

**EXAMINING FACTORS THAT AFFECT TEEN MOTHERS' RE-ENROLMENT INTO
FORMAL PRIMARY SCHOOLING AFTER CHILD-BEARING: A CASE STUDY OF
MACHINGA BOMA ZONE IN MACHINGA.**

MED (Education Policy Planning and Leadership) Thesis

BY

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**Submitted to the Department of Education Foundations, School of Education in partial
Requirement for the fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education Policy Planning and
Leadership.**

SEPTEMBER, 2018

DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original work and it has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Acknowledgements have been duly made where other people's work have been used. I bear the responsibility for the contents of this Thesis.

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Date.....

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to Nancy Kadumuliro Mlauzi; my mother, for the kind of woman she is. She has always been there for me, believed in me, encouraged and supported me even when resources were limited to do so.

To my Fiancé Mike Mtukulo; thank you for continuing to be a driver for the completion of this thesis. I appreciate all the support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help, motivation and contribution to this study:

First of all, I would like to thank my Supervisors Dr. Nertha Mgala and Dr. Elizabeth Kamchedzera for their guidance and motivation during this study and for believing and encouraging me in the times I could have given up when things were tough.

I would like to thank Mike Mtukulo for being there and pushing me so hard up to the completion of this study, when all I could think were reasons to quit.

Also, I am absolutely indebted to the Almighty God for the life and health I undeservedly enjoyed throughout the period of my studies

The participants who without their stories, this study would not have been possible. I appreciate for the time they took in telling their stories.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth. Drawing from the experiences of 20 teen mothers, 4 head teachers and 4 parents in Machinga Boma zone, the study examined factors that affect teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. The study used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to understand the status of teen mother re-enrolment into schooling after giving birth. The study also sought to understand the kind of support teen mothers are given to re-enroll, home and school related factors that affect their return to school and how the challenges that teen mothers face can be addressed. The study further examined the community related factors that affect teen mothers' return to school.

Findings suggest that there is low re-enrolment of teen mothers to formal schooling after giving birth. Moreover, it was found that teen mothers do not receive enough support both from school and home to re-enroll. Often teen mothers are stigmatized and discriminated against both in school and the community. They do not receive proper guidance and counseling in schools, and they are forced into early marriages and challenged by conflicting roles of being a mother, student and daughter. The time they spend out of school exposes them to more options in life which are aggravated by the community. However, they are encouraged by future benefits of education like employment and also chances of finding someone to take care of their babies at home while they are in school. Despite this however, they are to a great extent set back by lack of financial support. The implication of the study is that there should be more sensitization and awareness campaigns about the policy for students, teachers and parents as most of the policy challenges arise from lack of awareness.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACCRONYMS

UNFPA	- United Nations Population Fund
NSO	- National Statistics Office
EECA	- Eastern Europe Central Asia
MoEST	- Ministry of Education Science and Technology
SSA	- Sub-Saharan African Countries
EMIS	- Education management Information System
MESVTEE	- Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
MSAS	- Malawi Schooling and Adolescent Survey
MDHS	- Malawi Demographic Healthy Survey
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organizations
CSG	- Child Support Grant
AGLP	- Malawi Adolescent Girls Learning Partnership
OVC	- Orphans and Vulnerable Children
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
UNFPA	- United Nations Fund for Population Activities
USAID	- United States Agency for International Development
UNICEF	- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
FAWE	- Forum for African women educationalists
IPA	- Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
SIG	- School Improvement Plan
SIP	- School Improvement Grant
SMC	- School Management Committee
CBCC	- Community Based Child Care Centers
ECD	- Early Childhood Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the topic of the study by narrating a brief history of the re-enrolment policy in Malawi and other Sub-Saharan African countries. The problem statement relating to teenage pregnancy, school dropout and re-entry into formal schooling is also presented. It then proceeds by pointing out the purpose and the significance of the study. The research questions that gives the direction of the study has also been introduced.

1.1 Background Information

Teenage motherhood is a global challenge, both in developed and developing countries (Treffer, 2003; Hubbard, 2008). Child bearing among teenage girls in sub-Saharan Africa remains high, with worrying levels in Niger, Mali, Angola, Chad and Malawi, as the adolescent fertility rate is 108 births per 1000 girls aged 15-19 in the region as compared to 73 in South Asia, 72 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 32 in US, 26 in New Zealand and 25 in the UK (World Bank, 2011). According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2013), developing countries account for 95 percent of births to adolescent mothers. In Malawi, one in every three girls is married and/or has experienced at least one pregnancy before her 20th birthday (National Statistics Office (NSO), (2011). Traditionally, these teens are expected to dedicate themselves wholly to their children thereby, dropping out of school.

To address the problem of teen mother school dropout, governments have devised policies and programs to keep these girls in school. In Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), pregnant girls have a right to continue their school education (UNESCO, 2014). Such policies are referred to as Continuation Policies and are the most progressive policies, allowing pregnant learners to remain in school for as long as they would like, and not requiring compulsory leave to come back after giving birth. Some countries however, especially the SSA countries, have adopted the Re-entry policies. These policies necessitate a compulsory leave of absence before a student may re-enter school after giving birth (Biringu, Undie, MacKenzie, Katahoire, Obare & Machawira, 2015).

In Malawi for example, the government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology adopted the re-admission policy in 1993 so as to reduce the number of girls dropping out of school because of pregnancies. According to Wolf, Lang, Mount, Proutya (1999) and Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST, 2018) the policy allows school girls who have become pregnant to be withdrawn from school for one academic year and be re-admitted to a different school upon application as long as there is assurance of safe custody of the child. This opportunity is given once in a girl's education. If a school boy is responsible for the pregnancy, he is also withdrawn for one academic year and re-admitted upon application. The idea of the policy came in the late 1980s and early 1990s with a group of politically and institutionally empowered women who attempted to catalyze changes that would improve the lives of women. As such, they asked the Ministry of Education and Culture to re-examine the pregnancy policy of which by then it allowed permanent expulsion of the pregnant girls from school. After being adopted, the policy was strongly supported by the Government, the community and the Doner partners, but faced resistance from the teachers because of their own perspectives towards pregnant girls. According to Samati (2015), many communities and schools still have not implemented the provisions in the policy and more recently issued government guidelines and many adolescent girls in Malawi still fail to return to school for a variety of reasons that the policy does not adequately address.

