to obtaining access to a fitting population of potential subjects (Berg, 2001),

The research was conducted in Mungwi district located in the Northern Province of Zambia. The district consists of 151, 058 population of people. 49.5% are males while 50.5% are females. Mungwi district shares boundaries with 5 other districts, including: Isoka, Mbala, Nakonde, Chinsali and Kasama district. Mungwi district receives the rainy season from November and it ends in April and is in a tropical type of climate. The dominant ethnic and cultural (tribe) group is Bemba which practices extended family relationships. The village headmen/women lead the rural communities which are organized based on villages

According to table 1.1, Northern province of Zambia has the lowest Gender parity index (GPI), GPI of 0 in all grades, implying that there's no equal number of boys and girls in schools at all levels, the schools have more boys than girls, this indicates that there's high dropout of girls in schools. Northern Province. Mungwi district was the best research site for this study in the sense that, it is found in the province which has the low gender parity index (GPI) of 0. Therefore, this area provided the right audience or population to provide the information on re-entry policy implementation in primary schools.

Figure 3.1: Map of Northern province of Zambia.



3.4 Target population

Population is any target group of individuals that has common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Best and Khan, 1993; Tuckman, 1994). The researcher targeted the population that possess common characteristics and knowledge of the study. In schools, the researcher targeted guidance and counseling teachers, and administrators. According to the statistics from the District Education Board Secretary (2022), Mungwi district has a total number of 95 primary schools, 504 teachers and, 42, 026 total enrolments.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is the process or technique of selecting a suitable sample for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Adams and Khan, 2007).

3.5.1 Sampling technique

The study used non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected but the participants are purposively chosen depending on their characteristics and knowledge. The selection criteria for this study based on characteristics, experience and knowledge of the re-entry policy. Cohen (2007), defines purposive sampling as the process in which researchers select the cases to be included in the sample based on their decision and essential characteristics. Purposive sampling technique was used. For this reason, head-teachers and guidance and counseling teachers were purposively sampled because they are particularly important in the sense that they can give rich information about re-entry policy implementation.

3.5.2 Sample size determination and sampling procedures.

Creswell and Creswell (2018), state that sample size depends on the qualitative design being used in the study. Phenomenological studies usually employ 3-10 participants.

Participation in the study was based on key roles the participants play in their respective positions regarding the girl re-entry policy implementation. Only key people were required to participate in the study and by nature of their position in relation to the study and the knowledge they have about the study. The knowledgeable people for this study were school administrators, and guidance and counseling teachers.

The following were the participants who were sampled and took part in the study

Head teachers.

The population for the head-teachers was 95. Only 5 five head-teachers were selected to participate in the study. The head-teachers were among the participants because they oversee the

implementation of the re-entry policy in schools and they supervise the guidance and counseling teachers. They are the recipients of policy documents such as policy guidelines, and other official documents from the Ministry of Education and other government departments and stakeholders.

Guidance and counseling teachers.

Out of 95 guidance and counseling teachers, only five guidance and counseling teachers participated in the study. Guidance and counseling teachers participated in the study because they are the ones in charge of re-entry policy procedures, starting from identifying the expectant learners, counseling them and ensuring that they are re-entered after maternity leave. They are also in contact with expectant learners, girl-mothers, and other learners on a regular basis.

The schools which have received more than five cases of child pregnancy were qualified to be the site for this study. Out of 95 schools only 5 schools were sampled purposively depending on the number of pregnant cases the schools have received.

Table 2.1: Summary of the study sample.

No	Description of the sample	Population	Quantity of the sample	Sampling procedure
1	Primary schools	95	5	Purposive sampling
2	Head-teachers	95	5	Purposive sampling
3	Guidance and counseling teachers.	190	5	Purposive sampling
total	-----	380	15	

3.6 Data Collection.

The researcher collected qualitative data for the study using various types of data collection instruments. The researcher used interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The data was collected by the researcher without any assistance from the research assistants.

3.6.1 Research instruments.

According to Creswell and Poth (2016), a phenomenological study requires a standardized or streamlined data collection method that includes only one or more interviews with participants. This study applied four qualitative data collection tools namely: semi-structured interviews (one on one interviews), document analysis, unstructured questionnaires, and drawings. The use of the three tools for data collection and multiple participants enabled the researcher to maximize the studies authenticity as well as to view issues from different participants' perspectives. The strength of qualitative research lies in using more than one data collection to for the purpose of triangulation (Patton, 2002).

Unstructured interviews.

Based on a conversation, an interview is regarded as social interaction (Rubin and Rubin, 2012; Warren and Xavia Karner, 2015). It seeks to understand the world through the eyes of the participants, reveal the meaning of their experience, and uncover their lived world (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015)

Creswell (2007), states that the researcher conducts interviews using interview guides or schedules that list the questions to ask. Interviews guides can be broken into categories of structured or closed-ended and unstructured or open-ended questions. Unstructured interview questions allow respondents to freely express themselves and provide detailed information about the problem under investigation. Therefore, the researcher conducted unstructured interviews to allow guidance and counseling teachers to freely express themselves to acquire detailed information to achieve objective one.

Document analysis.

Analysis of documents complements interviews and questionnaires in the data collection process and may help answer questions that focus group discussions, and questionnaires may not address (Maree 2007). Document analysis implies focusing on all forms of written data sources that can shed more light on the issue being investigated. Written data sources may include published and unpublished documents, reports, administrative documents, email messages, newspaper articles, or document that is connected to the investigation (Modesto et al., 2013). The researcher used this data collection instrument to complement data from the interviews and questionnaires. The researcher reviewed the related documents to the study such as re-entry policy and education bulletin. By using different related literature, the researcher selected different unit of meanings from the literature (words and phrases) and categories. Thereafter, the researcher formed concepts from different words or phrases. Groups of concepts were further joined to form themes.

Unstructured questionnaire.

A questionnaire is a document containing questions designed to obtain information from the sample. It consists of structure and unstructured or open-ended questions (Modesto et al., 2013). According to Adams et al., (2007), open-ended questions require respondents to describe issues or express their thoughts and feelings in response to open questions and textual statements are used to provide answers. The unstructured questionnaire was used to allow the participants (head-teachers). To achieve objective one of this study, unstructured questionnaire was used on the head-teachers.

Drawings.

According to Horne et al., (2017), drawings depict personal emotions naturally and enable the exploration of the diversity and complexity of human experience. Zuboff (1988), states that drawings assist participants in expressing implicit or difficult-to-define feelings. Drawings allowed the participants to freely express their experiences regarding the challenges they face in the re-entry policy implementation. To achieve objective two, the head teachers and guidance

and counselling teachers used drawings to express their experiences regarding the challenges they face in the implementation of the policy.

Data collection Procedure

The whole data collection process started with seeking clearance from the District Education board secretary office (DEBS). After receiving a go-ahead letter from District Education board secretary office (DEBS), the researcher embarked on giving the consent forms to the participants who were purposively sampled to be the participants of the study. The main purpose of the study was clearly stated to the participants using the consent form. Before starting to conduct the interviews and administering open ended questionnaires, all the participant signed the consent forms. Data generation was done using the qualitative methods, one-on-one interviews, open ended questionnaire, and drawings.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is important. According to Hittlemen and Simon (2006), trustworthiness is a priority for all researchers to ensure that the data collected is relevant and representative. The criteria of credibility and trustworthiness was used to strengthen the authenticity and trustworthiness of this study results.

Multiple methods of collecting information were used, including document analysis, unstructured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and drawings, all of which were used to validate study reliability. Increasing the credibility of the study, the researcher established rapport with participants in addition despite employing member checking to review the data, its interpretation, and conclusion.

To ensure dependability, collected data from all sources were triangulated. To gain the full significance of the findings, data on transcripts collected from interviews were triangulated with data obtained from questionnaires. Denzin and Lincoln (2011), advocate for the use of primary data sources.

This study was conducted in a real-world setting for the research participants. In the case of guidance and counseling teachers, interviews were conducted within the school premises and

Bemba and English were used as the most comfortable languages to acquire information for the study. Detailed discussion on trustworthiness is discussed in full below.

3.7.1 Credibility.

According to Pilot and Beck (2012), credibility is the truth value of the data or participant views and representation of them by the researcher. March (2005), adds that credibility helps ensure that what participants say is truthful and understood accurately in order for the study to be considered trustworthy. To address this, the researchers employed a variety of data collection approaches, as well as diverse data sources.

The researcher benefited from the corroboration of several data sources in order to validate the opinions of participants, gain rich explanations, and obtain information saturation. Similarly, member check was utilized to allow participants to review the material acquired. According to Lietz and Furman (2003), member-checking permits returning the final report or themes to participants and ask them if they believe the qualitative findings are accurate.

3.7.2 Transferability.

The amount to which the researcher's results of a certain study may be transferred to a similar sample of participants is referred to as transferability (Ritcher and Mlambo, 2005). The study was conducted in the Northern Province and in five schools of Mungwi district. The results are not generalizable. Typically, the study findings are only transferable to comparable schools or study locations.

3.7.3 Dependability.

In qualitative research, dependability is one of the most important factors in ensuring trustworthiness. This is the repetition of research under similar assumptions. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010), define dependability as the degree to which the data collected and the findings would be identical if the study were duplicated. It refers to the data's stability under similar conditions (Pilot and Beck, 2009).

The researcher performed the research in a way that outlines a precise method, and the findings would similar if applied to a similar subject. The data collection methods which were utilized in

this study were assessed by the researcher's supervisor and colleagues to guarantee instrument reliability.

3.7.4 Conformability.

Cope (2014), defines confirmability as the extent to which the data study includes participant input that differs from the researchers' bias. Lietz and furman (2006), add that confirmability is all about study bias, which can be verified because generated data and findings should not represent a researcher's perspectives and meanings, but rather those of the participants

Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the precise words that were recorded during the interviews to ensure that the participants' views are appropriately taken and expressed. Multiple data techniques were used, and the researcher conducted member checking following data analysis to guarantee confirmability.

3.8 Data analysis.

Thematic data analysis was used in this study. According to Miason and Morrison (2011), qualitative analysis includes categorizing, analyzing, and extending material. Braun and Clark (2006), states that thematic analysis provides adaptable and beneficial research methods that have the potential to generate comprehensive and extensive study data. Thematic analysis was performed on data from semi-structured interviews, unstructured questionnaires, document analysis and the drawings. Data analysis started with descriptive analysis. The raw data was organized in groups depending on the position of the participant in school. The data for interviews was organized which was collected from the G&C teachers. There after the raw data collected using an open-ended questionnaire from the administrators was also organized. After descriptive analysis, evaluative analysis was conducted. At this stage, the recurring themes were organized. Thereafter, code theory was followed together with Creswell's (2014) six phases of data analysis were merged.

Step 1.

Organize and prepare the data for analysis: this stage included transcribing interviews, scanning materials, typing up field notes, and classifying and categorizing data into different types based on information sources.

Step 2.

Reading and examining the data: The researcher used this step in the analysis to provide a general sense of the material and to reflect on its overall meaning. During this stage, the researcher was also taking notes on the data.

Step 3.

Coding process: The coding process is defined by Creswell (2014) as the process of organizing data by bracketing chunks (or text or images) and writing a word denoting a category in the margins. This stage included taking text data acquired during data collection and categorizing sentences (or paragraphs) or images.

Step 4.

The coding method was used by the researcher to provide a description of the place or people, as well as categories or themes for analysis. In addition, the researcher studied the emerging themes and compiled the numerous cases into a general description of the case.

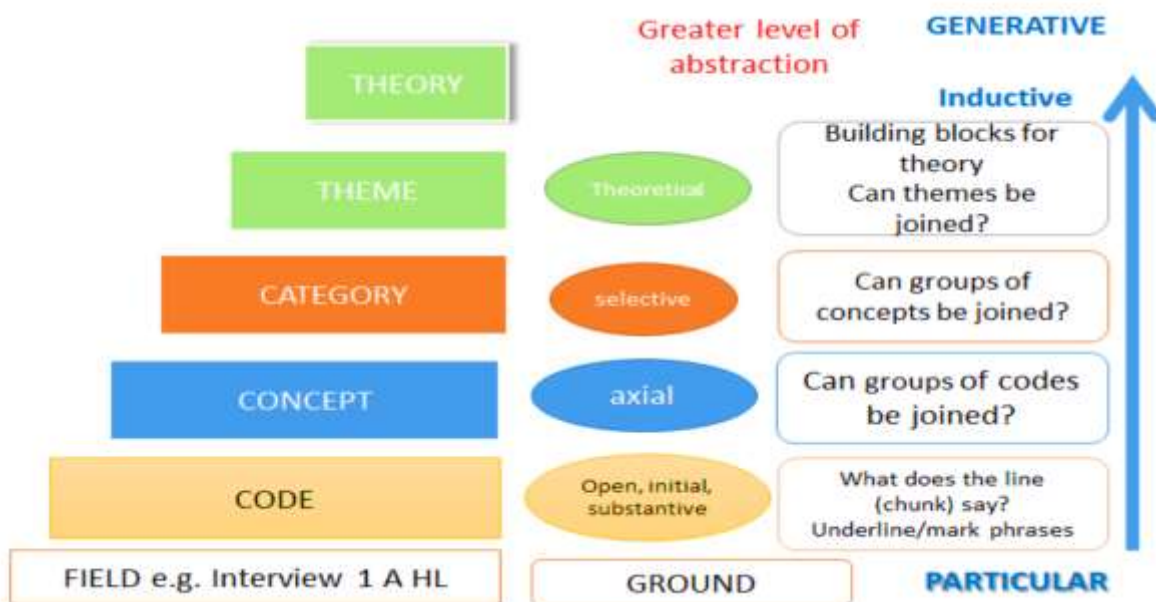
Step 5.

Moving forward with how the descriptions of the topic was conveyed in the qualitative narrative. For this step, the researcher combined the emergent themes into narrative passages, so that the findings may be a discussion of a chronology of events, a detailed discussion of various topics (complete with subthemes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and citations), or a discussion of interconnected themes. The researcher used drawings and tables to supplement the conversations.

Step 6.

Interpret the meaning of data: Data interpretation entails determining the meaning of data. The question, "What were the lessons learned?" conveys the heart of this concept (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These are the researcher's personal interpretations, couched in with the idea that the inquirer will bring to the study from a personal experience or meaning that will be formed from a comparison of the findings with information gathered from the literature or theories. Figure 3.2 summarizes the code theory the researcher used for data analysis.

Figure 3.2: Code theory.



Source: (Coherence in PG research project: Digi-Face, 2019).

3.9 Ethical consideration.

According to Tichapondwa (2013), ethical concern should be maintained throughout the whole research process, including planning, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and dissemination of research findings. Ethical concern in research is critical, especially when dealing with humans. It is important to safeguard and protect the rights and dignity of individuals and communities whose vulnerabilities limit their ability to make independent decisions. The following were considered to ensure that ethical considerations are upheld:

3.9.1 Obtain necessary permissions.

Conducting qualitative research necessitates the researcher gaining access to the study site and participants, which entails getting permission from the institution, individuals, and clearance from the university review board (Creswell, 2012). After receiving approval from the university board, the researcher requested permission from the institution's gatekeeper. Following that, the researcher asked for the permission from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to conduct research in primary schools within Mungwi district. Thereafter, the researcher asked participants for permission to participate in the study willingly by signing the consent form.

3.9.2 Privacy and Confidentiality.

The confidentiality of the research participants was always protected. The researcher ensured that the participants' identities was kept private and anonymous. The study required the development of a relationship with the participants to assure the participants' self-expression. The information acquired from the participants was treated with the full confidentiality. The respondents' privacy, dignity, and fundamental human rights was maintained.

3.9.2 Voluntary participation.

To take part in this research, participants were asked to volunteer. They were also able to withdraw at any moment. They were informed of the study's objectives and that the data will be used solely for academic purposes. To confirm their participation, the participants signed a consent form. The form gave details on the research method as well as the participants' willingness to participate in the study. Before the study started, participants completed signing the attached consent form. Freedom to withdraw at any stage of research should be guaranteed (Creswell 2003). Participants were respected and protected. According to Coretta (2003), each participant has his or her own dignity and worth as a human being, and one of the researchers' key obligations is to protect their wellbeing, at least in terms of their participation in the study process. The participants were clearly informed about the research objectives.

3.9.3 Informed consent

To promote the participants' voluntary engagement in this study, letters seeking consent to participate were written and participants signed. Each interview begun with the distribution of

consent letters. Cohen et al., (2007), states that the intent of the consent letter concept is to validate that participant grasp what is intended by participating in the specific study. Therefore, individuals were able to make an informed decision about whether to join. Participants signed letters indicating their willingness to be informed about and involved in this research.

3.9.4 Anonymity of participants.

The researcher followed the ethical committee's rules for disclosing the identity of the participants, their institutions. Participants were assured of their confidentiality before, during, and after research activities in a letter signed prior to the data collection. Participants were informed that their identities will be kept confidential and just pseudonyms were used.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

This section provides findings from the selected schools in the district in which the study was conducted. It also presents the data analysis, data presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the findings from the sample schools in which the study was conducted. It presents data on key aspects of the study including determining the administrators' and teachers' awareness level about re-entry policy in primary schools and the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. Data was generated using one on one interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and drawings. 5 Guidance and counseling teachers were interviewed while the 5 school head-teachers responded using open-ended questionnaires.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondent

This section presents the demographic information of the participants who took part in the study in Mungwi district in the Northern Province of Zambia. The participants included the school administrators and the guidance and counseling teachers. The table below summarizes the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of the participants .

No	Participant	Gender	Position
1	FT1AD	Female	Administrator
2	FT2AD	Female	Administrator
3	FT3AD	Female	Administrator
4	FT4AD	Female	Administrator
5	MT5AD	Male	Administrator
6	FT6G&C	Female	G&C Teacher
7	FT7G&C	Female	G&C Teacher
8	MT8G& C	Male	G&C Teacher
9	MT9G&C	Male	G&C Teacher
10	MT10G&C	Male	G&C Teacher

Table 4.1 indicates the number of participants by gender and the position of the participants in schools where the study was conducted. Out of 10 participants, 5 participants were administrators. 4 participants among the administrator were females and only 1 participant was male. Among the G&C teachers, 3 of the participants were male and 2 of the participants were females.

Demographic information indicated that females in primary schools were taking a key role as it is emphasized that females should be supported in positions of leadership at all levels (National

Strategy for Women and Girls, 2020). On the other hand, the demographic information indicates that most male teachers are actively taking the role of Guidance and Counseling in primary schools.

Themes emerging from the data.

A thematic approach was used to analyze the data. The researcher started with descriptive analysis; the raw data was organized in groups depending on the position of the participant in school. The data for interviews which was collected from the G&C teachers and was organized and stored in an electronic file. Thereafter the raw data collected using an open-ended questionnaire from the administrators was also organized followed by the drawings. After descriptive analysis, evaluative analysis was conducted. At this stage, the recurring themes were organized. To reach the recurring themes, codes were formed, thereafter, codes were joined to form concepts. Groups of concepts were also joined to form categories and from the categories themes emerged. The following themes emerged from the objectives and various data sources

Table 4.2 Emerged from the objectives and various data sources.

No	Objectives.	Emergent themes.
1.	To determine the administrators and teachers' awareness about re-entry policy in primary schools	Awareness levels regarding girl-mothers' re-entry policy. Pregnancy detection in primary schools. Social-cultural influence on girl-mothers' re-entry policy implementation. Existing support mechanism for girl-mothers during and after maternity leave. Coordination among the policy implementers. Availability of guidance and counseling services in primary schools. Girl mothers' re-entry policy sensitization and awareness campaigns in primary schools.
2.	To explore the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools.	Challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools.

4.3 Awareness levels regarding girl-mothers' re-entry policy.

The researcher sought to find out the awareness level of the girl-mothers re-entry policy in primary schools in Northern Province, Mungwi district. Under this theme, the researcher wanted to establish if the respondents are aware of the policy and are able to articulate what it entails. The findings indicate different levels of awareness regarding girl mother re-entry policy. It is worth noting that all the participants accepted that the Ministry of Education provides the girl-mothers re-entry policy guidelines and other necessary documentation. However, Guidance and

counseling teachers showed low levels of awareness on a different aspect of the re-entry policy while the head teachers who participated in the study exhibited high levels of awareness of the girl mother re-entry policy.

4.3.1 Pregnancy Detection in primary schools.

Effectiveness in the re-entry policy implementation requires awareness by its implementers and execution of guidelines. Pregnancy detection is one aspect of the girl mother's re-entry policy. Under this aspect of the girl mother's re-entry policy, implementers were required to show the ability to articulate what the re-entry policy is and the researcher further wanted to establish if, in primary schools, the re-entry policy implementer conduct a routine procedure as guided in the implementation guidelines. The findings indicate that primary schools do not conduct routine checkups as guided by the Ministry of Education. Despite primary schools having all the necessary documents on girl mothers' re-entry policy provided by the MoE, most schools do not conduct routine medical check-ups as the policy entails. The participants revealed that in most cases guidance and counseling teachers get to know about the pregnancies from the peers of the pregnant learners. All the participants accepted that they are aware of the girl mother's re-entry policy but the findings indicated variation in the articulation of the procedures of pregnancy detection following the guidelines in the girl mother re-entry policy. Below are some of the responses from the participants.

“Yes, the Ministry of Education provides a copy of re-entry policy guidelines. What we usually do if the child is pregnant is that we talk to that child, she must feel comfortable. Thereafter we notify the administration as the guidance teacher. After that, we record the information in the files, and we continue guiding that child. In most cases, if a child is pregnant, we get to know that a child is pregnant from peers and rumors around school and we call the child to ask, but many of them usually open up that yes, I am pregnant in privacy. And some time back we suspected that some learners are pregnant and as a school, we organized the check-up with the medical personnel, and we conducted testing. Such program is done maybe once a year but this year we have never had any kind of such program.” (FT6G&C)

“When we find that a child falls pregnant, we call the parents then the next thing we do is guidance and counseling. Know if a child is pregnant, we get the information from friends. Thereafter, we call a child and talk to her. But

as a school we do not have any program for pregnancy detection but some time back we worked in collaboration with the health workers.” (MT8G&C)

“In terms of pregnancy detection in school, we do have female guidance teachers that help us to identify the girl who is pregnant and sometimes we do arrange with the ministry of health to come and conduct voluntary and non-voluntary pregnant tests. Especially, when we suspect that a certain child is pregnant. Once we find that a child is pregnant, we ask a child if it was by consent or rape, and after establishing the fact we now guide and counsel the child.” (MT10G&C)

“We are advised to call health workers and conduct testing if we suspect that some are pregnant but at this school, we are yet to do that, we normally get the information from that community that she is pregnant. Thereafter, we summon a child and do the counseling. We also involve the community mostly the parents. For instance, last year we had a case where one child was pregnant, we called the parent and the girl, and she managed to seat for an examination.” (FT3AD)

“Yes, we have the re-entry policy guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education both in soft copy and a hard copy. Usually, we have had cases of pregnancies, if we see that a girl is not looking ok, we call the child and try to inquire. We don’t have a program in school for pregnancy detection. But sometimes if we suspect that one child is pregnant, we do the testing where we involve all the children. Once a child is found pregnant, we call the parents or the guardians. Some guardians show ignorance about it, but others will tell you. After talking to the guardians, we also involve health practitioners and we give a child a maternity leave.” (MT9G&C)

The quotations above show variations in the articulation of the procedure to follow for the detection of the pregnancy and the steps to follow after the detection. Variation in the articulation of the procedures to follow for pregnancy detection by the girl mothers’ policy implementers may result in the ineffectiveness of the policy and to some degree it indicates low awareness levels for guidance and counseling teachers about the re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. Some participants showed ignorance on how they should implement the policy on the issue of conducting the pregnancy test using the provided guidelines. This is in line with Chiyota (2020) and Kiptanui (2020), who noted that there is a lack of information and most teachers were ignorant about the policy. Contrary, Nguru (2017), argues that awareness on re-entry policy varies across the region, with many stakeholders unaware of its existence. Dorrah (2021),

mentioned that awareness and sensitization are insufficient to effect behavioral change in the stakeholders, which is required for the re-entry policy to be implemented successfully.

4.3.2 Social-cultural practices influence on girl-mothers' re-entry policy Implementation.

Social-cultural practices influence is one of the major concerns on the implementation of the girl mothers' re-entry policy. This study sought also to discover the procedures the primary schools follow to report pregnancies within primary schools and outside schools. Most of the participants exhibited knowledge on early pregnancy case reporting. However, participants revealed that sociocultural practices play a negative influence on pregnant case reporting. Social-cultural influence is one of the penitent issues of concern regarding girl mothers' re-entry policy implementation which has affected effective re-entry implementation. According to the participants,

“Some of the learners involved in the issues of early pregnancy are minors (under-age)”.

The findings indicate that pregnant cases involving minors are reported to the relevant authorities such as One Stop Centre, Victim support unit, and DEBs. In the case where it is the teacher responsible for the pregnancy, the school administration reports the case to the DEBs office. Pregnant cases which happen within the school and it is the learner responsible for the pregnancy, such cases are reported to the school administration through the office of the G&C teachers' office. Thereafter, the parents or the guardians and the learners are summoned by the G&C teacher, and instructions stipulated in the girl mothers' re-entry policy are explained to the parents of both the girl-child and the boy-child. The pregnant learner is granted maternity leave and the boy responsible for the pregnancy is sent home and comes back when maternity leave for the girl child end. Below is the quotation from one of the participants:

“If it is the fellow pupil responsible for the pregnancy, we send both home, the boy comes back to school when the child delivers as guided in the policy”
(FT6G&C)

Another participant reported that they only send a girl child on maternity leave, not a boy child. Below is the quotation.

“We only send the girl home because the boy is not the one carrying the pregnant.” (MT8G& C)

The above two quotations indicate that there is no uniformity in the girl mothers’ re-entry policy implementation by its implementers. However, Socio-cultural practices play a greater influence especially when it is the member of the community responsible for a pregnancy. Social-cultural practices exert greater influence on implementing the girl mothers’ re-entry policy because of the customary norms and social practices that contradict statutory laws. One of the participants revealed that;

“We had a case in which a child was a minor (under-age) and because the child had already reached puberty, she was regarded as someone who is fit to be a mother. The parents of that child were not cooperative, they tried to cover up the issue and they changed the age of the child that she was 16 years old. Luckily, as the school, we had the school register and it was indicated that the child is in grade 6 and she was 12 years old. We reported the case to the police and we left the case in the hands of the police officers.”(FT2AD)

Findings revealed that pregnancy cases become highly complicated if it involves the members of the community, the village headmen, and the community at large having their own perception of early marriages and pregnancy. The participant revealed the following:

“In most cases when we follow up on the case the community fails to disclose that the child is pregnant and the person responsible for the pregnancy. We also engage the village headmen but it is very difficult. They expect us to respect their cultural practices and follow community protocols. Village headmen are reluctant in such cases. If we follow it up it becomes so difficult for us to do our part because the community regards these children as women who are ready to get married hence, they do not cooperate. Some of such cases go unattended. But for those cases, we

manage to talk to the village headmen we usually submit the cases to the relevant authorities” (MT9G&C)

Another participant revealed that;

“When we find that a child is pregnant, we get to listen to the child and if it is an adult involved in the case, we write a report to the DEBS office but unfortunately parents are not willing to come forth and reveal the truth. In most cases, parents get the money or goats or the man promises that he will marry the girl, in such cases parents choose not to cooperate with the school. In such cases, the DEBS office has advised that we write a report without consent from the parent but there is backlash (great negative opposition) to that,” (MT5AD).

The task of reporting early pregnancy for effective implementation of the girl mother’s re-entry policy is an imperative issue, especially when a learner impregnated is a minor (under age). According to the findings, customary norms and social practices are the points of issues in that they contradict statutory laws. Cultural practices play a big role in some rural areas and therefore still pose a big challenge. Thus, when girls come of age, they stay in their own huts and are directly or indirectly encouraged to engage in sexual activities to prove their womanhood and this made it easy for them to fall pregnant. Other traditions instill fear in the children, discouraging them to speak and only to listen to adults. Such children ended up failing to express themselves as it was seen as disrespectful to adults (Phiri et al., 2022). In line with Chitempa (2017), who noted that the biggest difficulty in the campaign against child marriage and early pregnancy in Zambia is the presence of a dual legal system comprised of traditional (customary) and constitutional law (statutory laws). According to customary law, there is nothing wrong with marrying a child who has reached puberty because the law automatically qualifies her to be a woman who is ready for marriage. Phiri et al., (2022) noted that sometimes informal negotiations between the responsible male and the pregnant girl’s family were often preferred and the school failed to re-admit such girls, thereby defeating the purpose of the policy. According to Chitempa (2017) and Girls not Brides and plan Zambia (2015), there is a disparity in the statutory and customary law, the two systems always come into conflict when addressing the issue of early

pregnancy and marriage in rural areas, traditional (customary) law prevails over statutory laws. Simaata (2018), postulate that the issues of customs and cultures that hinder girls' advancement in rural areas should be addressed. Some of these practices impede the advancement of the girls' education including initiation ceremonies in which females are isolated and are taught how to take care of homes and spouses when they marry. Chitempa (2017), realizes that traditional practices are degrading a girl child and putting her in danger and at risk of early marriage, practices like elongation of labia minora at the age of 10, teach the children how to bring more satisfaction to the husband. Such practices persuade the girl child to begin testing on them, which results in early pregnancy. The societal perception that marriage is a great achievement in the life of a girl and the source of wealth is critical to these elements, hence being pregnant develops a pass to enter marriage rather than education (Mushibwe, 2018, and Simaata, 2018). Phiri et al., (2022) emphasize that the ineffectiveness of the re-entry Policy is a result of different challenges of which the main ones include cultural beliefs and practices whereby the girl child is expected to get married soon after reaching puberty.

4.3.3 Existing support mechanism for girl-mothers during and after maternity leave.

The findings indicate that the most support mechanism existing for the girl mothers before, during, and after maternity leave is counseling and home visitation of the expectant learner by the teachers. The participants revealed that girl mothers are given counseling services, and commitment letters are also signed by the G&C teachers and the guardians to re-enter a child into school after giving birth. The participants also revealed pregnant learners and girl mothers are exempted from school activities that can be stressful to them and are given ample time to take care of their babies. All the documents necessary are prepared and kept in the school files for girls who are on maternity leave. On the other hand, it was found that in primary schools' medical reports confirming the pregnancy, health status, physical and emotional conditions are overlooked. Access to antenatal care services is mostly done by the parents or guardians of the pregnant girl. One participant said:

“In terms of material things, we don't give them anything, but we just talk to the parent and we counsel both of them. We usually counsel the parents to take good care of the learner and assist in taking good care of the baby.

And when the girl mother comes back from maternal leave, we still don't provide any material support, we only provide guidance and counseling services.” (MT8G&C)

Another participant said;

“We help the learner by sensitizing her about the re-entry policy before we send her on maternity leave but when she goes, we don't provide any support.” (FT5AD)

Contrary to the other, one participant said:

“As a school we normally provide counseling. During maternity leave, we do visit them and encourage them to return to school. When they come back, we normally encourage them and we register them under Keeping Girls in School (Education grant) to allow them to access social cash transfer and when we see how serious she is we provide simple materials like books.” (MT10G&C)

Lack of sufficient support mechanisms in primary schools was an up-and-coming issue regarding the girl mothers' re-entry. Re-entry policy guidelines are not followed in their totality, thereby compromising its effectiveness in meeting its intended objective of retaining pregnant girls in schools. Many schools lacked resources to help put in place supportive systems for re-entered girls, especially child care and scholarships. The only service provided is counseling through the Guidance and Counseling Committees for young mothers. As such, some girls fail to continue with their education (Phiri et al., 2022). In line with Ntumbo and Malvin (2017), who noted that girls who become pregnant avoid returning to school to re-enter due to the lack of a support system and unfriendly conditions, there is a lot of stigma among teachers and learners. Chiyota (2020) and Nsalamba (2017), asserted that girl-mothers experience peer discrimination both in society and school, with school experience being the worse and most of the students who return to school are embarrassed by teachers and learners. One participant reported that:

“We struggle to help the girl-mothers because some teachers have a wrong perception of the re-entry policy as it allows a girl to re-enter school every time she falls pregnant. Most of the teachers regard the policy as something that supports unruly behavior among learners and most girl-mothers become very lazy. Most of my fellow teachers are not in support.”
(MT8G&C)

Kapasule et al., (2020) present a differing perspective by stating that in Malawi girl mothers after re-entering or re-admitted they become hard-working and they conduct themselves very well. However, Muyunda (2021), stipulates that some teachers encounter numerous difficulties when educating girl-mothers, resulting in a negative opinion of the re-entry policy. Muyunda (2021), further noted that the re-entry policy received no sufficient support which is required during its development and implementation. The Ministry of General Education and DEBs had not established effective measures to materially and economically support the girl-mothers.