Following the implementation challenges of the 1993 Policy, the ministry developed a circular on Readmission Procedures in 2006. The procedures provided that a pregnant female learner, and the male learner responsible for the pregnancy, needed to submit three copies of a letter to the head teacher regarding the pregnancy and be counseled regarding the issue (MoEST, 2018). These conditions have proved to be bad and cumbersome for girls trying to re-enroll into school. Recently, the government of Malawi has reviewed the re-admission policy and drafted new guidelines of the policy that will assist in promoting girls' education by addressing barriers that prevent learners from dropping out of school (MoEST, 2018). The guidelines therefore seek to; increase access, retention and completion of education for girls, simplify readmission procedures, provide guidance to communities and schools, reduce vulnerability of learners through reduced dropout from school and strengthen school systems in the provision of counselling the readmitted learners to stay in school.

According to a study by Biringu *et al.*, (2015) from six Sub-Saharan African countries of Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Botswana only three countries (Botswana, Kenya and Zambia) have their policies established and the rest are still in draft form, have no clear guidelines and still convey mixed messages in regard to how policy implementation should occur. In most of these countries for instance, no mechanisms have been put in place to keep track of these girls. On top of that, they are left to their own and parents' initiative to find a new school and begin the re-entry process which becomes cumbersome. There is no awareness among the communities about the policies and most schools implement them based on their personal convictions over what should be done. In Kenya for instance, the policy has been criticized for being discriminatory as the school boys who are responsible are not asked to leave school until the child is born (Kiptanui *et al*, 2015). In Malawi however, the policy is explicit on the fact that boys who impregnate girls will face an equivalent suspension. Nevertheless, there is an inequality in practice as boys are rarely suspended for a full year (Wolf, *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, it is unclear if there is a systematic method of tracking the affected girls. Despite this however, the existence of national policies and guidelines, whether in official or draft form, demonstrates the commitment of countries to respond to this critical issue.

Although policies and interventions to encourage girls' school enrolment have contributed to near gender parity in school entry, girls are still more likely to leave school than boys because of pregnancy and marriage (Anzar, Harpring, Cohen & Leu, 2004, Hubbard, 2008). According to Education Management Information System (EMIS, 2013), in 2013, 57% of boys completed primary education in Malawi compared to 46% of girls with pregnancy and marriage being the main reason for school discontinuation among girls. According to EMIS report 2015 and 2016, pregnancy was one of the highest reasons of drop out among girls. It also specifies that the survival rate of girls to standard 8 is 37 percent. One of the few studies of the policy in Zambia found that, nationally, school reentry rates among teen mothers decreased from 79 percent in 2002 to 65 percent in 2008, where they remained until 2015 (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) 2002-2014). This was also proven in the Malawi Schooling and Adolescent Survey (MSAS) conducted in Machinga and Balaka districts in 2007. Out of the 875 girls who were attending school at the time of the baseline more than a third of those had a child four years later/ by age 18 and were out of school (Chalasani, *et al.*, 2013). Again, out of the 133 girls who cited pregnancy as a reason for not attending school, only 11 (8.3%)

subsequently re-enrolled compared to the 23.5% of those who missed a term as a result of economic constraints. According to a 2010 Malawi Demographic Health Survey (MDHS), 25.6% of adolescent girls were ever pregnant and 96.6% of those ever pregnant girls were out of school. Biringu *et al.*, (2015) states that, nearly all adolescent girls who have ever been pregnant are out of school in most Sub Saharan African countries. This therefore suggests a substantial attrition from school particularly among girls mostly due to teenage pregnancies and marriages.

1.2 Problem Statement

Due to its negative consequences on different aspects of adolescents and young women's lives, early and unwanted pregnancies have become a public policy concern. Policy reforms and programs aimed at helping teen mothers to increase their educational outcomes have increased over the decades and are being implemented by Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (Moonga, 2014; Hubbard, 2008). Malawi's re-admission policy is one example of the wider strategies to improve the attainment of basic education for teenage mothers in Malawi. Despite the Government's wider strategy to improve teen mothers' education, it has been noted that after child-bearing only a few girls re-enroll into formal schooling (Moonga, 2014, Chalasani *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the question is; what prevents these teen mothers from going back to school after giving birth in Malawi? Many studies have been done in as far as re-admission policy is concerned. Among other aspects, most of these studies have dealt with challenges that teen mothers face after re- enrolling into formal schooling following child-birth (Moonga 2014, Chalasani *et al.*, 2013, Duncun, 2005, Ahikire & Mandanda, 2014, Wedekind & Milingo, 2015). Moreover, much of the attention has been directed in examining experiences of school going mothers and the relationship between teen motherhood and academic performance (Dlamini, 2015, Chalasani *et al* 2013, Nelima, 2010, Chigona & Chetty, 2008 Kiptanui *et al.*, 2015). However, little research has been done to examine factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment into both primary and secondary schools. Little is known as to why the proportion of girls being re-admitted back into schools after pregnancy is not increasing. It is for this reason that this study aims at examining the factors that affect teen mothers to re-enroll into formal primary school after giving birth.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine factors that affect the teen mothers' re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth.

1.3.1 Main Research question

What are the factors that affect the teen mothers' re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth?

1.3.2 Sub: research questions

- What is the current status of re-enrolment of girls after giving birth?
- To what extent are teen mothers supported to re-enroll after falling pregnant?
- What are the school-related factors affecting girls' re-enrolment?
- What are the home-related factors affecting girls' re-enrolment?
- How can the challenges that affect teen mothers' re-enrolment be addressed?

1.4 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is based on the fact that the findings from this study will contribute a body of knowledge to scholarly work, policy and practice. In terms of policy and practice, the study will provide strategies on which the policy can be improved and how well the policy can be implemented in both secondary and primary schools. The study will enlighten the policy stakeholders on the factors affecting teen mother-enrolment and how the implementation of the policy can best address the challenges teen mothers face. There will be more literature for scholarly work in relation to factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment after giving birth.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the re-enrolment policy in Malawi and other Sub-Saharan African countries. It also outlined the problem statement, the purpose and the significance of the study. The research questions that shapes the study have also been outlined in this chapter.

The research questions outlined in this chapter lay a foundation for the next chapter which will review literature related to this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section aims at summarizing and analyzing former studies that are related to this topic. Review has been organized according to research questions

Teenage pregnancy is a growing concern of different nations particularly in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where adolescent girls experience the highest rates of pregnancy in the world (Biringu *et al.*, 2015). Research has shown that, teen pregnancies compromise women's educational prospects and economic opportunities in the future (Sedgh, Bankole, Finer, Eilers & Singh, 2014; Chigona & Chetty, 2008, Hubbard, 2008). As such many studies have focused on this topic. Among other aspects, these studies have dealt with the associations between early/unintended pregnancy and school dropout. To add on that, much of the attention has been directed in examining the governments' education sector responses/ policies to the issue mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The amount of knowledge that has been generated from previous research has laid a foundation for building further knowledge on this topic.

2.1 Policies and Programs on girls' enrollment

Literature has shown that there are a number of policies and programs that are being implemented by governments and NGOs in order to increase girls' enrollment into formal schooling.

The last decade or so has seen an introduction of more teenage pregnancy policies in many African countries, including Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar, Swaziland and Botswana as a way of encouraging teenage mothers to stay in school. The policies have received criticisms in terms of their implementation and effectiveness. According to Wolf *et al* (1999), most of these policies have not been internalized and mainstreamed in the education systems as they exist more at policy level than in practice. He further argues that, the policymakers are focused upon the design of the policy and the politics of its creation, and do not see its implementation as part of their role. Chilisa (2002) argues that such policies constitute an indirect form of violence on the affected girls as they are entrenched in ideologies of exclusion. For example, some schools force girls to be out of school for a year even though the baby has died. In

Malawi, it has been reported that the process of application for re-admission often takes more than a year and becomes a setback for girls already contending with social pressures to get married rather than to return to school (Simati, 2015). In other words, the implementations of these policies have not been very effective, since only a few girls return to school after pregnancy (Moonga, 2014). Despite these statements however, the existence of these national policies and guidelines, demonstrates the commitment of countries to respond to this critical issue.

To support these policies, programs are also being implemented to keep teen mothers in school. For example, in South Africa, the Child Support Grant (CSG) was introduced in 1998 with the aim of helping teen mothers and poor girls financially so that they remain in school (Dlamini, 2015). According to the quantitative analysis of the impact of the CSG undertaken by the Department of Social Development and the United Nations Children's fund (2008) and the Health Systems Trust, in 2013, revealed that girls receiving the CSG are attending school at a considerable rate and that the CSG managed to keep the sugar daddies away from the girls. In Malawi, for example, there is CAMFED and the Malawi Adolescent Girls' Learning Partnership (AGLP), just to mention a few, which are working to keep girls in school. However, Moonga (2014) argues that most of these programs are not specifically meant for teen mothers as more support goes to the Orphans and Vulnerable Children. Thus, there is need for government entities and the private sector to devise special programs that entirely aim at supporting teen mothers and their babies for them to get the attention they deserve.

2.2 Support given to teen mothers

One of the greatest challenges that teen mothers face is lack of support. Some studies therefore have assessed the kind of support given to adolescent mothers after they have fallen pregnant and when attempting to re-enroll.

Much has shown that pregnant girls and teen mothers are highly subjected to stigmatization, discrimination and lack of support networks (Dlamini, 2015; Moonga 2014). Young girls often get negative responses from family and friends and face trauma in trying to decide who to tell about the pregnancy. Looking at a study by Moonga (2014), on challenges faced by teen mothers in Zambia, he points out that, several teen mothers shared how they were abused by family members by throwing them out of home as they were seen as a disgrace to the family. A study by UNESCO

(2010) on pregnant school girls in Tanzania, indicated that young mothers reported that the teasing and taunting from their peers start once rumors of pregnancy start circulating. On the same note, Kaufman *et al.*, (2001) claims that teen mothers fail to access health facilities due to the embarrassment they get within the health care systems. This stigma often leads to depression, social exclusions, low self-esteem and poor academic performance, which in turn affects chances of their return to school after giving birth (Hubbard, 2008 & Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod, Letsoalo, 2009). To add on that, the Canadian Ministry of Education (1998), in their study, states that teen mothers do not receive any support from the fathers who often do not show concrete commitment as fathers. As such, they tend to seek support from older men who sexually abuse them, leading to subsequent pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Moonga (2014) argues that, the amount of support a pregnant teenager gets from her family and the community, influence the manner in which the pregnancy affects her educational outcomes. This simply means that the more support a teenage mother gets from her family and community, the more likelihood there is that she would return to school.

Given that education is a right, regardless of a student's status it is mandatory upon schools to take full responsibilities to guide pregnant girls so that they fulfill their right to education (UNESCO, 2014; Hubbard, 2008). Despite this however, a number of studies have shown that pregnant girls do not receive proper support and guidance from the school authorities. Bhana, Morrell, Shefer & Ngabaza (2010) conducted a study investigating the teacher's responses to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in schools. In this study, it was found that teenage pregnancy is often shamed and punished in schools. Teachers have the ideology that teenage girls, who fall pregnant in schools, bring a bad example to the other girls and they therefore should not be allowed back in schools. They often argued that teenage mothers would encourage other school children to view teenage pregnancy as a good thing, and therefore encourage the other teenagers into sexual chaos. In view of this therefore it can be said that this perception prevents the teachers to counsel and recommend the pregnant girls of the options that are open to them once the baby is born.

2.3 Factors affecting girls Education

Much has been written about the factors that affect girl's education. These factors are classified as pull and push and are influenced by social, economic, cultural, school and individual factors (Ahikre and Madanda, 2011). Among others, this section will look at both 'pull and push' factors, such as; early pregnancies, forced marriages, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and future career prospects.

Among other reasons, research has demonstrated that unplanned teenage pregnancies and forced marriages are regarded by many as big threats to girls' education (Dlamini, 2015, Chalasani *et al.*, 2013). Drawing experiences from these countries, Biringu *et al.*, (2015) states that, in 2010, 56% and 70 % of girls in Botswana and Kenya respectively, dropped out of school mainly because of pregnancy. To concur with this, the Malawi Schooling and Adolescent Survey (MSAS) investigated the extent to which pregnancy and marriages affect girls' education in Machinga and Balaka Districts. It was found out therefore that, out of the 133 girls who cited pregnancy as a reason for not attending school, only 11 representing 8.3% subsequently re-enrolled. Furthermore, according to EMIS (2013), 57% of boys completed primary education compared to 46% of girls in 2013 in Malawi. This therefore suggests a substantial attrition from school particularly among girls mostly due to teenage pregnancies thereby minimizing their educational outcomes.

Economic factors are not divorced from the accounts of girl's completion of their education. In general, when young women struggle to meet immediate material needs, they make trade-offs between their future and economic security (UNFPA 2013). In a study by the Gauteng Department of Social Development (UNESCO, 2013) it was evident that, poverty in most instances leads young girls to seek financial security from older men which later compromise their academic performance. On the side of some teenage mothers however, they fail to return to school after the pregnancy due to financial issues that hinder them to take care of the child and themselves as most parents are not willing to help them (Dlamini, 2015, Moonga, 2014). Moreover, girls from the poorest households are less likely to attend school as compared to boys. Thus, poverty is a probable explanation of school disturbance among girls.

In most African countries, the rate at which teenage girls are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS is five times higher than that of teenage boys (Chogona & Chetty, 2008). According to World Bank (2010), HIV/AIDS affect girls' access to education as girls are more likely than boys to be

retained at home for domestic work when household income drops as a result of AIDS deaths or to care for sick relatives. On top of that, more girls than boys are infected with HIV/AIDS due to widespread exploitation, sexual abuse and discriminatory practices. Thus HIV/AIDS reduces girls' already low enrolment in school thereby affecting their educational outcomes.