4.3.4 Coordination among the Policy Implementers.

As indicated earlier, all the schools selected for this study had the documents necessary for re-entry policy implementation. All the respondents reported that the Ministry of Education provided all the necessary documents. According to the findings, the school administrators clarified that there is no limit to the number of re-entries as guided in the guidelines. However, some G&C teachers did not show clarity or they were not sure about the number of times a girl child can re-enter if one particular child gets pregnant concurrently. Below are some of the participants’ responses:

“We only allow a child to re-enter once.” (FT7G&C)

“We do not allow the child to re-enter more than two times.” (FT2AD)

The above quotations suggest that among the re-entry policy implementers, there is a lack of coordination. The findings also indicate a lack of coordination on the length of time for re-entry after delivery. On the length of time for re-entry, there was a disparity from the Guidance and counseling teachers and the administrators. The participants reported that:

“It depends on the vulnerability of the girl. If she has a supportive family even at three months can do. But normal is six months.” (FT4AD)

“At least 6 months except those in examination classes.” (FT3AD)

“6 months.” (FT1AD)

Most of the administrators reported 6 months as the length of time for re-entry after delivery in line with the stipulated guidelines. Contrary to the stated length of time, G&C teachers stated different lengths of time. Below are some of the responses from some participants:

“The length of time after delivery is 2 years”. (FT7G&C)

“2 months is the length of time allowed”. (MT10G&C)

One participant reported that:

“It is difficult to state the length of time for re-entry after delivery because it depends on an individual, others can re-enter after a month, others after 6 months, and others after a year”. (FT6G&C)

According to Muyunda (2021), the lack of a well-defined policy guideline is another barrier to the implementation of the re-entry policy. Lack of well-defined results in different awareness levels amongst the girl mothers’ re-entry policy implementers which yields a lack of coordination in the implementation of the policy. Mushibwe (2018), emphasizes that re-entry policy may not be achieved because of a lack of Cooperation or allowing non-uniform implementation and the development of non-supportive processes by expected implementers. Lack of Cooperation or coordination mechanism among service providers has also been reported to be one of the major concerns in the fight against early marriage (Fischer et al., (2015).

4.3.5 Availability of Guidance and counseling services in primary schools.

Effective implementation of the girl-mothers' re-entry policy requires active availability of guidance and counseling services in schools. The girl mothers' re-entry policy states that each school should have a female-trained counselor for girls and a male for boys. The participants revealed that guidance and counseling services are available in primary schools. Nevertheless, all the schools that were sampled for the study did not have professionally trained counselors. Most of the appointments are done based on different factors including the number of experiences one has in teaching service, maturity level, and personality. One participant mentioned that:

“We don't have any professionally trained guidance and counselors. As teachers, we have been appointed to take the role and provide these services. But in most cases, you will find that we usually have a lot of classes to teach in most cases, if there is an urgent case to attend to, one would just call the G&C teacher while teaching and learning are taking place.” (MT8G&C)

The above quotation suggests that not only lack of professionally trained guidance and counselors in school, but most of the appointed teachers to take the role of guidance and counseling are also occupied with different roles within the school. The findings revealed that Guidance and Counseling teachers usually don't have the required time to provide guidance and counseling services. In line with Mufalo and Kabeta (2019), who noted that schools had no trained counselors to handle counseling services and contrary to the point that secondary schools lacked counseling and guidance services. Further, Chiyoda (2020), confirms that guidance and counseling services were available in schools despite having some challenges of not having trained counselors and the teachers who have taken a role or have been appointed usually have limited time because of work overload, teaching, managing examination related work, and other tasks. Mushiwe (2018), suggest that well-trained guidance and counselor are required for effective girl mothers' re-entry policy implementation in schools.

4.3.6 Girl Mothers' re-entry policy Sensitization and awareness campaigns in primary schools.

Sensitization and awareness programs are crucial matters to the implementation of the girl mothers' re-entry policy, many girls drop out of school because of insufficient knowledge of the re-entry policy. Raising awareness among policymakers, community leaders, and the general public makes its drivers, impact, and most impacted populations more visible (Pan America Health Organization and United Nations Population Fund, 2017). According to the findings, the school administrators and the guidance counseling teachers exhibited high levels of awareness regarding re-entry policy sensitization and awareness campaigns to the teachers, learners, and the community. The participants revealed that:

“There are advocacy efforts to policy sensitization and awareness on re-entry policy in schools”. (MT5AD)

According to the findings, the teachers are sensitized on re-entry policy at different levels, including the district level and at the school level. The findings revealed at the school level, sensitization is done during the teachers' group meetings (TGM), teachers' professional development meetings (CPDs), parent/teachers' association meetings (PTA), annual general meetings (AGMs), and during staff meetings.

The learners are also sensitized in schools during group counseling where boys and girls usually have separate sessions, through school clubs and assembly meetings. The community is sensitized using the formed committees and through the village meetings. Participants reported that

“There is a committee known as the school/community partnership or parent teachers' Committee (PTC). In this committee, parents/teachers carry the information from the school to the community about re-entry policy and share the information during the village meetings” (MT9G&C).

“The community has insufficient knowledge and a negative attitude towards re-entry policy, in most cases, the community does not attend when we call

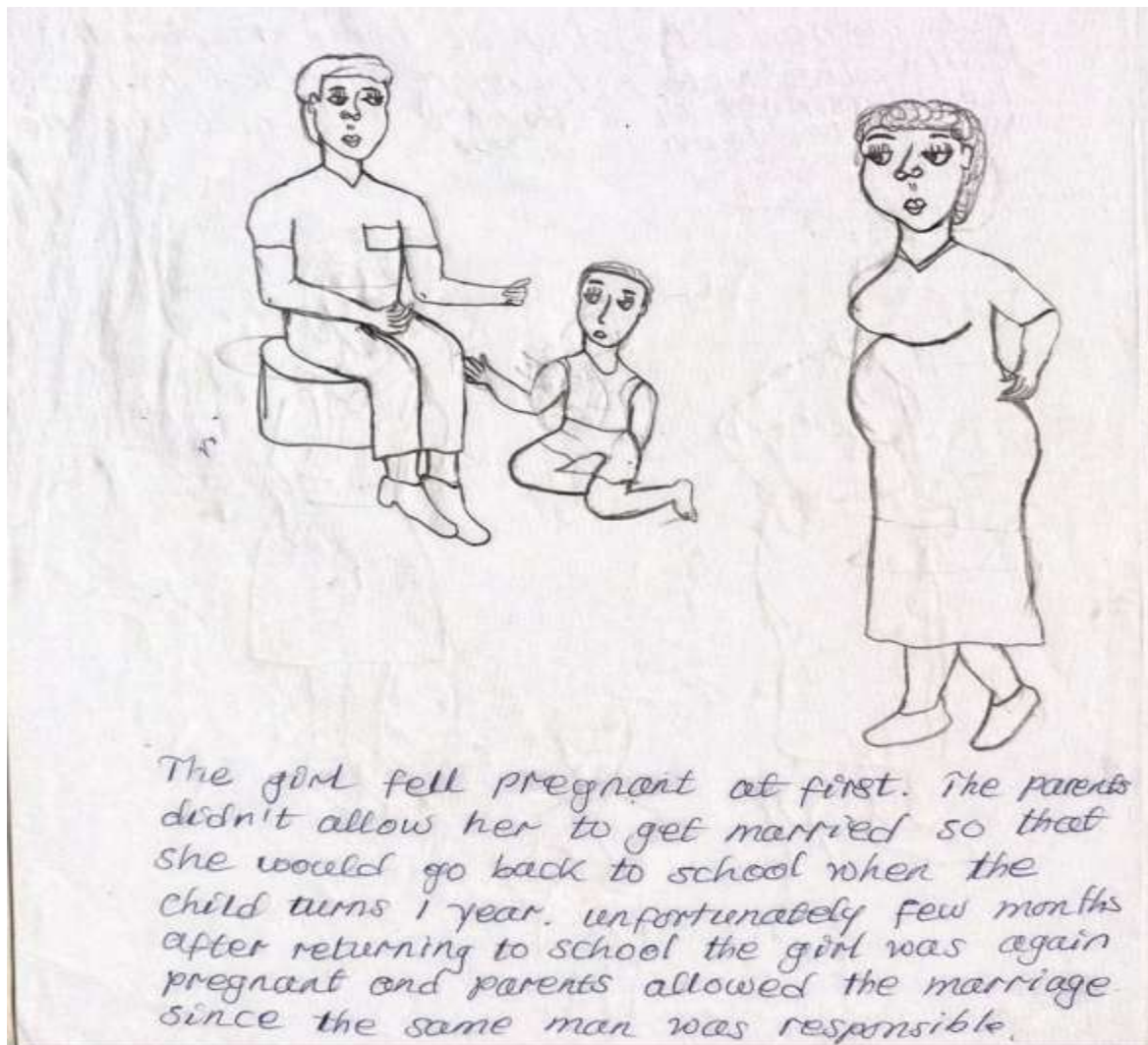
for a meeting, especially when they know that you are not going to give them anything materially.” (MT5AD).

The above quotations tell that the schools have programs that assist in advocating for re-entry policy sensitization in the community. Contrary, Dorah (2021), postulates that there's an insufficient effort in advocating efforts for awareness and sensitization to effect behavioral change in stakeholders, which is required for re-entry policy. Nsalamba et al., (2019) noted that school administrators or the district education board secretariat did not formally communicate to them clearly the reason the re-entry policy was established and most of the learners were uninformed about the re-entry policy because administrators and teachers never communicated with them about the re-entry policy. According to Kiptanui (2020), girls engage in sexual relations with married males because they are uninformed of the painful experience and repercussions of being pregnant. In Brazil, Cruz et al., (2021) alluded that early pregnancy is associated with a lack of information and access to programs and services dedicated to teen sexual and reproductive health. School administrators are reluctant to implement and sensitize learners and the community about the re-entry policy (Zimbabwe national Dialogue, 2017).

4.4 Challenges of re-entry policy Implementation in primary schools.

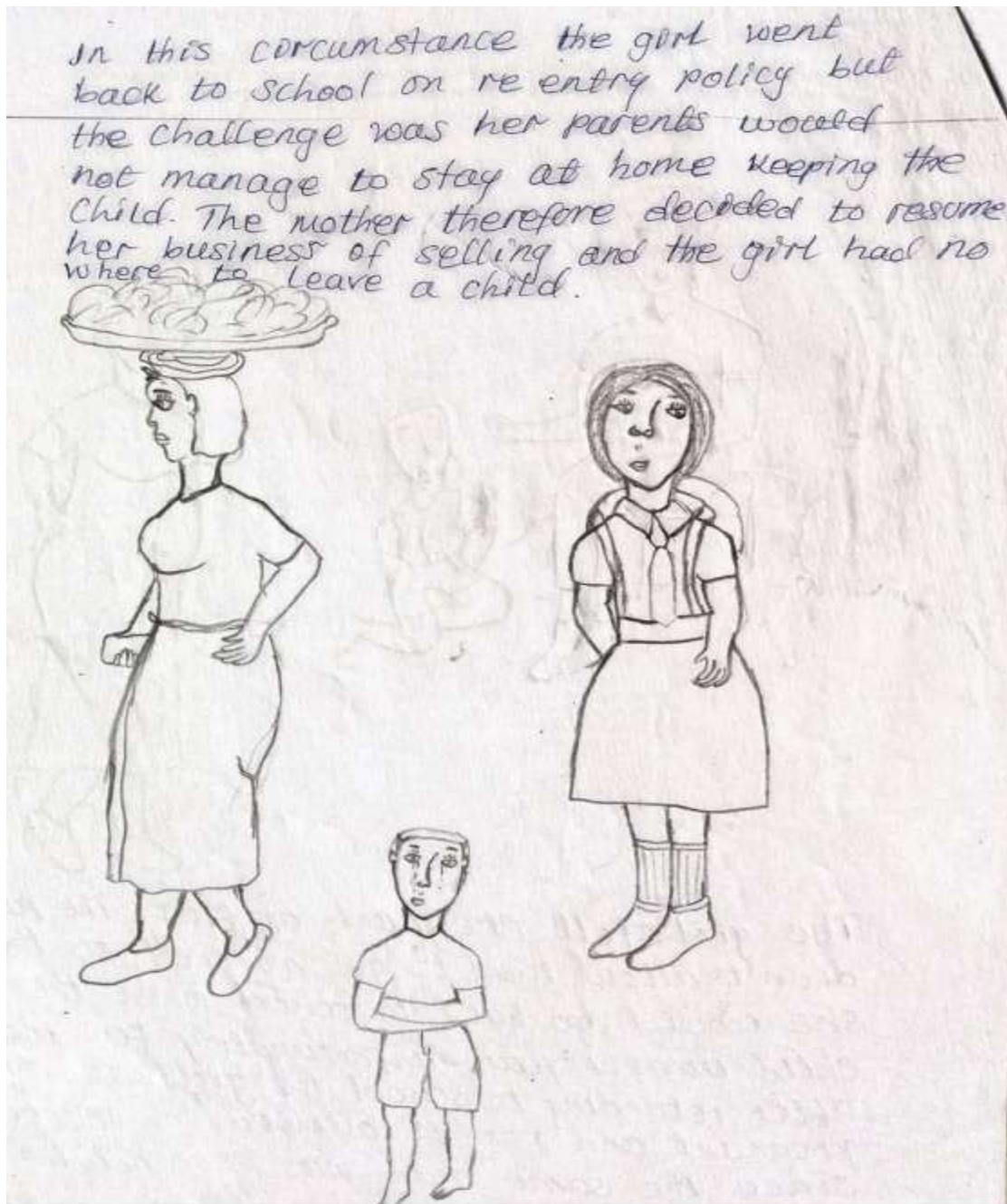
The second objective of this study was to explore the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. Drawings were used to generate the data for the second objective. Participants of the study used the drawings to express their experiences regarding the challenges in the implementation of the girl-mothers in primary schools. After the analysis of the drawings, the drawings were categorized into two and they were grouped according to the categories. The first category of the drawings expressing the challenges the guardians and the learners face because of the lack of awareness of the re-entry policy, and the effect of cultural practices on girl mothers' re-entry policy. The second category of the drawing expressed challenges related to the infrastructure the learners, Guidance and counseling teachers, administrators, and community members face during the implementation of the girl mother's re-entry policy. The caption of the drawings in this section was presented the way the participants had written them without any alteration.