To add on that, Asoman (2017), in her study on school persistence and dropout among teenage mothers in Ghana found out that, poor academic performance is an individual factor that leads to school dropout among girls. The implication is that poorly performing students are more likely to drop out of school than well performing students. To concur with this, in his study of dropout in a rural district in Ghana, Imoro (2009) identified that parents view the support for the girls who do well in school as a form of investment which they expect to yield results. Where students do not meet these expectations, or perform poorly in school, parents doubt the relevance of the investments and thus withdraw their support which leads to school dropout among them. Within the school practice, poor academic performance often prompts the decision on grade repetition, which encourages negative change in attitude among students towards school because the practice of repetition exposes these students to stigmatization. Moreover, Scottie & Awasu (2011) found out that teachers often develop good relationships and show affection towards academically strong students than the weak students. As such, weak students feel humiliated as they are often reprimanded publicly for non-performance and teased by their peers thereby dropping out of school as a result of lack of motivation.

Evidence has showed that many teenage mothers who return to school do so for the sake of their babies (Wolf *et al.*, 1999). Dlamini, 2015, asserts that, these girls often want to complete their education in order to enhance their chances of getting into the job market and out of the poverty cycle so that they can assist their child in future. Duncun (2005) argues that, for this reason, these young mothers tend to perform better than their social counterparts who are not teen mothers. However, Moonga (2014), argues that this good performance can be attributed to a number of factors like the previous girls' performance and the support they receive from the teachers, family and community. Following this, it can therefore be concluded that, for some teens, childbirth actually improves their educational outcomes and future employment chances.

2.4 Factors influencing teen mothers return to school after child birth.

Few studies have been conducted on factors affecting teen mother's re-enrolment. Among others, it was found out that there are school, community and home related factors that influences a teen mother to continue schooling or not after the birth of the baby.

2.4.1 Home/ Family Related Factors

One factor that could dictate whether the teen mothers return to school or not following the birth of their babies is the availability of resources for childcare while they attend school (Chetty, 2007). Wakesa, (2010) states that, poverty makes it difficult for the teen mothers' families to fully take on the responsibility of the new born babies. As such, teen mothers engage in paid work so as to supplement their natal families. This has implications on the teen mothers' chances of returning to formal schooling. He further argues that, the availability of female labour at the household level to support with child care responsibility enables an early return of teen mothers to school. Chetty, (2007) states that, teen mothers residing in households with an adult female aged 25 to 49 or aged 60 or older are more likely to return to school than those in households lacking an adult female. Moreover, Zellman, (2008) agrees that, lack of satisfactory and convenient child care forces teen mothers to stay at home as the re-entry policies do not help them to meet these needs and advertently encourage them to drop out of school. Therefore, the situation at home in terms of availability of resources determines whether a teen mother should return to school or not.

According to USAID (2010), one of the greatest barriers in helping teen mothers back to school is the organization of the family. Wakesa (2010), states that, most households in Africa have their competing, gendered and normative interests. These gendered cultural norms and values deter both households and girls themselves from seeking readmission (Simati, 2015). As most cultures in Africa favors men at the expense of women, almost all the decisions for teen mothers to return to school in families are influenced by the fathers sometimes in consultation with older sons. A good number of families, especially fathers does not value the role of education and understand how it will help their girl achieve her goals, as such; they are less likely to support her to return to school (USAID, 2010). According to Chetty (2007), most fathers consider the benefits of educating teen mothers to be limited and the cost of sending them to school to be unnecessary for the family budget. This is supported by the Human Rights Watch (2005) and Bunyi (2008) who indicate that

parents in many cultures in developing countries give priority to their sons over their daughters for schooling because of their traditional biases against educating girls. In view of this therefore, it can be concluded that the structure of how decisions are made at family level and gender has an impact of teen mothers return to school after child birth. Moreover, fathers have a greater role to play on the return of teen mothers to school.

On the same note, SmithBattle (2007) in his study, found out that family and childcare responsibilities also complicates teen mother's goals to remain or to return in school. Most of the teen mothers are often expected to work at home by their parents which in turn this world of work compete with the world of school.

2.4.2 Community related Factors

Societal norms can never be separated from influencing teen mothers' return to school. Girls are part of the broader community, and the cultural biases that impede their education cut across multiple sites including the community level (Simati, 2015). In a study conducted by USAID in Mangochi District in Malawi, it was found that beliefs that teen mothers must forgo their education to raise their children and take care of their husbands hinders a lot of girls on their chances to return to school. Moreover, in a study conducted in various districts in Malawi by UNICEF, it was found that 20 percent of school age mothers pointed community pressure as an obstacle to their return to school. Simati (2015), states that, many communities inculcate a deep value for marriage to teen mothers which pose a barrier to girls' chances of re-enrolling in school after giving birth. Unmarried teen mothers suffer stigma from the community from the idea of the "unwed mother", as such they opt for marriage instead of school. Consequently, young girls are subjected to different initiation ceremonies and cultural practices that deepen gender stereotypes that portray girls and women as sexual objects and define their primary role as caretakers thereby discouraging parents from allowing their daughters to continue with school after pregnancy. As such, it can be said that the community plays a greater role on teen mothers' possibilities of returning to school.

Despite this however, Christianity is a strong influence from the community for teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. According to Wakesa (2010), the religious discourse of forgiveness, where some believe that people should be forgiven of their sins and be given second chances, provides opportunities for teen mothers to find support and return to school. However,

FAWE (2006) reports that some churches have worked to the disadvantage of teen mothers' re-enrolment as they have opposed the move. For, example, Catholic owned schools do not allow girls to return to school after pregnancy as they consider pregnancy outside marriage as morally and religiously unacceptable. Chunga (2012) states that the re-entry girls are barely accepted in these schools as they are seen as social misfits that are likely to corrupt the moral strength of other students in the school and therefore compromise discipline and transmission of norms and values unacceptable to society. Therefore, those who engage in sex and fall pregnant defy the 'religious rules' and are therefore seen to be deviant and deserve to be punished by being withdrawn from school. This act therefore shuts all the possibilities of teen mothers to return to school after delivery.

On the other hand, the community can be of positive influence by presenting the images of other student mothers who have done well in life. According to Wakesa, (2010), the community reveals that getting pregnant is not the end of a girl's education and some girls get support because of some role models who have experienced the same thing in the community. In trying to gain respect from the community, some teen mothers opt for returning to school. Therefore, it can be concluded that community can positively or negatively influence teen mother's return to school.