Figure 4.1: Drawing by participant FT1AD



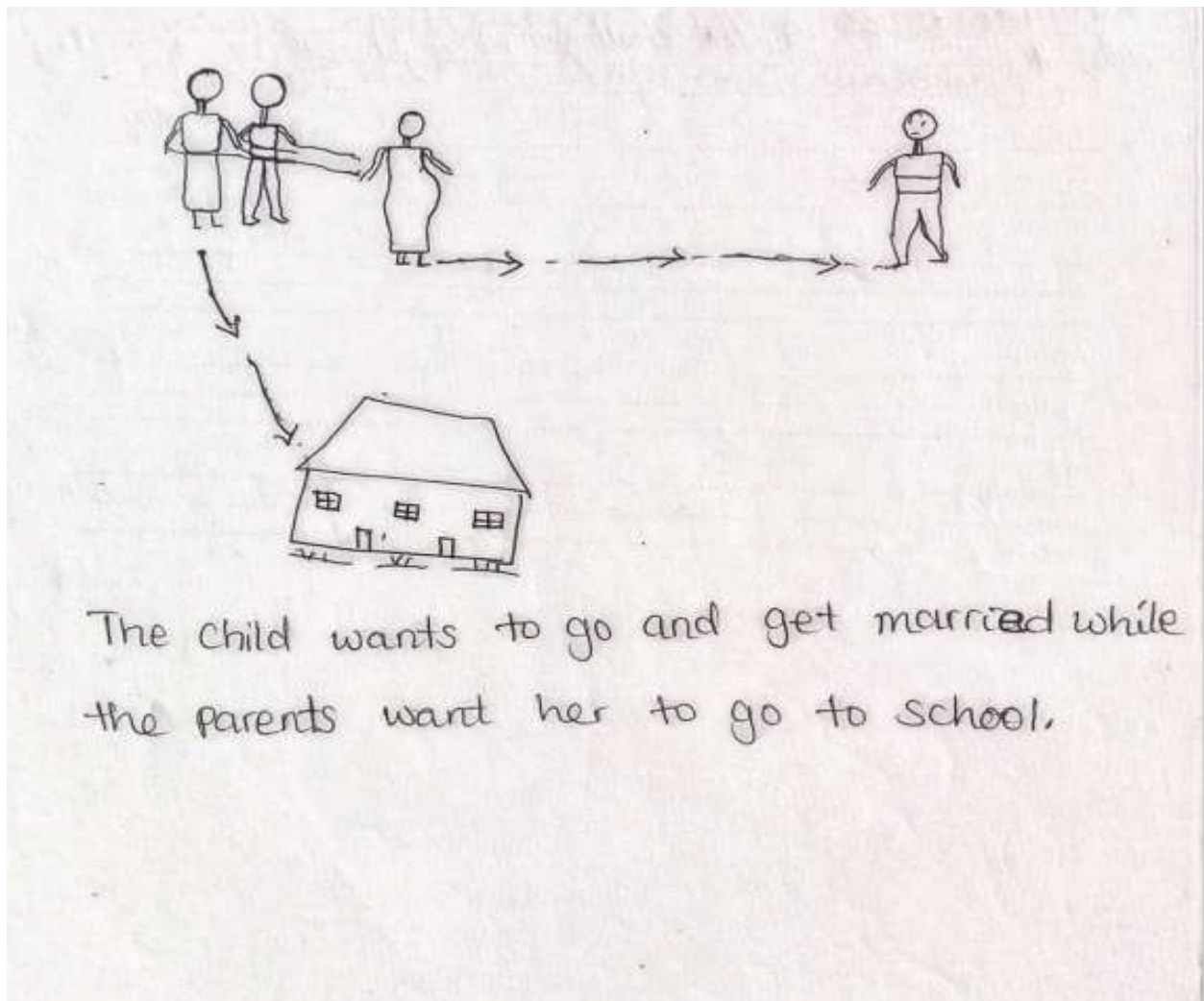
Caption: The girl fell pregnant at first. The parent did not allow her to get married so that she would go back to school when the child turns 1 year. Unfortunately, a few months after returning to school the girl was again pregnant and her parents allowed the marriage since the same man was responsible.

Figure 4.2: Drawing by participant FT1AD.



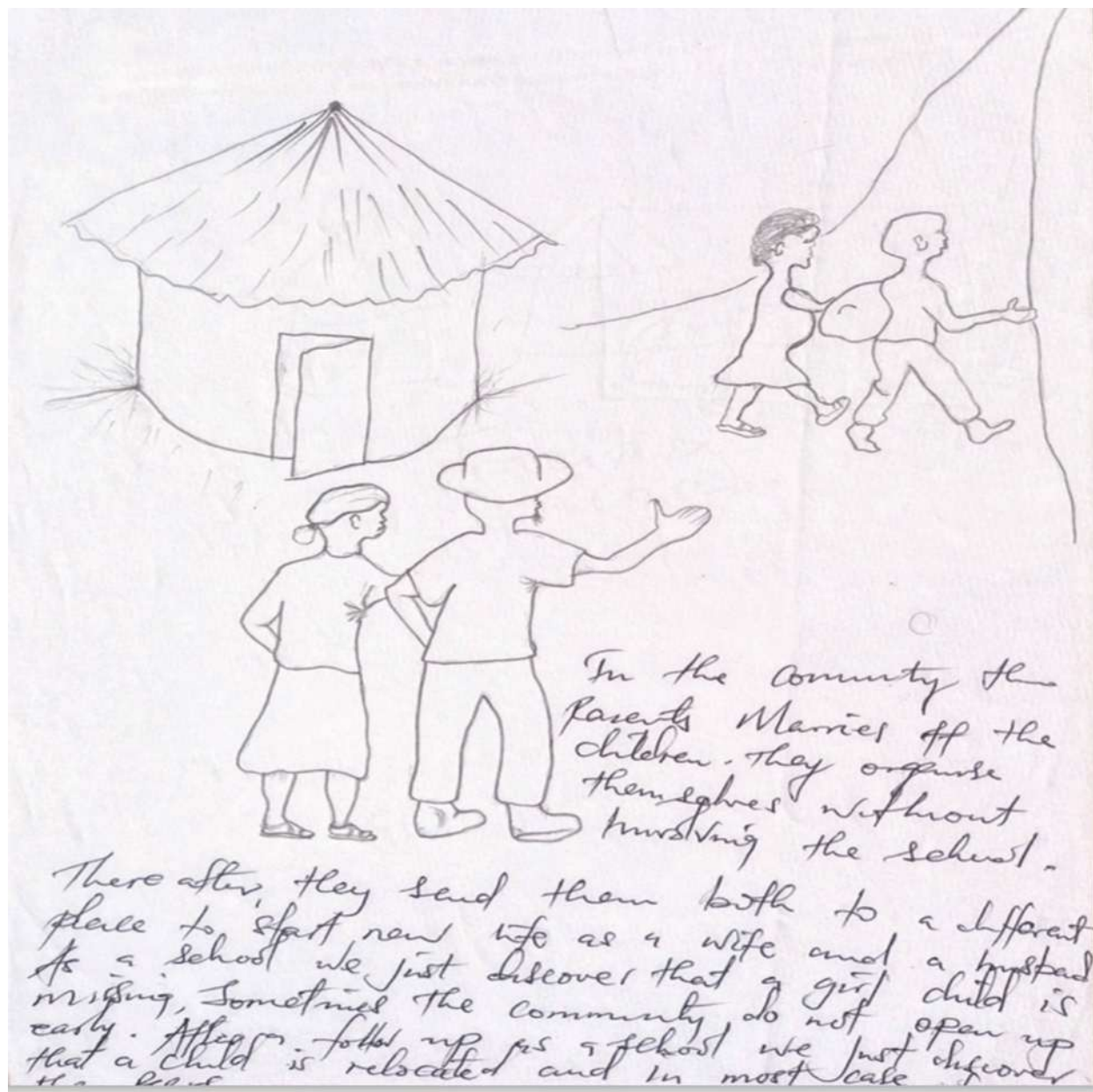
Caption: In this circumstance, the girl went back to school on re-entry policy but the challenge was her parent would not manage to stay at home keeping the child. The mother, therefore, decided to resume her business of selling and the girl had nowhere to leave a child

Figure 4.3: Drawing by participant FT2AD



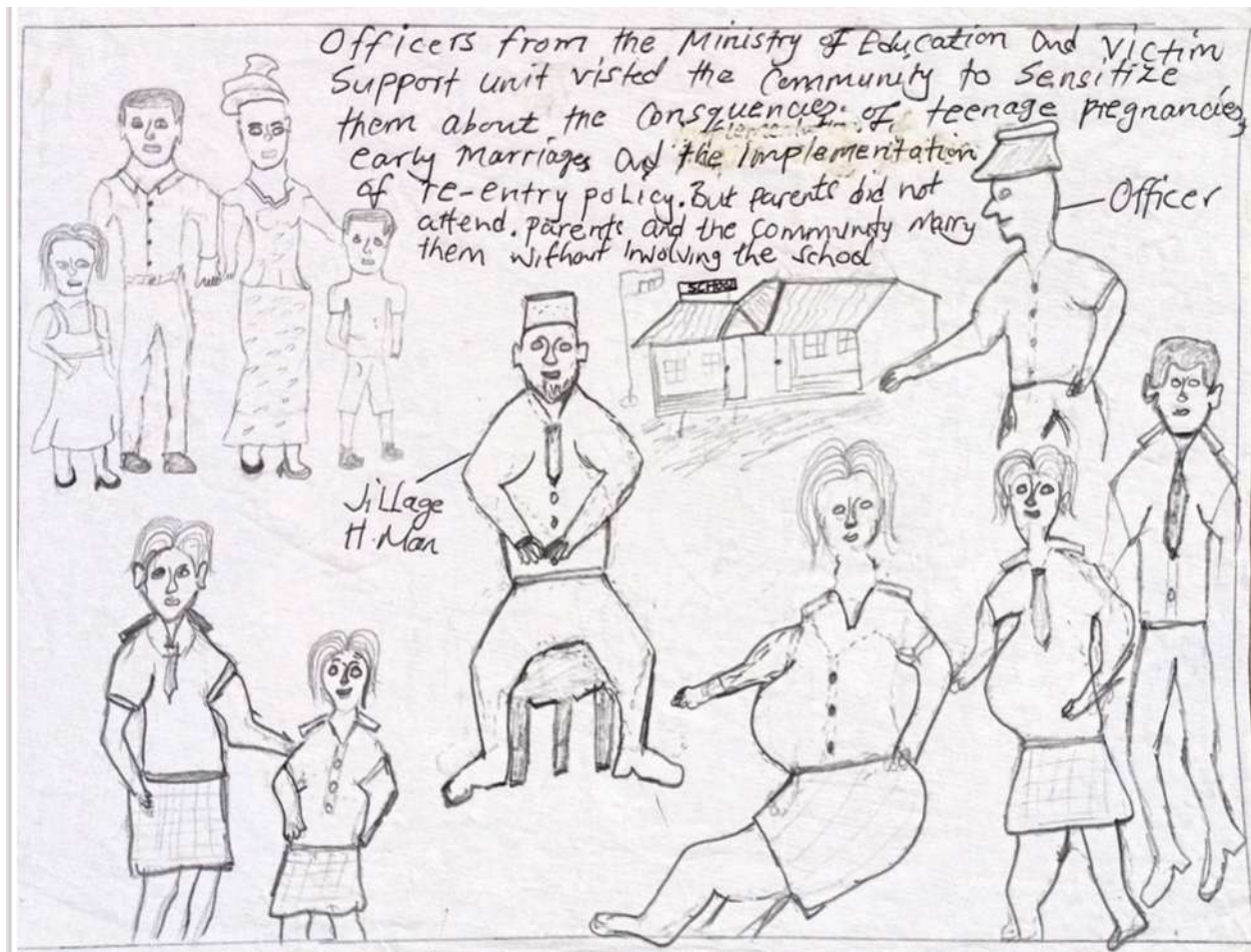
Caption: The child wants to go and get married while the parents want her to go to school

Figure 4.4: Drawing by participant MT10G&C



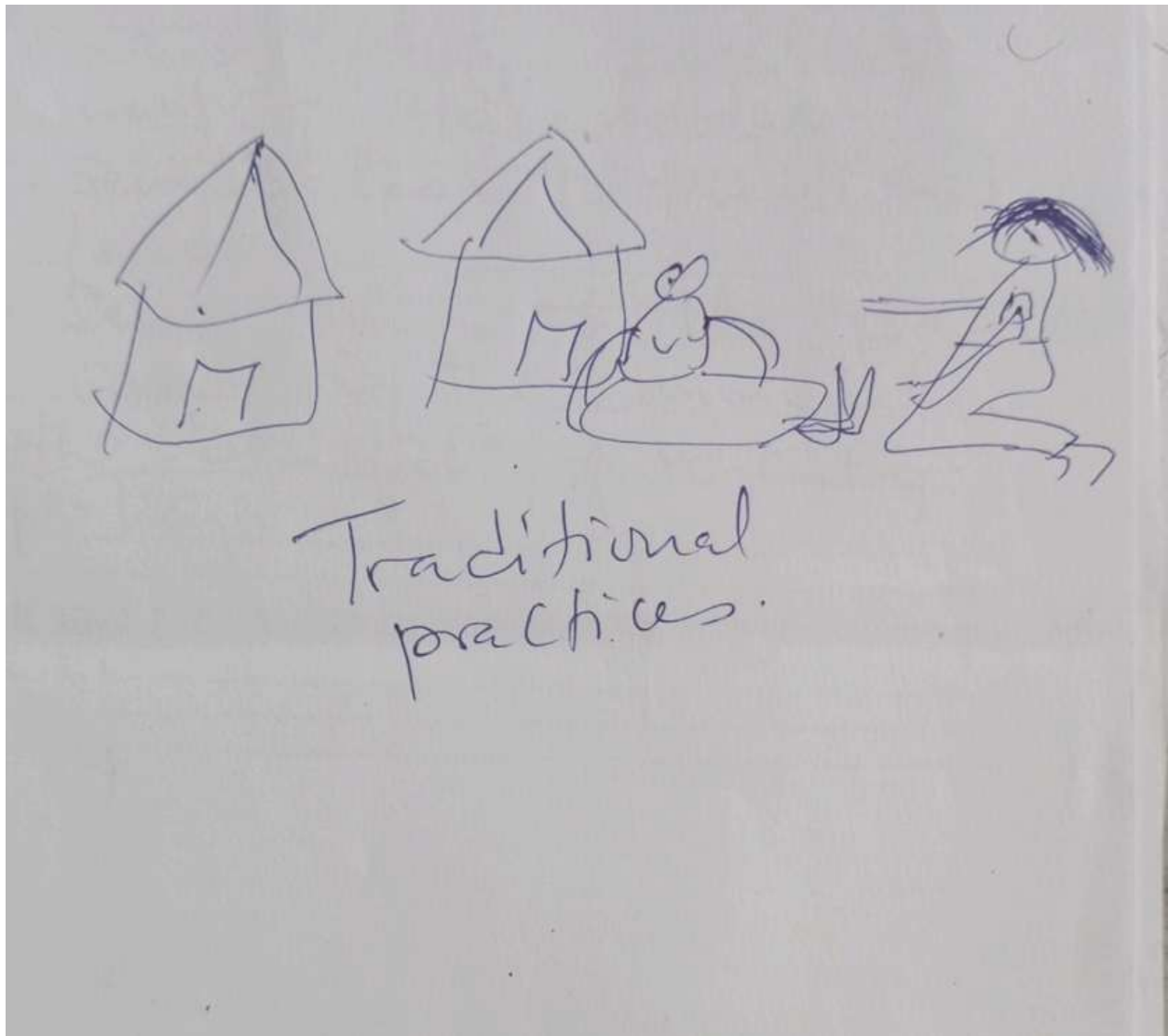
Caption: In the community, the parents marry off the children. They organize themselves without involving the school. Thereafter, they send them both to a different place to start new life as a wife and husband. As a school, we just discover that a girl child is missing. Sometimes the community do not open up early. After following up as a school we just discover that a child is relocated and in most cases from the peers

Figure 4.5: Drawing by Participant MT8G&C



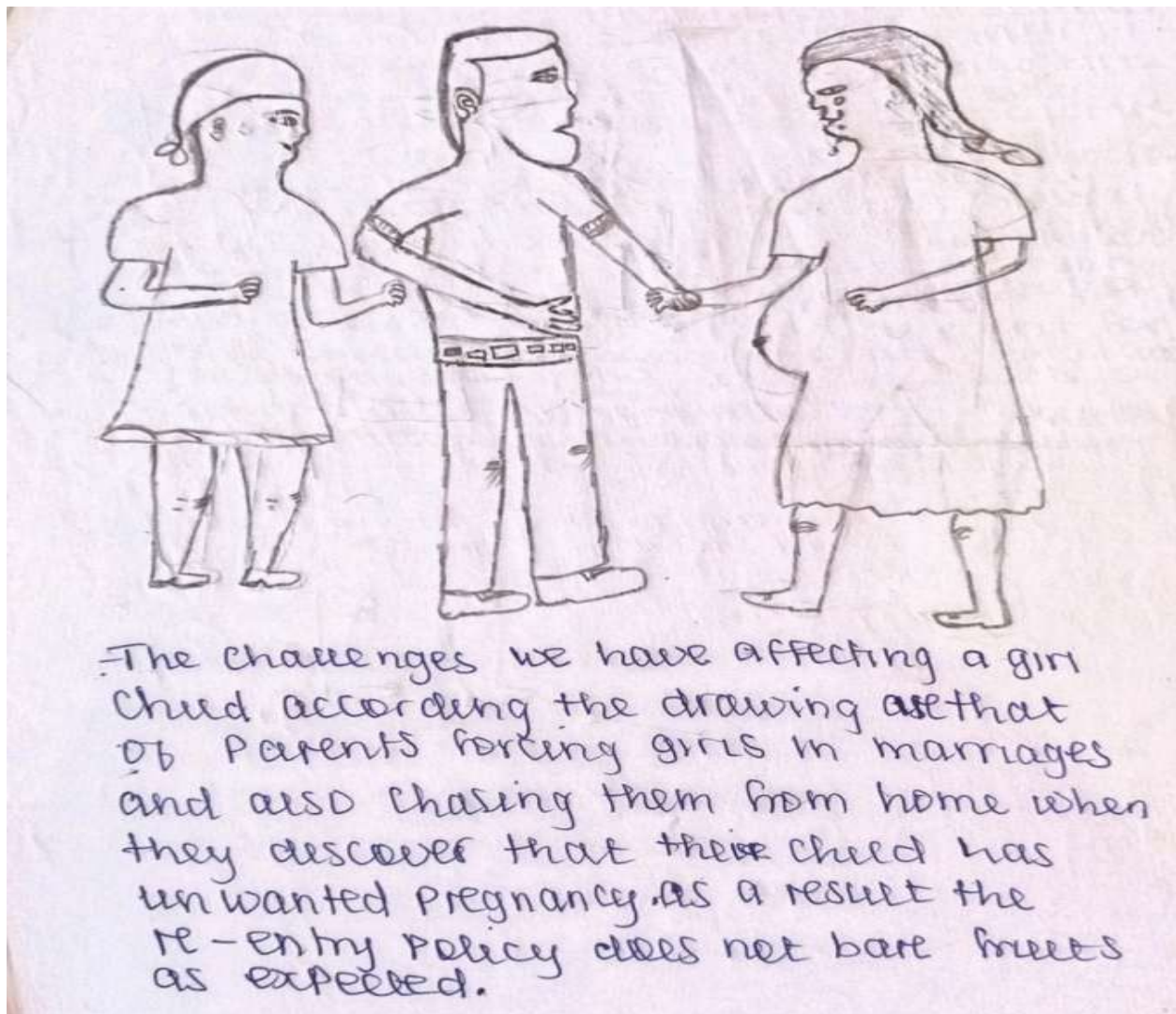
Caption: Officers from the Ministry of Education and victim support unit visited the community to sensitize them about the consequences of teenage pregnancies, early marriages and the implementation of re-entry policy, but parents did not attend. Parents and the community marry them without involving the school.