2.4.3 School Related Factors

The school environment plays a role in both encouraging and discouraging teen mothers' re-enrolment into school after giving birth.

Discriminatory attitudes and practices towards girls shown by teachers in the classroom, school administrators, and peers in the wider school environment have an adverse effect on girls' chances to re-enroll (Simati, 2015). Wakesa, (2010), states that the teasing and taunting from peers start once the rumors of pregnancy start circulating. These experiences during pregnancy in some cases instill fear in girls, discouraging them to return to school later on, as the responses that the girls receive in school during their pregnancy, in a way, determine their later return (Chunga, 2012). Since most of the alternative different schools they are supposed to re-enroll are far from home and they cannot afford transport, they choose to just be at home. For those who have re-enrolled, such attitudes create stigma in the readmitted learners and consequently affect learning and academic performance leading to permanent dropping out of school (MoEST, 2018). However,

Chunga (2012), states that while the girls reveal many challenges in relation to the people's perception of school girl pregnancy and in fact face indifferent treatment within the school, they sometimes get support from school administrators, some teachers, as well as fellow learners which later on influences them to return to school after giving birth. Therefore, it can be concluded that the stigmatization and discrimination in school confirms the perception that the school environment is a non-space for pregnant re-entry girls and even though they get support, it is sporadic and dependent on the good will of individual teachers than deliberate policy by schools to help these girls.

In his study of dropout among teenage mothers, Vincent (2016) found school policy and practice to be significant factors for school dropout among teen mothers. These factors were found to be due to inflexibilities within school policies and practices such that the teenage mother's needs were not catered for. The author identified that policies of mainstream schools were often not inclusive, rigid and lacked clarity thereby leaving local practice open to differing interpretations and variability. To add on that, Chugh's (2011) analysis of a group of marginalized children living in slums of Delhi revealed that that teen mother drop-out is not merely due to poverty and financial constraints but also occurs because schools does not respond appropriately to the needs of the teen mothers, forcing them to drop out. On the re-enrolment policy, SmithBattle (2007) states that remaining or returning in school is often complicated by cumbersome re-enrolment processes, stringent attendance policies, lack of educational options and bureaucratic mismanagement.

Despite these experiences however, Chunga (2012), argues that a small number of those that return simply do so in order to achieve their aim of advancing in education and be able to take care of their babies in the future. They also rely on the provisions of the policy which guarantees their presence in the school. Moreover, the girls are expected to be strong enough and face such instances of stigmatization and go on with their education. This shows that some teen mothers return to school because of their inherent motives and their perceptions towards the benefits of education to their lives such that they are able to withstand the challenges just to achieve their dreams. In other words, mothering transforms the meaning of school and often reset the course of these teens as they reevaluate their goals for the future of their academic achievement.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by Bronfenbrenner Family systems or the ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner developed his ecological systems theory in an attempt to define and understand human development within the context of the system of relationships that form the person's environment (Essa, 2011). According to Bronfenbrenner, human development is shaped by the varied systems of the human's environment and also by the interrelationships among these systems (Khrishnan, 2010). He further suggests that, the theory can also be used as one key to understand education and everything that happens within it. Essa (2011) states that the theory provides a useful approach to understanding the family, the school and the community as ever-developing and changing social units in which members constantly have to accommodate and adapt to each other's demands. In this case, Bronfenbrenner answers the questions on the factors affecting teen mothers' re-enrolment by showing the influence of family members, the school and the communities on teen mothers, as these factors are home, school and community related.

According to Bronfenbrenner initial theory (1989), the environment, is comprised of four layers of systems which interact in complex ways and can both affect and be affected by the person's development (Johnson, 2008). These systems are called the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macro and each have either direct or indirect influence on a human development. A fifth system, the chronosystem, was later added to incorporate the dimension of time as it relates to an individual's environment.

Before looking at the rest of the systems, the paper will explain the systems theory and how it is linked to the policy by looking at the third system. According to Jonson (2008), the exosystem represents the larger social system, and encompasses events, contingencies, decisions, and policies over which the developing person has no influence on. The exosystem of a teen mother might be comprised of such structures as; the school regulations and policies, the mass media, the local industry and sometimes the parents' workplace. According to Khrishnan (2010), it encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events that occur influence processes within the immediate settings that does contain that person. This case can be referred as the policy making process (it does not contain the teen mother) and the school or home which directly contain the teen mother. The teen mother may not be directly involved at the level of policy making

process, but the positive or negative forces involved with the interaction within the system affects her. In case of the re-admission policy therefore, it is clear that the policy has procedures of which are not made by the teen mothers. For example, according to MoEST, (2018), the readmission procedures of 2006 which suggested that a pregnant female learner and the male learner responsible for the pregnancy needed to submit three copies of a letter to the head teacher regarding the pregnancy proved to be bad and cumbersome for the girls trying to re-enroll. As such they opted not to even start the process. Moreover, the policy has implementation challenges of which the teen mothers have no control over. Therefore, this proves that the policy procedures and implementation challenges of which these teen mothers have no say on, influences their choices of re-enrolling or not.

The microsystem is the system that is closest to the person that he/she is in direct contact with (Khrishnan, 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1995) defines this system as the pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of personality, and systems of belief. He further argues that, the influences between the developing person and these structures are bi-directional, meaning that the person influences and is influenced by the microsystem. In this case, it can consist of such structures as the family, school, church, friends and the neighborhood in which the teen mothers live. These structures have the immediate influence on teen mother to re-enrolment into school. Among others, the variables that can affect teen mothers' return to school after giving birth in this system include: childcare centers, parenting style, parent's health, the school system, socioeconomic status of the family and people's attitudes. On the other hand, teen mothers themselves can influence these structures on the expression of their return to school.

The mesosystem simply stated by Bronfenbrenner (1995) comprises the linkages between microsystems. In other words, it is referred to as a system of microsystems as it focuses on the connections between two or more microsystems, such as home, the neighborhood, the church and the school (Khrishnan, 2010). For example, what happens in the home in which a teen mother lives can influence what happens to her in school and vice versa. This relationship therefore, can determine whether a teen mother should continue with her education or not. Moreover, the mesosystem of a teen mother can be seen in the interactions between the school and the parents.

The church and the community can also influence the family's decisions about sending their daughter (teen mother) to school or not.

The Macro-system is the largest system in the theory. This system is generally considered to exert a unidirectional influence upon not only the person but the micro-, meso-, and exo-systems as well (Johnson, 2008). The macro-system of a teen mother is embodied in the cultural, political, social and economic climate of the local community as well as of the nation as a whole. The effects of the larger principles defined in this system have a flowing influence throughout the interactions of all the layers. For example, if it is the belief of the culture that women should be only responsible for raising their children, that culture is less likely to help teen mothers to return to school. Again, the age at which one is considered to be mature and enjoys some privileges in a country can also have an impact on the teen mother's decisions of returning to school. For example, according to Chigona & Chetty, (2008), most teen mothers in Kenya feel that they are old and cannot return to school after giving birth when they have reached 18 years of age as it is the age set by the government for an individual to be considered an adult.

Although not one of the four system layers per se, the chronosystem represents a time-based dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the ecological systems (Johnson, 2008). According to Krishnan (2010), an event has varying degrees of impact on development, and the impact decreases as time progresses. Events, such as a parent's incapacitating illness, divorce, or economic status change can have a more profound impact on the choice of teen mothers return to school after giving birth. For example, teen mothers can opt to stay at home and take care of their sick parents rather than go back to school.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This section provided an analysis of the existing literature that are applicable to this topic. Review of literature was organized according to research questions. Elaborations were made on various factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth. The chapter concluded with a presentation of a theoretical framework which is applied in the analysis of data known as: The Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development. Having established the research context and the theoretical framework in this chapter, the next chapter will discuss the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in the study. The discussion in the chapter is structured around the theoretical paradigm, methods of data collection, research design, population and sampling procedures, data analysis, and data collection tools. Ethical considerations and credibility measures to provide trustworthiness of the study, are also discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Theoretical Paradigm

The methodology employed an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is concerned with trying to understand lived experiences and with how participants themselves make sense of their experiences (Creswell, 2007; Thorne, 2000,). This type of research utilizes the participants themselves as experts in the chosen phenomenon being analyzed. In this case therefore, IPA was used in order to understand and describe the lived experiences of teen mothers about formal school re-enrolment. During this period, the researcher bracketed or suspended past knowledge and tried to get new insights to enrich the description of the data collected. Bracketing is the process of setting aside one's own beliefs, feelings and perceptions so as to become more open and faithful to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2004).

3.2 Methods of data collection

The study engaged a qualitative research method to collect and analyze data. To achieve the objectives of the study, the research employed a Case Study of Machinga Zone. Qualitative methods were used in order to understand the human experiences that are unique, generate rich knowledge and an in-depth insight presenting a lively picture of the participants' reality and social context (Thorne, 2000). Semi structured interviews were used to collect data from parents and head teachers, while Focus Group Discussions were used to collect data from the teen mothers. Semi structured interviews were utilized as a data collection tool for this study as they allow the researcher to have flexibility over the questions that are being asked and capture any relevant

emerging themes (Corbetta, 2003). Focus Group Discussions were used to bring together a group of people who had something in common (Creswell, 2007), in this case the teen mothers. Moreover, the girls were empowered to be able to express themselves. This also minimized costs as compared to a one to one interview with the teen mothers.

3.3 Research design

The study was carried out following exploratory, explanatory and descriptive qualitative research designs. According to Burns & Grove (2003) exploratory research is conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas and increase knowledge of a phenomenon. In this case therefore, the study explored, explained and described the factors that affect teen mother's re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth. The study also investigated whether teenage mothers are fully supported in their attempt to return to school after giving birth.

3.4 Site Description

Machinga is a district in the Southern Region of Malawi. It covers an area of 3771km and has a population of 369,614. Machinga is one of the districts which have the highest rate of teenage girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies and early marriages in the Southern Region and the whole Malawi (EMIS, 2013). According to EMIS (2013) between 2012 and 2013, Machinga had 923 girls dropping out of primary school because of pregnancies and early marriages. It registered second from the highest district (Mangochi), which registered 980 girls dropping out of school due to pregnancies and early marriages.

3.5 Sample and sampling procedure

The study targeted teachers, parents of teen mothers and teen mothers within the age range of 13-19 in selected primary schools in Machinga Zone. This was so because Machinga is one of the districts with the highest rate of teenage pregnancies. The parents were involved because of their primary responsibility over the teen mothers and the role they play as primary care givers to teen mothers. The girls were chosen depending on whether they met the eligibility criteria. This required the girls to be teen mothers who have dropped out of school permanently. Due to constraints in resources, time factor and nature of the study, not all schools and teen mothers in Machinga were involved in the study, hence, there was need for sampling. Purposive sampling

was employed to identify the sample. The study involved 28 key informants who include 4 head teachers, 4 parents, and 20 out of school teenage mothers.

3.6 Data collection tools

Taking into consideration that this study was entirely qualitative, data was collected using semi structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions based on Interview and Focus Group Discussion guides. According to Creswell (2004) an interview guide is a written list of questions or topics that need to be answered by the interviewee. During the interviews the researcher took notes and recorded the interviews using a voice/audio recorder.

3.7 Data analysis

The data in this study was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis method. The responses from research respondents were put into categories according to the emerging themes and then analyzed and interpreted decisively and with fairness in order to allow the researcher to go beyond the information given from the gathered data, and then made vivid and reliable conclusions.

3.8 Ethical consideration

Before collecting data, certain ethical issues were considered in view of the sensitive nature of the study. First of all, permission was sought from the relevant authorities (like the District Commissioner for Machinga District, the District Education Manager and the Malawi Police at Machinga) to conduct the study in the research site. Respondents were informed of the study and its purpose and asked to participate based on voluntary basis and not coercion. Appointments were booked to conduct the interviews on the agreed time. Consequently, those who agreed to participate in the study were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Codes were used to represent information rather than names. The participants were also informed of their rights that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to.

3.9 Credibility

To ensure credibility of the study, prolonged engagement, peer and participants debriefing was applied. Anzar (2004), states that prolonged engagement requires the researcher to spend enough time becoming orientated to the situation. In this case therefore, enough time was spent with the

participants to develop a trusting relationship with the teen mothers during interviews. For participant debriefing, Research data analysis and findings were examined by supervisors. This is so because Peer debriefing exposes a researcher to the searching questions of others who are experienced in the methods of enquiry and the phenomenon (Thorne, 2000). Purposive sampling technique ensured credibility of the study as it targeted out of school teen mothers who had firsthand information and experiences about the phenomenon.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology used in the study. The discussion was structured around the theoretical paradigm, methods of data collection, research design, population and sampling procedures, data analysis, and data collection tools. Ethical considerations and credibility measures to provide trustworthiness of the study, has also been discussed in this chapter. Building on the methodological considerations outlined in this chapter, the next chapter will discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on factors that influence teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth. The structure of the chapter is based on the themes that emerged from the research questions as follows: The status of teen mother re-enrolment, support rendered to teen mothers to re-enroll after giving birth, the school and home related factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment into schooling and how challenges that prevent teen mother re-enrolment can be addressed. The findings were obtained by interviewing the teen mothers under study, the head teachers and parents or guardians of teen mothers. The chapter also provides discussions of the findings in light of literature review and the theoretical framework that guided the study. To identify the individual participants in this study, the pseudonyms are used to ensure privacy and anonymity of the participants. *PS1*, *PS2*, *PS3*, and *PS4* represent Primary Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. *PT* is representing parents and there are 4 parents altogether each with a different code, for example, *PT1*. Teen mothers have also been identified using different codes, for example, (*TM1 a*) meaning teen mother *a*, from Primary school 1 as the case applies in Table 1.