Figure 4.9: Drawing by participant MT5AD



Caption: Traditional practices

Figure 4.6: Drawing by participant FT4AD



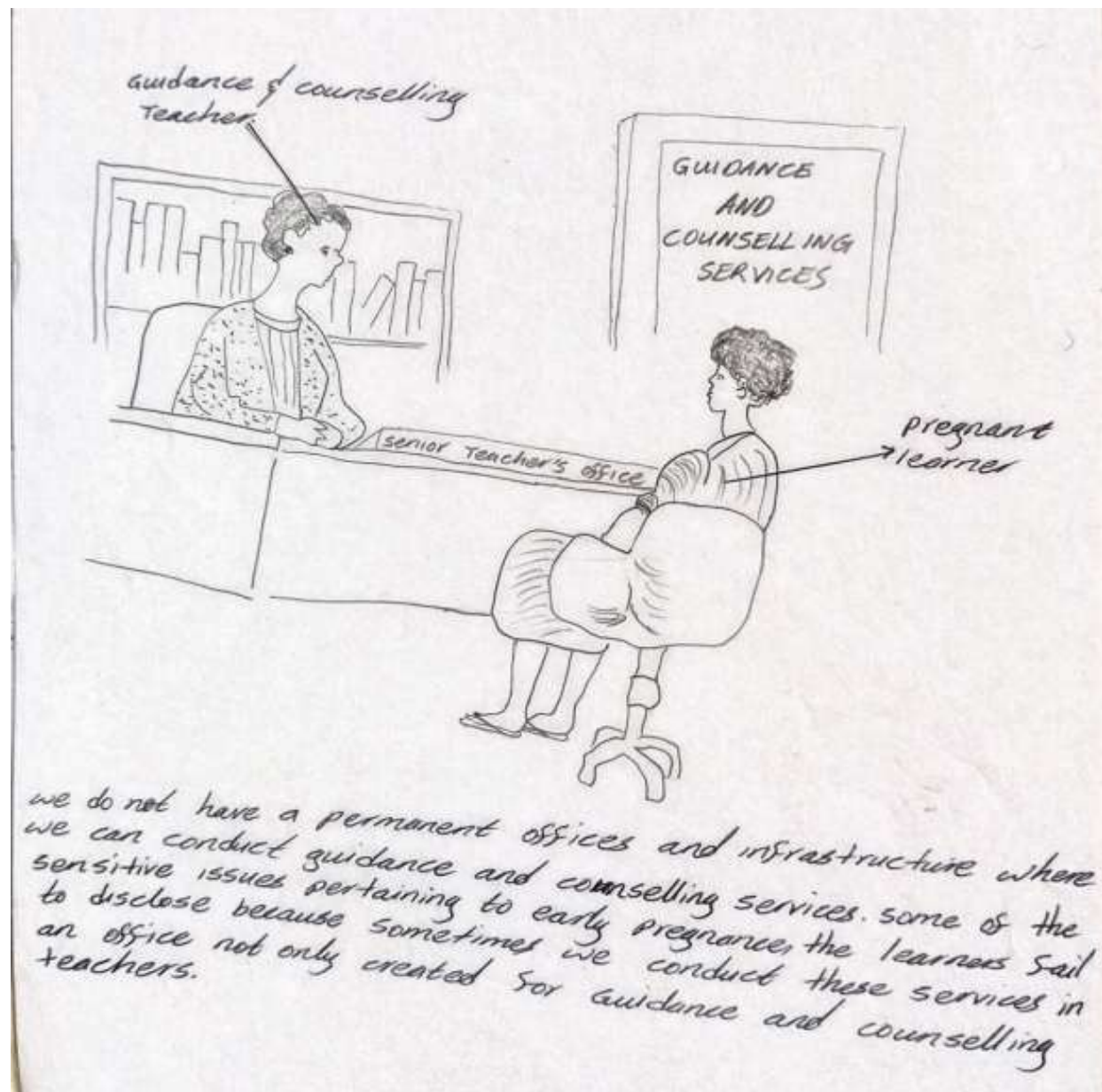
Caption: The challenges we have affecting a girl child according to the drawing are that parents are forcing girls in marriages and also chasing them from home when they discover that their child has an unwanted pregnancy. As a result, the re-entry policy does not bear fruits as expected.

Figure 4.7: Drawing by participant MT16G&C



Caption: Work overload is one of the challenges we face. We usually have enough work to do and sometimes we find that we do not attend even to the duties of counseling. As guidance and counseling teachers we attend classes with a lot of pupils, make books, and other teaching-related duties.

Figure 4.8: Drawing by participant MT9G&C



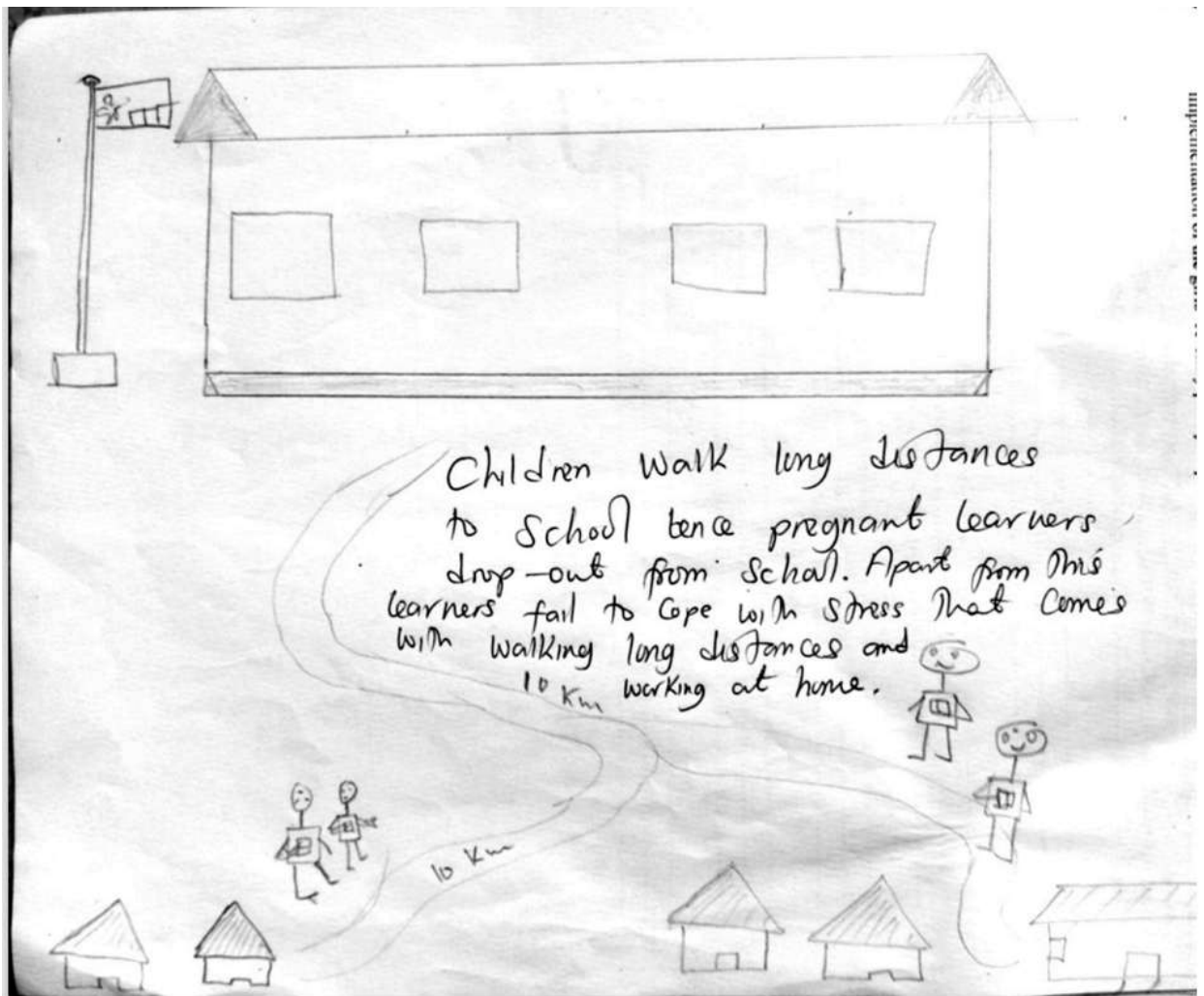
Caption. We do not have permanent offices and infrastructure where we can conduct guidance and counseling services. Some of the sensitive issues pertaining to early pregnancy the learners fail to disclose because sometimes we conduct these services in an office not created for guidance and counseling teachers.

Figure 4.9: Drawing by participant FT7G&C



Caption: Lack of infrastructure. We do not have a conducive environment for the learners and the community. Awareness campaigns are done under a tree. Besides that, community members have a negative attitude toward the re-entry policy.

Figure 4.10 Drawing by participant FT3AD



Caption: Children walk long distances to school hence pregnant learners drop-out from school. Apart from this, learners fail to cope with stress that comes with walking long distances and working at school.

The implementation of the girl mothers' re-entry policy comes with different challenges. The participants of this study expressed various challenges they face during the process of the re-entry policy implementation using the drawings, some of the challenges included forced marriages, traditional practices, work overload to guidance and counseling teachers, rejection of the pregnant learners by their families and the community, lack of cooperation between the school administration and the community, lack of supporting infrastructure and learners forcing themselves into marriage. Due to some of the challenges which were given by the participants,

the re-entry policy fails to bear fruit as expected. Araz-Ledezma et al., (2020) noted that rejection from the communities and their families is among the factors contributing to ineffective policy implementation. In line with Masterson et al., (2021), discovered in Arkansas, USA, that early pregnancy can be the primary cause for dropping out of school, posing a challenge to re-entry policy. Dungal (2018), noted that many studies have found that the average age of first sexual contact is falling, implying that today's girls are becoming sexually active at an earlier age as the result few school girls utilize contraception and are at high risk of pregnancy which resulting into early pregnancy. Cruz et al., (2021), confirm that early pregnancy contributes to forced marriages, and school dropout and it must be addressed. In Ghana, Baafi (2020), pointed out that forced marriages in Ghana increase because of early pregnancy. Dorah et al., (2021), pointed out the different aspect that schools lack display facilities for girls who give birth which is in line with Ishaku (2020), who emphasized that girls will stay in school if the environment is safe and there are healthy and sanitary facilities in schools.

According to Chitempa (2017), the challenge limiting the campaign against child marriage in Zambia is the presence of a dual legal system comprised of traditional (customary) and statutory laws. In cases where statutory and customary law overlap, the customary law takes precedence. Girls Not Brides and Plan Zambia (2015) emphasized the existing disparities in statutory law and customary law, the two systems always come into conflict when addressing child marriage, and, in most cases, customary law prevails over statutory law. Simaata (2018), states that the issue of customs and cultures that hamper females' advancement in rural areas should be addressed. UNFPA (2020), advocates for a comprehensive approach that combines various interventions, such as removing legal barriers to girls' sexual and reproductive health services, continuing to expand their coverage, increasing access to modern 20 contraceptives, and encouraging the use and dissemination of lengthy contraceptive methods.

These results should raise red flags about the need for early adolescent and childhood initiatives. Pregnancy-related school dropout is an issue of public concern worldwide nowadays (Dungal, 2018).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter consists of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. The qualitative study explored administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi District, Northern Province. Using phenomenological research design with the adoption of the interpretivism paradigm, semi-structured interviews (one on one interviews), document analysis, unstructured questionnaires, and drawings were used to generate data from the school administrators and the teachers. This chapter will present the summary of the findings, conclusions, contribution of the study, and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

This section presents the summary of all generated themes by thematic analysis. The study had three research questions with several themes which were generated. The presented themes answered the following questions:

What are the awareness levels of school administrators and teachers about the re-entry policy in primary schools?

What are the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools?

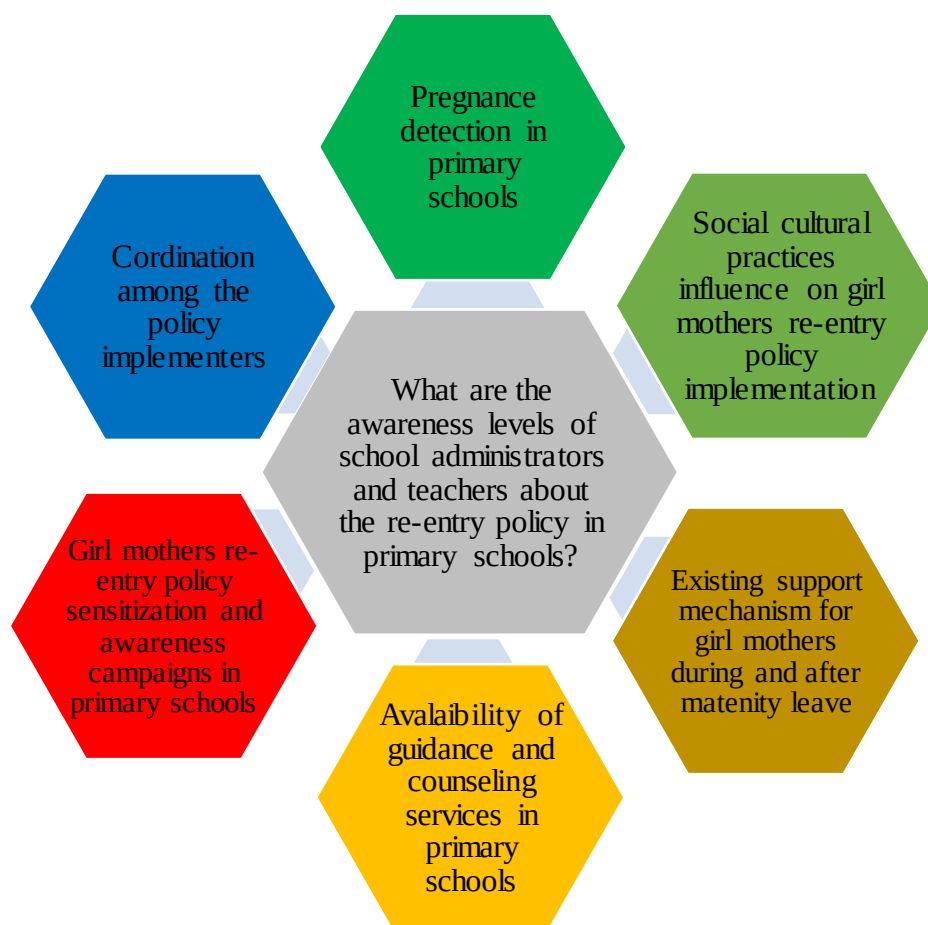
What guidelines can be developed to effectively implement the re-entry policy in primary school?