Table 4.1 Description of Respondents

SCHOOL	CODE	DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENT
PS1(Primary school number 1) Interview on April 25, 2018	HTPS1 PT 1a PT 1b TM 1a TM 1b TM 1c TM 1d TM 1e	Head teacher for primary School 1, Boma Zone, Machinga District. Parent a, from Primary School 1. Parent of teen mothers 1c and 1d. Parent b, from Primary School 1. Parent of teen mother 1b 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 6. 19-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 7. 19-year-old teen mother dropped out in standard 8. 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 5. 18 year old teen mother, dropped out in standard 7
PS2(Primary School 2) Interviews On April 26 2018	HTPS2 PT 2a PT 2b TM 2a TM 2b TM 2c TM 2d TM 2e	. Head teacher for primary School 2, Boma Zone, Machinga District. Parent a, from Primary School 2. Parent of teen mother 2a. Parent b, from Primary School 2. Parent to teen mother 2b 20-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 8. 15-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 6. 16-year-old teen mother dropped out in standard 4. 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 5. 18 year old teen mother, dropped out in standard 7.
PS3(primary school 3) Interviews on April 27 2018	HTPS3 PPS3a PPS3b TM 3a TM 3b TM 3c TM 3d TM 3e	Head teacher for primary School 3, Boma Zone, Machinga District. Parent a, from Primary School 3. Parent of teen mother 3a Parent b, from primary School 3. Parent of teen mother 3b. 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 8. 19-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 6. 18-year-old teen mother dropped out in standard 4. 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 5. 19 year old teen mother, dropped out in standard 7.
PS4(primary school 4) Interviews on April 28 2018	HTPS4 TM 4a TM 4b TM 4c TM 4d TM 4e	Head teacher for primary School 4, Boma Zone, Machinga District 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 6. 3 years old baby 18-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 6. 4 years old baby 19- year-old teen mother dropped out in standard 8. 2 years old baby 17-year-old teen mother, dropped out in standard 5. 1 year old baby 18 year old teen mother, dropped out in standard 7. 3 years old baby

4.1 The current status of re-enrolment of girls after giving birth in Machinga Boma Zone

The first research question sought to find out the current status of girls' re-enrolment after giving birth. To generate data related to this question, interviews were conducted with the head teachers. Head teachers were asked to provide records of girls who dropped out due to pregnancy and re-enrolled after giving birth from 2014-2018 school sessions. This section therefore, presents the findings from the interviews with the head teachers in the sampled four primary schools.

School 1

It was found that the school keeps records on teen girls who dropped out due to pregnancy. However, the records are only for those who come forward about their pregnancy status. Moreover, it was found that those who come to re-enroll at this school are not the ones who withdrew from the same school previously. As the Head Teacher for School 1 remarked:

“Yes! We have the records at the office, and the role model we have at this school also keeps some. “Actually we just keep records of those who have come forward to us about their pregnancy status”.

And he continued as follows:

“Mostly those who come back to re-enroll come from other schools. From the records, we have 4 teen mothers from other schools and only two who were previously here” (Interview with HTPS1, on April 25, 2018)

School 2

From school 2, it was found that teen mother dropouts were recorded from 2016-2017 school sessions only. According to the head teacher, they just hear rumors of girls dropping out due to pregnancy, but they do not have concrete evidence of whether those girls have really dropped out as a result of pregnancy. As the following remark shows:

“But this time we just hear rumors of girls dropping out due to pregnancy but we are not told that, those girls are really dropouts due to pregnancy” (Interview with HTPS2 on April 26, 2018)

School 3

Despite having the records of teen girls who dropped out due to pregnancy from 2014-2018 school sessions, the head teacher recounted that they have problems to obtain records of everyone leaving school because of pregnancy. The problems were that, when confronted about the pregnancy, most of these girls hide information and what follows next is that they just disappear without giving proper information.

“Yes, yeah! But there is a problem that we are facing at this school, you know most of the time when these girls realize that they are pregnant, usually they are shy. What follows next is that they just disappear; you just hear from their friends that aaah she is pregnant, so that’s why we are having problems in having their documents”. (Interview with HTPS3 on April 27, 2018)

School 4

In this school, the head teacher revealed that they do have the re-admission records. He further opened up to say that they use the mother group to follow up those who just disappear though it becomes a challenge to find all of them. As the remarks below shows

“Aaaaah yes! We have it. In fact we have what we call re- admission records where we record such type of things. We do follow those who just disappear using mother groups though some are still unreachable. (Interview with HTPS4 on April 28, 20180)

From the findings above, it shows that schools face challenges to get records of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy. 3 head teachers narrated that a good number of girls just disappear after realizing that they are pregnant. As such it becomes hard for the schools to record them as dropping out due to pregnancy since they do not have the evidence that they are really pregnant. It was therefore not possible to get documented records of all school-girl pregnancy cases reported over the last 3 years; neither were there any official records on of the number of young mothers that had returned to school. Even though they have the numbers, they do not necessarily reflect the exact status of teen mother re-enrolment since they have few records of those who drop out than actually those who drop out due to pregnancy. This is as a result of the tendency of just disappearing after discovering being pregnant among the girls. 1 head teacher explained her experiences on the matter as follows;

“Yes, yeah! But there is a problem that we are facing at this school, you know most of the time when these girls realize that they are pregnant, usually they are shy. What follows next is that they just disappear; you just hear from their friends that she is pregnant, so that’s why we are having problems in having their documents”. (Interview with HTPS3, on April 27, 2018.)

Moreover, it becomes so hard for the schools to follow up on these teen mothers since most of them move to different places as they are shy of being seen pregnant. Despite initiatives being put in place to track these teen mothers, for example the mother group, some are still not reachable. As such, those who come to re-enroll are not usually the ones who had dropped out from the same school previously. One head teacher narrated that:

Mostly those who come back to re-enroll come from other schools. From the records we have 4 teen mothers from other schools and only two who were previously here (Interview with HTPS1 on April 25, 2018)

These findings are converging with finding by SmithBattle (2007) in his study on teen mothers’ rise in Educational Aspirations, Competing Demands and Limited School Support which found that although schools value education as a pathway to economic security they rarely have the skills and knowledge to support teen mothers return to school and rise in their educational aspirations. However, Chunga (2012) states that while the girls reveal many challenges in relation to the people’s perception of school girl pregnancy and in fact face indifferent treatment within the school, they sometimes get support from school administrators, some teachers as well as fellow learners which later on influences them to return to school after giving birth. He further argues that, even though they get support, it is sporadic and dependent on the good will of individual teachers. It can be concluded therefore that without the effort of some well-wishers in the school some students are forgotten and deprived the privilege of being supported to re-enroll.