5.2 Awareness levels regarding girl-mothers' re-entry policy.

To answer the research questions, the findings of the study establish that the re-entry policy implementers have different awareness levels of re-entry policy. The G&C teachers exhibited low awareness levels of the re-entry policy while the school administrators were knowledgeable about the girl mothers' re-entry policy. The G&C teachers execute the re-entry policy in primary schools with the supervision of the administrators. It was evident from the findings that the Ministry of Education provides all the necessary material to increase the advocacy effort to sensitize all the stakeholders of the re-entry policy, all the participants accepted that they have all

the necessary documents both soft copies and hard copies provided by the Ministry of Education. To determine the awareness of the re-entry policy, under objective one and answering the question “What are the awareness levels of school administrators and teachers about the re-entry policy in primary schools?” related different themes are illustrated below in figure 5.1

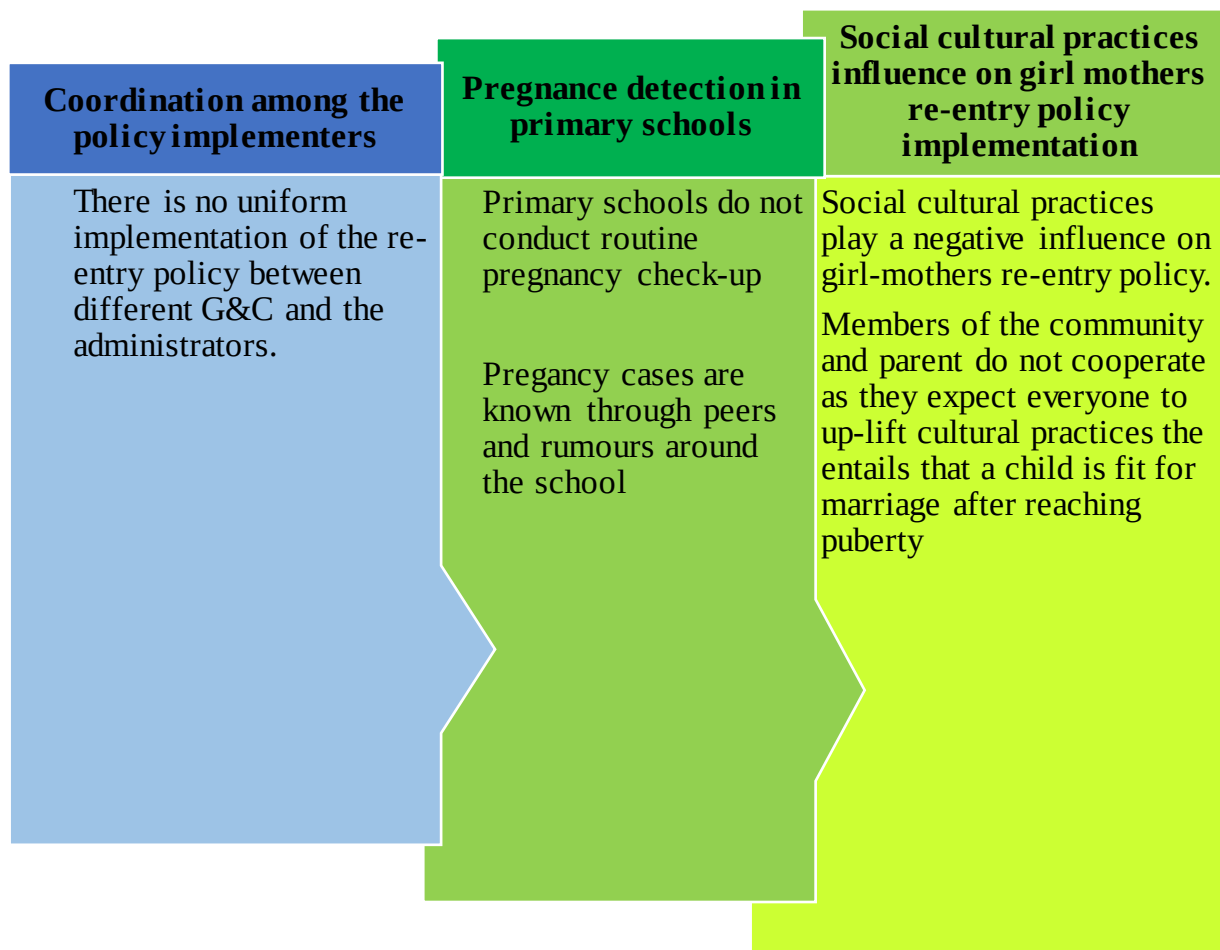
Figure 5.1: Generated themes for the first research question.



It is evident from the findings that the G&C teachers in different schools implement the policy ununiformly because of different understandings of different aspects of the re-entry policy. Research revealed that most primary schools despite having documents provided by the Ministry of Education, they do not have deliberate routines for pregnancy check-ups among the learners. The policy entails that, termly, each school should conduct a routine general medical check-up

involving several children. However, it is evident that primary schools have not set up check-up mechanisms or strategies to implement what the policy entails. The finding revealed that in most cases, the school gets to know that a child is pregnant from the peers of the pregnant learners. Additionally, the research revealed that there was variation in the articulation of what the re-entry policy demand for the detection of pregnancy among the learners. Most of the G&C teachers were unable to give detailed information on how pregnancy among the learners is supposed to be detected. The findings revealed that variation in the awareness of the pregnancy detection procedures may result in the ineffectiveness of policy execution as most of the G&C teachers showed ignorance. Further, the findings revealed that girl mothers' re-entry policy implementation has been influenced negatively by social-cultural practices. Reported pregnancies within primary schools have been left unattended because of the influence played by social-cultural practices. The research revealed that some learners involved in these cases are under-age and when the case is reported, if it is the member of the community responsible for the pregnancy social-cultural practices exert greater influence on re-entry policy implementation. It was revealed that members of the community and parents are not cooperative. Parents of learners consider their children fit for marriage after reaching puberty. Parents are promised of receiving dowry and the person responsible promises to marry their children, as a result, parents end-up covering pregnancy issues in favor of the person who impregnated the learners. Village headmen expect the schools and the delegates of the re-entry policy to uplift their cultural practices that advocate that a child is fit for marriage after reaching puberty. It was established that cultural practices and the re-entry policy are in conflict and it has led to a backlash from members of the community. Many cases involving the members of the community are left unattended. It was advised that awareness and sensitization advocacy on re-entry policy should be done regularly by both the Ministry of Education and the schools. However, pregnancy cases involving fellow learners(boys) or the members of the staff(teachers) are reported to the authority within the school (Administration), and outside-school cases are reported to the District Education Board secretary, One Stop Centre, and Victim Support Unity. Figure 5.2 below presents the summary of the following themes: "Coordination among the policy implementers; Pregnancy detection in primary schools; Social cultural practices influence on girl mothers re-entry policy implementation."

Figure 5.2: Coordination among the policy implementers; Pregnancy detection in primary schools; Social cultural practices influence on girl mothers re-entry policy implementation.



The research revealed some practical support mechanisms for the effective implementation of the girl mothers' re-entry policy. The findings indicated that existing support mechanisms in primary schools during and after maternity leave include home visitation and counseling of the expectant learner. It was also cited that the schools have aligned the guidance and counseling department in a way that will help a learner to return to school after delivering, pregnant learners are given commitment letters signed by the G&C teachers and the guardians. The findings also revealed that girl mothers are exempted from school activities that can be stressful to them and they are given ample time to take care of their children, schools have files where they keep all necessary school documents giving the details of a pregnant mother. On the other hand, it was evident from

the findings that in primary schools' other important aspects of implementing the girl mothers' re-entry policy effectively were overlooked. The research revealed that the selected primary schools overlooked medical reports confirming the pregnancy, health status, physical and emotional during. Antenatal care services are only left to the parents of the learner.

Figure 5.3: Existing Support Mechanism for girl mothers during and after maternity leave

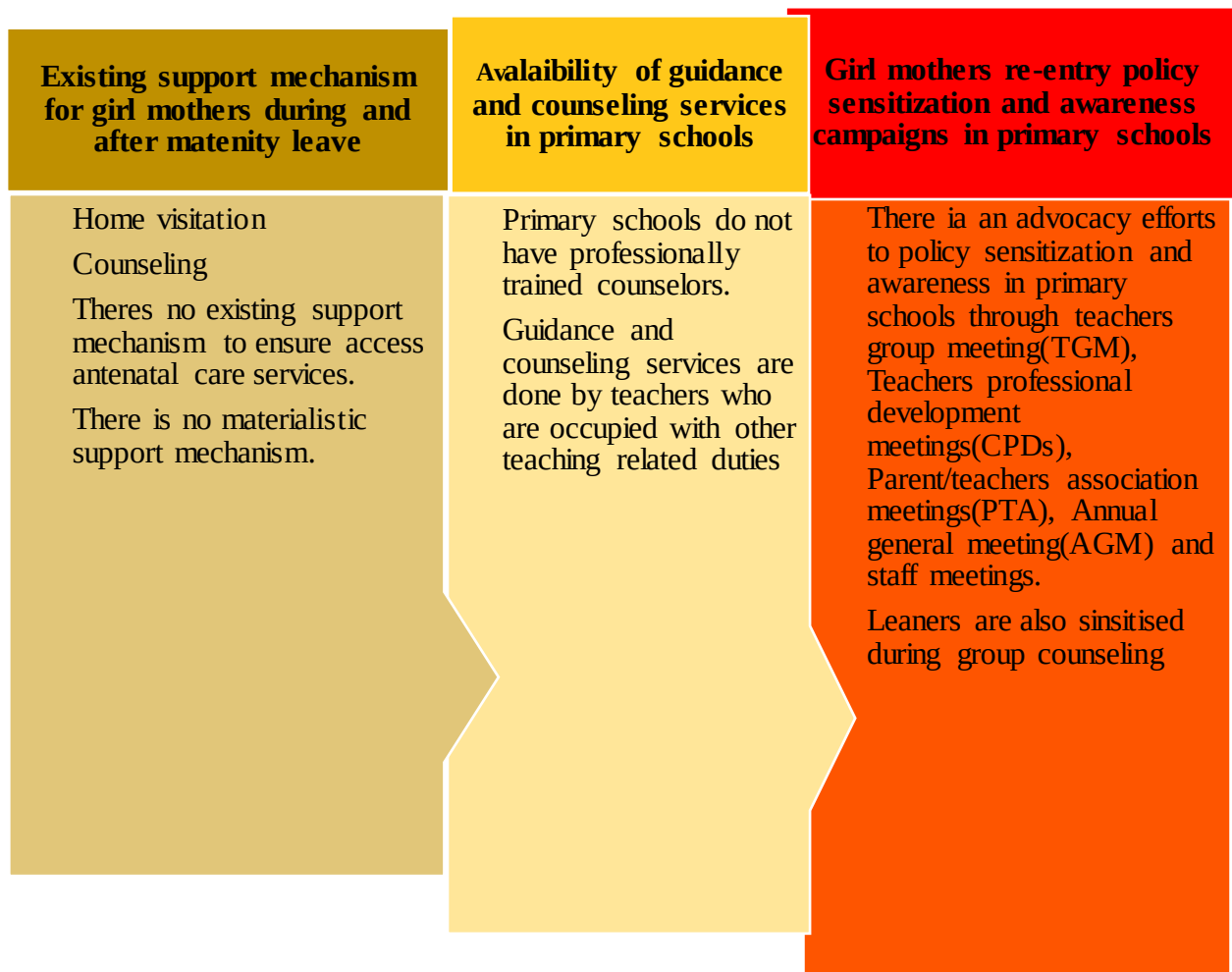


It is evident from the findings that primary schools do not have professionally trained counselors as the policy entails. Research revealed that teachers have taken up the role of guidance and counseling. Teachers who have taken up the role of guidance and counseling were chosen considering different factors including experience in teaching service, maturity level, and personality.

Study findings revealed that there is an advocacy effort to girl-mothers' re-entry policy. The selected primary schools sensitize the teachers and learners about the re-entry policy through

teacher group meetings (TGM), Teacher professional development meetings (CPDs), Parent/teachers association meetings (PTA), Annual general meetings (AGM), and staff meetings. Findings further revealed that learners are also sensitized in group counseling, assemblies, and club meetings. Figure 5.1.3 presents the summary of the themes.

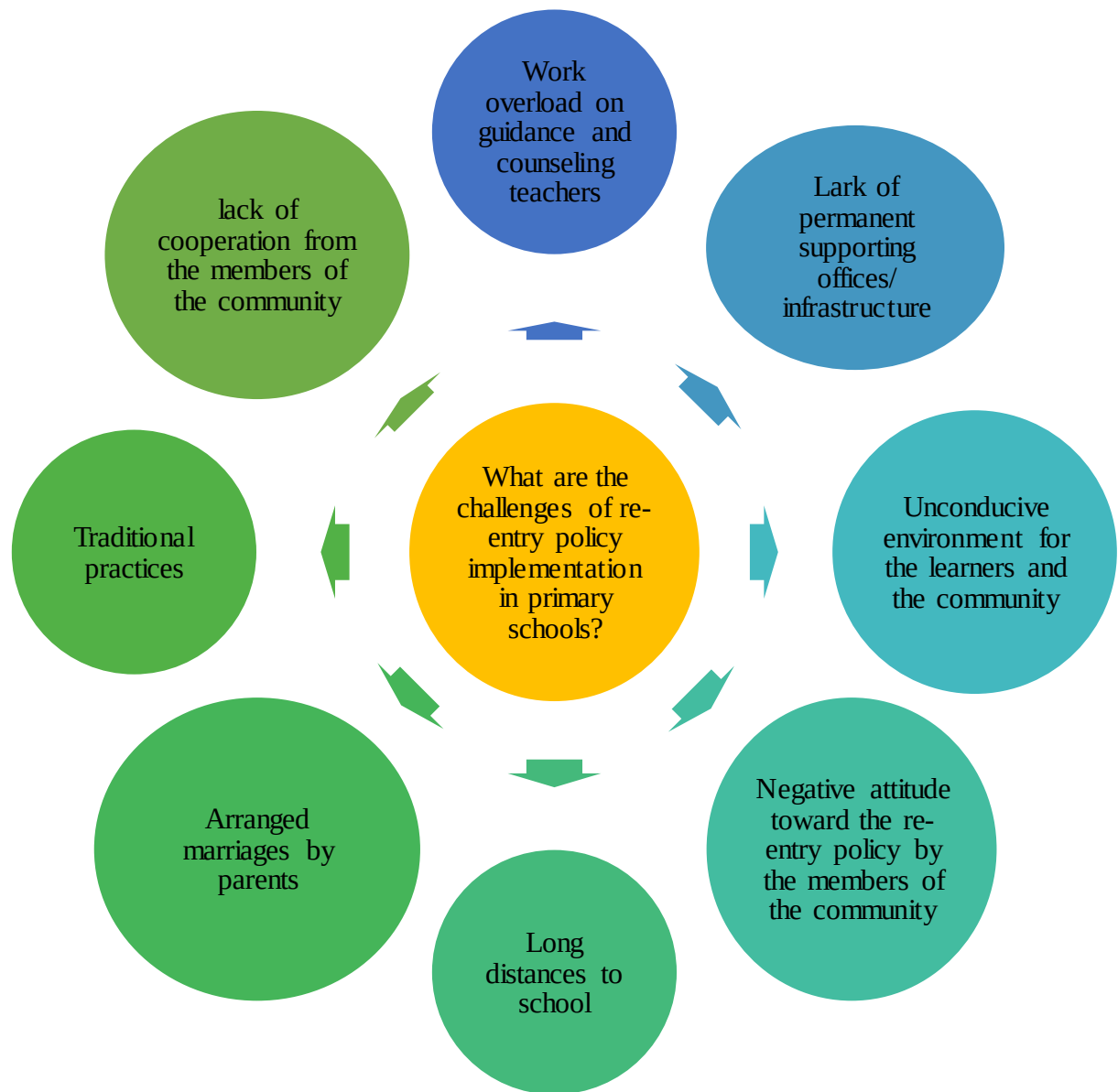
Figure 5.4: Existing support mechanism for girl mothers during and after maternity leave; Availability of guidance and counseling services in primary school; Girl mothers re-entry policy sensitization and awareness campaigns in primary schools



5.3 Challenges of Re-entry girl-mothers Policy Implementation in primary schools.

Through thematic analysis, it is revealed that school administrators and teachers experience a wide range of challenges during the implementation of the girl-mothers' policy. Figure 5.2 summarizes the challenges of the re-entry policy.

Figure 5.2: Challenges of re-entry policy.



The findings of the study revealed that members of the community and the parents are arranging marriage for the learners and expect to receive a dowry, the study further revealed that after learners are engaged in early marriage the parents are relocating them to other places. Besides that, the study revealed that some girls opt to get married than continue with education in rural areas. It was cited that girl mothers walk long distances from home to school. The environment in the school is also not conducive for the girl mothers and all the re-entry policy stakeholders. G&C teachers do not have their own offices for handling sensitive and the community members

seat under the trees during combined meetings. Infrastructures do not suit the need for effective re-entry policy implementation, and as a result, community members do not show willingness in attending the meetings. It was advised government should provide a conducive environment to attract girl mothers to return back to school and to all the stakeholders of the re-entry policy. If the environment is conducive most of the girl-mothers will return to school.

5.4 Conclusion of the Study.

The study explored administrators and teachers' experiences of implementing the girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi district. The study was answering the questions: *What are the awareness levels of school administrators and teachers about the re-entry policy in primary schools?*

What are the challenges of re-entry policy implementation in primary schools?

What guidelines can be developed to effectively implement the re-entry policy in primary school.?

The study revealed that girl-mothers re-entry policy implementers have different levels of awareness. G&Cs who are involved in the girl-mothers re-entry policy implementation have low knowledge about what the policy entails. This has resulted in the re-entry policy not bearing fruits as it is expected. A low level of awareness of the re-entry policy has resulted in overlooking other important aspects of the policy that can lead to effective re-entry policy implementation in primary schools. The re-entry policy in primary schools is not well implemented. However, there is a flip side to this the findings of the study show that other aspects of the policy were successfully implemented. Primary schools have some mechanisms to support girl-mothers during maternity leave, G&C teachers do conduct home visitation, and they ensure that parents and G&C teachers sign commitment letters for the returning of the girl-mother back to school and records of the girl-mothers are well kept. Additionally, there is an advocacy effort to policy sensitization and awareness within the schools, to the learners, teachers, and members of the community. The study further revealed re-entry policy implementation in primary schools has different challenges which may result in unintended outcomes.

5.3 Contribution of the Study.

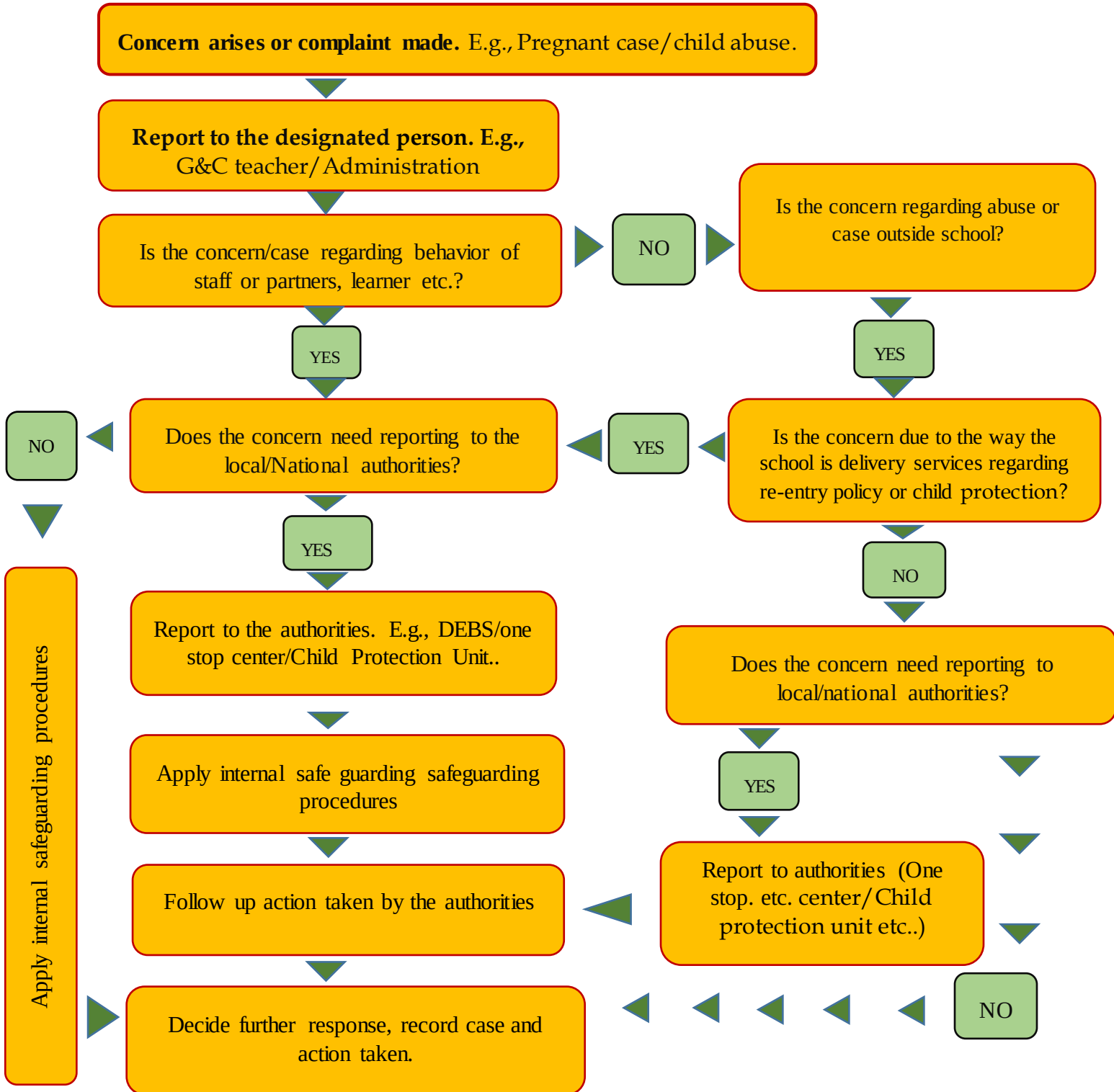
The study has added new information to the already existing knowledge of girl-mothers re-entry policy implementation.

5.3.1 Contribution of the Study to the policy implementation.

This section presents the discussion of new knowledge the study is contributing to the already existing body of knowledge. In the process of document reviewing and discussing the findings of the study, the researchers identified knowledge that can be aligned with the re-entry policy. Below are the main contributions the researchers have made:

- The research revealed that G&C teachers were counseling pregnant learners in primary schools without asking if sex was done by consent from both males/boys and female/girls: Other learners are victims of rape cases.
- The researcher noticed that some G&C teachers were not able to articulate the reporting procedures when there is sexual abuse in primary school. The researcher identified the reporting procedure for child abuse in schools. See **Figure 5.3** below.
- The researcher revised the re-entry policy guidelines by adding the reporting procedure of child abuse in primary schools. The gaps which were identified in the policy and some new findings from the study objective 1 and 2 informed the revision of the guidelines., the girl mother's re-entry policy was revised. See the document attached at the end.

Figure 5.3: Proposed reporting procedure to enhance re-entry policy



Source: (Adopted and modified from Keeping the children safe 2014, p.38).

Figure 5.3 is the proposed reporting procedure for any reported child abuse in primary schools. According to children's code ACT No 12(2022), children have right to social protection and education. It further states that a person shall not subject a child to early marriage, to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, cultural rights, religious or traditional practices (Female genital mutilation/cutting) that are likely to infringe the life of a child, social welfare and psychological development. Therefore, the proposed reporting procedure of child abuse might enhance the implementation of the girl mothers re-entry policy and safety of the children in primary schools by protecting them from early marriage, sexual exploitation, traditional practices and other abuse that might affect the education and wellbeing of a child. Informed by the findings from objective 1 and 2 of the study, the researcher reviewed a document to supplement the findings on child safeguarding standards and how to implement them. According to Keeping the children safe (2014), the guiding principle is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration. Any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a child must be treated seriously. For this reason, it is vital that anyone raising a concern should strictly follow reporting procedures. Particular care should be taken in regard to confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

5.4 Recommendation

The study recommended the following:

- Advocacy efforts to policy sensitization and awareness in primary schools and to the members of the community should be maximized by the Ministry of Education: Stakeholders to be sensitized about the re-entry policy frequently.
- The Ministry of Education and the government should endeavor to build the supportive infrastructures to enable implementation of the re-entry policy
- Ministry of Education should be closely monitoring the implementation of the re-entry policy

- Government and Non-governmental organizations through the Ministry of Education should fund guidance and counseling departments: Girl-mothers to be supported materially.
- Primary schools should have professionally trained guidance and counseling officers employed on a full-time basis to spearhead guidance and counseling departments.
- Teachers playing the role of guidance and counseling should be trained in primary schools for professional counseling services required by girl-mothers.
- Ministry of Education should foster school-community partnerships through Parent/teachers association meetings (PTA) meetings. In order to keep the community and teachers informed about changes to re-entry policy and other guidelines.
- All primary schools should have internal child safeguarding rules and procedures.

5.4.1 Recommendation for further research.

The following are the recommendations for further research

- A study should be conducted to explore the experiences of the community members on the re-entry policy implementation.
- A similar study should be conducted using the Quantitative method.
- A similar study should be conducted to explore the experiences(Narrative study) of the girl-mothers and the community members on re-entry policy implementation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I: UN-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL HEADS.

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the Moi University with the Student Number MS/R/5883/22. I am carrying out research with the title **Exploring administrators and teachers' implementation of girls' re-entry policy in primary schools**. This discussion is purely intended to produce information only for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality. You are therefore encouraged to be as objective as possible in your responses.

INSTRUCTIONS.

Tick in an appropriate box [☒] and give an explanation in the spaces provided.

SECTION A:

1. Age of respondent:

20-25[☐]

26-35[☐]

36-45[☐]

46 and above [☐]

2. Gender of respondent: Male [☐] Female [☐]

SECTION B:

1. Does the ministry of education provide any guidelines or documented procedures for the implementation of the girls' re-entry policy implementation at your school? Yes [☐] No [☐].

2. If Yes what procedures do you follow in terms of the following:

a. What procedures are taken at your school for the detection of pregnancies?

.....
.....
.....
b. After pregnancy is detected among your learners, what follow-up steps do you take?

.....
.....
c. What documents are given to a pregnant girl before sending her on maternal leave?

.....
.....
c. What documents does the school ensure that are maintained on a pregnant girl who is on maternity leave?

.....
.....
3. What steps does the school administration take if it is the following responsible for the pregnancy?

i). Fellow pupil:

.....
.....
.....
.....
ii). Teacher:

.....

.....

iii). Outsider:

.....

.....

.....

vi). How do you report the case if it is the following responsible for the pregnancy?

Teacher

Outsider

4. What help is given to a pregnant girl before she is given a maternity leave and during maternity leave?

.....

.....

.....

5. How do the school administration support girl-mothers after re-entry?

Please explain

6. Does the school offer counseling services to girl-mothers after re-entry?

Explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Does your school has qualified trained counselors?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. What is the length of time for re-entry after delivery and how many times should a learner the learner should re-enter?

.....

.....

.....

9. How is teacher awareness of the re-entry policy done at your school?

.....

.....

10. How is learner awareness of the re-entry policy done at your school?

.....

.....

11. How is community awareness of the re-entry policy done at your school?

.....

.....

.....

SECTION C:

Use a drawing to show the main challenges you have experienced that have affected the smooth implementation of the girls' re-entry policy implementation and add a **CAPTION** to a drawing?

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TEACHERS.

Facilities: Pencils, paper, taking notes and an audio/video recorder will be used with the teachers' permission.

My name is Conrad Musongo, a student at Moi University. I am doing research with a title **Exploring administrators and teachers' implementation of girls' re-entry policy in selected primary schools, in Mungwi district.** I am interested in your experiences as a key person in the implementation of girl mothers' re-entry policy guidelines. Throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of findings processes, I will maintain the confidentiality of your information. To achieve the research's goals, several questions have been created. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time if you feel threatened during our conversation, and all notes will be destroyed.

1. Does the ministry of education provide any guidelines or documented procedures for the implementation of the girls' re-entry policy implementation at your school? Yes [] No [].

2. what procedures do you follow in terms of the following:

a. what procedures are taken at your school for the detection of pregnancies?

b. After pregnancy is detected among your learners, what follow-up steps do you take?

c. What documents do you give to a pregnant girl before sending her on maternal leave?

c. What documents does the school ensure that are maintained on a pregnant girl who is on maternal leave?

3. What steps does the school take if it is the following responsible for the pregnancy?

i). Fellow pupil:

ii). Teacher:

iii). Outsider:

vi). How do you report the case if it is the following responsible for the pregnancy?

i). Fellow learner:

ii). Teacher:

iii). Outsider:

3. What help is given to a pregnant girl before she is given a maternal leave and during maternal leave?

4. What support do you give to girl-mothers after maternal leave?

5. Do you offer counseling services to girl-mothers after maternal leave?

6. How many qualified trained counselors do you have who offer counseling services to girl mothers?

7. what is the length of time for re-entry after delivery and how many times do you allow the learner to re-enter?

5. How do you sensitize teachers on the re-entry policy?

6. How do you sensitize learners on the re-entry policy?

7. How do you sensitize the community on the re-entry policy?

SECTION C:

Use a drawing to show the main challenges you have experienced that have affected the smooth implementation of the girls' re-entry policy implementation and add a **CAPTION** to a drawing?

APPENDIX III: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM MOI UNIVERSITY



MOI UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean School of Education

Tel: (053) 43001-8

(053) 43555

Fax: (053) 43555

P.O. Box 3900

Eldoret, Kenya

REF: MS/R/5883/22

DATE: 8th November, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH PERMIT IN RESPECT OF CONRAD
MUSONGO – MS/5883/22**

The above named is a 2nd year Master of Education student at Moi University, School of Education, Department of Educational Management & Policy Studies, School of Education.

It is a requirement of his Studies that he conducts research and produces a thesis. His research is entitled:

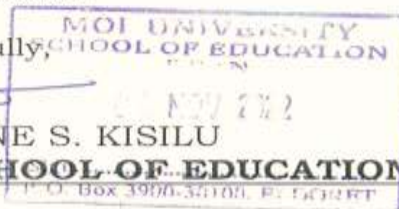
“Exploring School Administrators and Teachers’ Implementation of Girl Mothers’ Re-Entry Policy in Selected Primary Schools in Mungwi District, Northern Province, Zambia.”

Any assistance given to enable him conduct research successfully will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. ANNE S. KISILU

DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



(ISO 9001 – 2015 Certified Institution)

**APPENDIX IV: LETTER FROM MUNGWI DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD
GRANTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

All correspondence to be addressed to
District Education Board Secretary
Telephone: +260214245012



In reply please quote

Republic of Zambia
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**MUNGWI DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD
P.O. BOX 48
MUNGWI.**

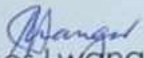
8th November, 2022

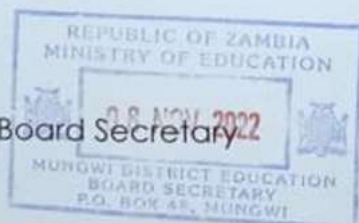
**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS: MR. CONRAD
MUSONGO**

Reference is made to the letter from MOI University dated 8th
November, 2022.

I am pleased to inform you that the office has agreed to allow you to do
your research in schools.

I wish you well during your research.


Moses Lwanga
District Education Board Secretary
MUNGWI DISTRICT



APPENDIX V: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Research Title: Exploring school administrators and teachers' implementation of girl-mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi district, Northern province, Zambia.

Researcher: Musongo Conrad.

Institution: Moi University.

Introduction.

The researcher is a master's student in Education research at Moi University in Kenya. This informed consent will give you details about the study. Any queries you may have about the study will be addressed after it has been explained and if you will be asked to sign a consent form after agreeing to participate in the study, and you will be given a copy to keep. This study is designed to explore school administrators and teachers' implementation of girl mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi district, Northern Province, Zambia.

A brief description of the sponsors of the research project.

This research study is funded by DAAD, a collaboration between Moi University in Kenya (CERM-ESA), University of Oldenburg in Germany, Uganda Management Institute in Uganda, Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, and the University of Dares Salaam in Tanzania. DAAD is funding this project with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office.

Aim of the study and procedures.

The main aim of this study is to **Explore school Administrators and teachers' experiences of Implementing the girl mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Northern province in Zambia**. The findings of this study will assist to find out the challenges regarding re-entries of girl mothers in primary schools after maternal leave. Participating in this research study includes a personal interview that is face to face which may keep going for one to two hours. The interviews will be directed by the researcher, tape recorder and later recorded information will be transcribed for analysis of the data. Data from the administrators will be collected using unstructured questionnaire while from the guidance and counselling teachers' data will be collected using one on one interviews.

Ten people will participate in the study, which will last for about thirty days. Each participant will take part for just one day in the interview, which the researcher will schedule on different days.

You have been requested to participate in this study because it is believed that you have the knowledge necessary for it. Kindly take note that there is no known risk that taking part in this

study will cause you any harm or discomfort. The research findings could be used to address several challenges faced by the administrators and teachers in implementing girls' re-entry policy. Sensitive information will be kept with high confidentiality.

Confidentiality.

Your names and any other identifying information will never be revealed in any publication of this study. The information which will be provided will be kept in strict confidentiality and will only be used for study purposes.

Cost.

You won't incur any additional costs as a result of taking part in this study. Questions: You can get in touch with if me you have any inquiries about the study or your rights as a research participant. Name: CONRAD MUSONGO. Contact number: +260760992520. Email: conradmusongo@gmail.com

Statement of consent.

I..... give my consent to participate in the research study. The title of the study is; **Exploring school administrators and teachers' implementation of girl mothers' re-entry policy in selected primary schools in Mungwi district, Northern Province, Zambia.** Data collection will take place in November 2022.

Voluntary participation.

The decision to participate in this research study is entirely up to the participants. Participation is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw from the participation at any time during data collection if they feel uncomfortable.

Acknowledgment and agreement by:

Administrators.

Signature.....

Date.....

Guidance and counseling teachers.

Signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX VI: WORK PLAN.

NO	Activity.	Time period.	Remarks.
1.	Proposal writing	April 2022 – September 2022	
2.	Approval of proposal by department (proposal oral examination)	August 2022-september 2022	The process will be effective of suggested amendments
3.	Pre-visit to gain information and extensive exploration of the area.	September 2022	The process will include seeking permissions to relevant study groups and gate keepers
4.	Data collection.	October 2022- November 2022	The researcher will commence data collection process
5.	Data analysis and interpretation.	December 2022- March 2023	The process will be repeated after returning to the field.
6.	Thesis report preparations	April 2023	
7.	Submitting theses to examiners	May 2023- June 2023	
8.	Oral thesis examination effecting correction suggested.	July 2023- August 2023	

APPENDIX VII: BUDGET.

S/N	Activity.	Qty	Unity Cost (ZMK)	Total.
1	Ream A4 paper	1	k120	K120
2	Photocopy (Consent forms, ID and letters)	13	k 5	k65
3	Pens	10	k10	k100
4	Stapler	1	k300	k300
5	Staples	1 box	k50	k50
6	Printing of research instruments	Qstnrs/interview guide	k k200	k200
7	Transport	Research site	K6,000	k600
8	Lodging		K3000	k3000
9	Other Expenses	Water, food and talk time...	k2000	k2000
	TOTAL			k 11, 835.00

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE GIRL MOTHERS' RE-ENTRY POLICY.

What Happens if a School-Girl Falls Pregnant?





Source: (Keeping the children safe, 2014).

INTRODUCTION.

Zambia launched its re-entry policy in 1997 to encourage Education for all in accordance with Articles 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which both state that "Education is a human right. The principle of "Education for All" also upholds the right to access education (EFA), the Beijing Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Zambia National Gender Policy, and other international agreements. Zambia is a signatory to all these.

In compliance with these national and international policy declarations, the Ministry of Education has put into place a number of measures to increase access to education for both boys and girls. One of these strategies is the Re-Entry Policy, which demands that schools accept pregnant females who had previously left the system.

The Ministry has decided to do this because it recognizes that every girl has a constitutional right to an education. In terms of literacy rates, school enrollment, completion rates, and educational achievement, there are still gender disparities that favor men; the bulk of these can be partly ascribed to adolescent pregnancies. Early pregnancy is a significant factor in the high dropout rates for girls, among other issues, as well as other issues.

The Ministry of Education's main goal in this area is to develop regulations that will reduce teenage pregnancies while upholding their access to an education. The Ministry will also endeavor to stop or reduce the number of female students who drop out of school for any other reason.

In the event that a girl is forced out of school due to pregnancy, the Ministry's suggestions will aid schools and other stakeholders in ensuring that the 1997 Re-Entry Policy is adhered to. Using the 1997 Re-entry policy and the findings of the study, the guide lines were revised by including the reporting procedures for any reported child abuse. The following are the modified Re-entry policy guide lines

1. How can our school detect pregnancies?

- ❖ All schools in collaboration with Health Centres should carry out **routine general medical check-ups** of all girls under the School Health and Nutrition (SHN) programme, on a termly basis.
- ❖ When it is reported or rumored that a girl is pregnant, a check-up involving several girls, e.g., thirty girls, should be carried out to avoid stigmatization. The pregnant girl should be assisted to obtain a medical report, which should serve as official evidence that the girl is pregnant.
- ❖ Schools should not demand a written confession or conduct an interrogation. Communication should be done through a trained school Counsellor.
- ❖ Schools should introduce communication boxes to facilitate communication with pregnant girls in order to lessen rumor-mongering.

2. What steps do we need to take/ after a pregnancy is detected?

- ❖ Once a girl is confirmed pregnant.
- ❖ Inform the parents/guardians of the girl as soon as possible if they are not already aware.
- ❖ Ask her if sex was done with consent from both (boy/man and girl).
- ❖ Once it is confirmed that both consented, she should be put on a counselling programme. The school should ensure she has access to antenatal care.
- ❖ The schools should send a letter explaining the Re-Entry Policy to concerned parents/guardians. Given the high level of adult illiteracy, it is recommended that parents/guardians should see the school Counsellor who will explain the re-entry

procedures to them. The committal document or agreement to be signed by parents/guardians should be attached to the letter.

- ❖ The girl should go on **mandatory** leave at the end of **the seventh month of her pregnancy**, or earlier if advised by her doctor. However, schools should be flexible in case the girl wishes to go on leave earlier or later than the seventh month. Appropriate documents should be given when the girl goes on leave.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Globally, about 22 million or 18% of all children aged 6 to 17 years were out of school in 2017

(UNESCO, 2019)

3. What documents should be given to a pregnant girl when she goes on leave.

- ❖ All schools should provide pregnant girls with the following documents before sending them on leave:
- ❖ Medical report confirming the pregnancy and health status, including physical and emotional condition.

- ❖ Document granting maternity leave. The period should be the same for both boarders and day scholars, i.e., to resume school as soon as possible.
- ❖ Letter of re-admission to school, which states the date for resuming classes.

4. What documents should be maintained by schools on pregnant girls?

The following documents should be maintained on pregnant girls by all schools:

- ❖ Detailed school record.
- ❖ All the documents cited in Section 3.
- ❖ Commitment by person responsible for the pregnancy, and his family in the case of a school boy.
- ❖ Data collection sheet for monitoring early pregnancy, court case report, policy report and all necessary reports.

5. What steps can we take if a fellow pupil is responsible for the pregnancy?

If a school boy is responsible for the pregnancy, both he and his parents should sign a committal document to support the girl and the unborn child.

Gender and equity considerations entail that both girls and boys should be given equal opportunities. Therefore, the following should be done:

- ❖ The boy responsible for the pregnancy should be counselled by a trained counsellor about his responsibilities, together with the girl. This should include

Voluntary Counselling and Testing for HIV. Both should have a medical check-up for STIs.

- ❖ School boys who are responsible for the pregnancies should also go on mandatory leave as a warning and lesson to other boys, and should only come back when the girl resumes school. This will also partly ensure that girls return to school.
- ❖ If a school boy is responsible for the pregnancy, both he and his parents should sign a committal document to support the baby: failure to do so will result in dismissal of the school boy.
- ❖ Detailed records on the man/boy responsible for the pregnancy should be maintained in the school. This will help to track him. The records are transferable in case he changes schools. The records should give information on the duration of leave, contact address/telephone, as well as the date of re-admission to school.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

11 502 girls were pregnant in primary school in 2019 and only 5 669 were re-entered back to school in Zambia.

(Zambia national education coalition, 2020).

6. What steps should we take if an outsider or a teacher is responsible for a pregnancy?

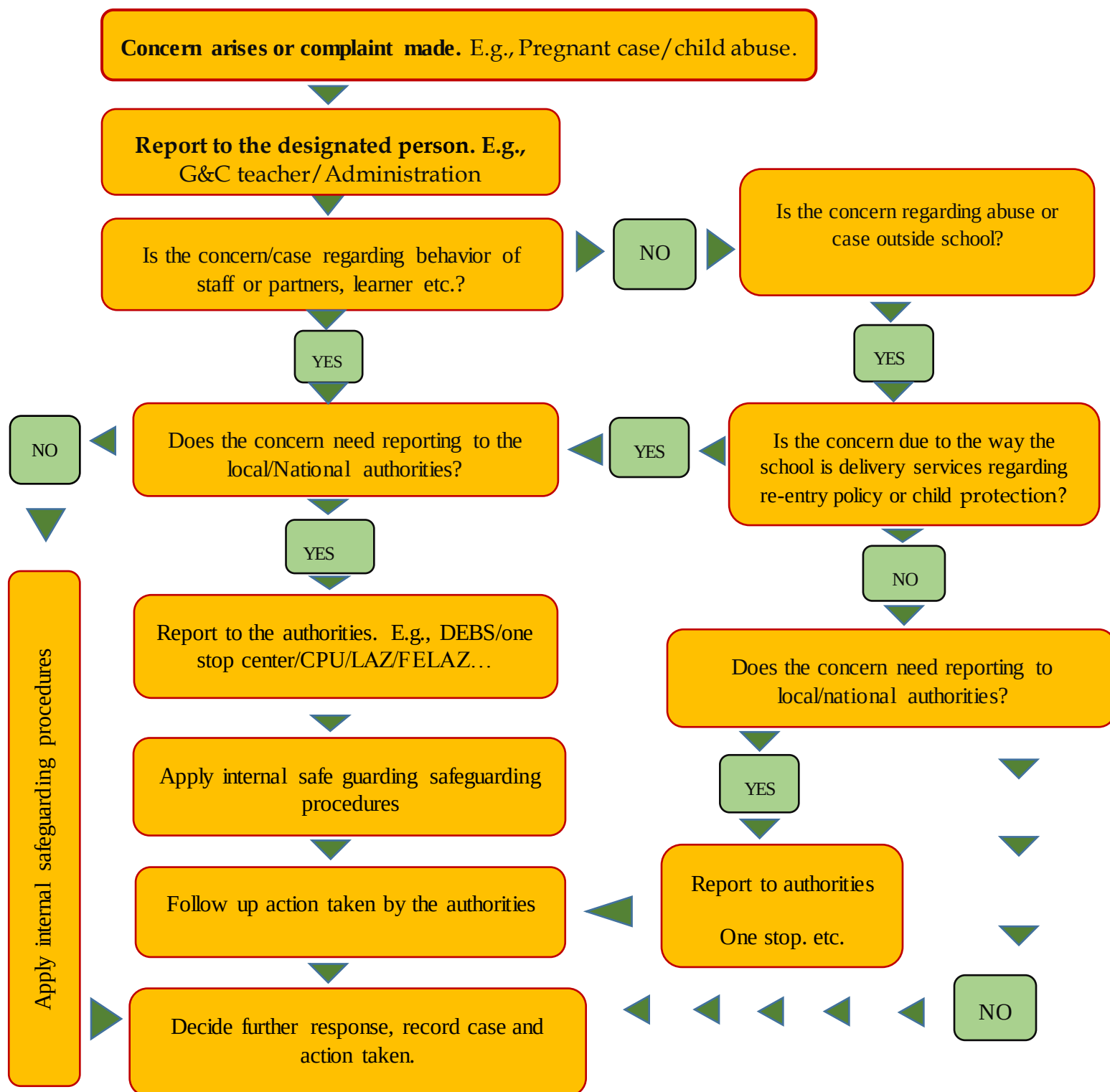
Adult men/teachers who impregnate school girls should be punished and exposed. The following actions should be taken:

- ❖ Put their details on record at the school.
- ❖ Inform the girl's parents/guardians of the name of the unborn child's father.
- ❖ Connect the family to organizations like Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Law Association of Zambia (LAZ), Female Lawyers Association Zambia (FELAZ), National Legal Aid Clinic for Women, and Victim Support Unit for information on legal action and maintenance for the girl and the child.
- ❖ Punish the perpetrators who defile girls under the age of 16 under the current law that deals with defilement cases.
- ❖ In the case of an outsider, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) and Guidance and Counselling Department should play an active role in tracking the culprit.
- ❖ In the case of a teacher impregnating a school girl, a stiff punishment should be given. The teacher should be expelled and the case handed over for criminal investigations. The figure below demonstrates the reporting procedures for any recorded child abuse in schools.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

At the time the survey was conducted, 29% of adolescents had begun childbearing. The 2018 ZDHS collected information on late-adolescent pregnancy (age 15-19). This implies that 29% of girls began childbearing before the age of 15 years.

Figure 5.3: Proposed reporting procedure to enhance re-entry policy.



Source: (Adopted and modified from Keeping the children safe 2014, p.38)

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

In Zambia, 1.7 million were child brides and 400,000 of these were married before the age of 15 years.

According to United Nations Population Fund, (2015).

7. What is the length of time for re-entry after delivery?

- ❖ The girl should be allowed to re-enter school at least six months and not later than a year after delivery. However, depending on the support from her family, she may re-enter earlier.

8. What steps should we follow in cases of school transfers?

- ❖ Transfers should not be mandatory, though a girl may choose to transfer to another school.
- ❖ The School Guidance Department should help to find a school place for the girl mother, if possible, on an exchange basis in the case of a transfer to another school.

9. How many times should a girl be allowed to re-enter school?

❖ In the rare event that a girl applies for re-entry more than once, the school should be flexible and re-admit the pupil, and the girls should be provided with the necessary counselling.

10. How can we track girls that have fallen pregnant?

❖ All schools should monitor teen pregnancy trends by completing the Data Collection Sheet on Early Pregnancy every term.

❖ Detailed records on the pregnant school girl and the man/boy responsible for the pregnancy should be maintained in the school. This will enable the school to track all cases. The records, which should be transferred to the next school in case of a change of school, should give the following information: duration of the leave; contact address/telephone and the date of re-admission into school.

❖ Schools and the Parent Teacher Association (FTA)/Ebrent Community School Committee (PCSC) should assist the pregnant girl and her family in tracking down perpetrators. The School Administration, the Guidance and Counselling Department and Equity and Gender Departments should make follow-ups on girls who do not come back to school after re-entering school.

❖ Who are involved in pregnant cases should not be allowed to transfer to other schools.

11. What can we do to improve the school environment and prevent pregnancies?

- ❖ Each school should have a **trained female Counsellor for girls and a male Counsellor for boys**. All schools must have a Counselling Committee headed by trained Counsellors, and should include in the timetable counselling on sexual and gender relations and reproductive health education to reduce incidences of teen pregnancies.
- ❖ The school administration should ensure that the Re-Entry Policy is disseminated at assembly on a regular basis. Sensitization should particularly be done at the beginning of the school year when the pupils report to school.
- ❖ The Counselling Committee should also sensitize the schools' PTA/PCSC to the Re-entry Policy.
- ❖ Schools should sensitize pupils on the consequences of pregnancy for both girls and boys, i.e. both will be sent on maternity/paternity leave; the school Guidance and Counselling Department should contact organizations like Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Law Association of Zambia (LAZ), Female Lawyers Association Zambia (FELAZ), National Legal Aid Clinic for Women, and Victim Support Unit for information on legal action and maintenance for the girl and the child.
- ❖ Schools should create networks with relevant organizations which can give support on issues of child maintenance and help access bursaries, if a change of school requires extra finances.
- ❖ Existing Student Alliance for Female Education (SAFE) Clubs and Child Rights Clubs should be strengthened and new ones established in all other schools.
- ❖

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

In 2018, 11 453 girls were pregnant in primary schools, only 4, 917 were re-admitted and in secondary schools 3,576 girls were pregnant and 2, 488 were re-admitted

12. What about girls that drop out due to reasons other than pregnancies?

- ❖ Girls who drop out of school for reasons other than pregnancy should be re-entered in schools without bias.
- ❖ All schools should develop measures that will facilitate the re-admission of female drop out for reasons other than pregnancy.