Despite these challenges however, schools still keep records of those who come forward as being pregnant and reserve a place that they will come back to re-enroll though they do in very small numbers.

Table 4.2 shows the current status of teen mother re-enrolment in Machinga, Boma Zone

School	No. of drop out girls	Girls re-enrolled	Rate in %
PS1	12	2	17%
PS2	7	1	14%
PS3	14	4	28%
PS4	4	1	25%
Average rate	37	8	22%

From the Table above, out of 12 teen mothers who dropped out in Primary School 1, in the 2014-2018 school sessions, only 2 re-enrolled. This represents a 17 % re-enrolment rate. Again, only 1 girl out of 7 girls who dropped out re-enrolled in PS2. This represents a 14% re-enrolment rate. Only 4 girls out of 14 who were recorded dropping out due to pregnancy in PS3 re-enrolled, representing a 28% re-enrolment rate. Lastly, PS4 indicates a 25% re-enrolment rate since only 1 out of 4 girls who had dropped out due to pregnancy had re-registered. This represents an average of 22% re-enrolment rate in the zone.

The results present a very low rate of re-enrolment among teen mothers in the zone. This can be one of the reasons why there is a low primary school completion rate among girls than boys. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Education Management Information System (EMIS 2013), which found that 57% of boys completed primary education in Malawi compared to 46% of girls with pregnancy and marriage being the main reason for school discontinuation among girls. Again, the 2015 and 2016 EMIS report suggests that the survival rate of girls to standard 8 is 37% with pregnancy and marriage being one of the highest reasons for school dropout among them. This was also proven in the Malawi Schooling and Adolescent Survey (MSAS) conducted in Machinga and Balaka districts in 2007. Of the 875 girls who were attending school at the time of the baseline more than a third of those had a child four years later/ by age 18 and were out of school (Chalasani, *et al* 2013). Again, of the 133 girls who cited pregnancy as a reason for not attending school, only 11 (8.3%) subsequently re-enrolled compared to the 23.5% of those who missed a term as a result of economic constraints. Moreover, in a study conducted by Ministry of

Education Science and Technology, (MoEST, 2018) done in 6 districts of Malawi, only 49% of the girls who left school because of pregnancy had been re-admitted in all the six sampled districts. Therefore, it can be concluded that teenage pregnancy is one of the factors affecting girls' education and moreover, the rate of teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling is still very low globally, especially in the sub-Saharan African countries like Malawi.

Among other reasons, most girls in the area are taken up by this cultural conviction that associates motherhood with adulthood perhaps because of the responsibilities that comes with motherhood. This is how the Macro-system, according to Bronfenbrenner influences teen mothers on choices to return to school or not. He further suggests that cultural practices can influence the other lower systems of an individual like the community and the immediate family to have an impact on their development as one head teacher revealed that: *Some cultures just opt for a girl to get married after falling pregnant and it is very common here in Machinga.* This cultural belief towards motherhood makes most of the girls in the area regard themselves as adults after giving birth and think that it is not possible and shameful for them to return to school as one of them narrated:

Ndine wankulu tsopano komaso kalasi yomwe ndinali singagwirizane ndi zaka zanga, ndizochititsa manyazi kut anzanga omwe amandiona ndili oyembekezra azindionaso ku sukulu kuonjezeraso kut ndizikhala nawo mu kalasi limodzi.

"I am old now and the class I was will not match with my age, it is shameful that the same friends who used to see me while pregnant should be seeing me again in school and worse still I should be sitting with them in the same class." **(Interview with TM3 c on April 27, 2018)**

This sentiment from the participants is also evident in studies on how to control their own reproduction conducted by Whyte (2002) in various parts of South African, mainly black communities in which she found that some teenage girls in these communities see early childbearing as a way to move forward in social circles. Therefore, they regard going back to school as a backward movement. Pillow (2008) argues that, the teen mothers regard returning to school as an unyielding burden especially for the teenage mothers living in unstable home environments.

4.2 Support rendered to adolescent mothers to re-enroll after giving birth

The second research question sought to establish how adolescent mothers are supported to re-enroll after giving birth. The teen mothers, teachers and parents involved in this study echoed different views on how adolescent mothers are supported to re-enroll after giving birth. To obtain information on this, teen mothers were asked to explain whether there were any support networks in schools to council and guide them after they were found pregnant, whether anyone talked to them about the re-entry policy and what happened when they tried to re-enroll. Teachers were asked to explain how they help those dropping out so that they are comfortable to come back and how they receive those re-enrolling. Parents were asked to explain what kind of support they give to teen mothers. There were a number of themes that emerged from the analyzed data. The findings revealed that some of the highly emphasized themes related to support from school, support from home and support from the community since support given to teen mothers should range from home to school. These were also related to a number of sub themes which have been highlighted in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1 Support from School

According to the findings on this section, teen mothers do not get enough support from schools to re-enroll. The participants echoed different views in relation to the kind of support they get from schools after falling pregnant or when trying to re-enroll. Among others, the study found out that there is lack of support networks in schools to council teen mothers and that teen mothers face resistance from their schools as they want to re-enroll. On top of that teen mothers revealed that the only support they get is the simple advice that being found pregnant is not the end of their life and that they have another chance of coming back to school after giving birth.

4.2.1.1 Lack of support networks in schools

The study found out that 18 teen mothers out of 20, representing 90 percent narrated that there is lack of support networks in schools to council and guide them after falling pregnant. As a result, they are unaware of the procedures they are supposed to follow when they want to re-enroll. Despite teachers stating about having mother support groups, most of the teen mothers revealed that they never met such groups after being discovered pregnant. Some teen mothers revealed that the common thing the school authorities talked to them after being found pregnant was to recall

them back to school after giving birth. Most of them said they did not get clear guidelines on what they are supposed to do next when they want to re-enroll. As the following statements from teen mothers show:

A head anandiitana ndikundiiza kut ndipite ndikakhale kunyumba, ngat ndikufuna, ndikhoza kuzabwerelaso ku sukulu

“The head teacher called me and told me that I should go back and stay at home, if I am willing, I can come back to school”. (Interview with TM1 a on April 25, 2018)

Amangotilimbikitsa basi, kuti munthu umalakhwitsa, koma mwana akazabadwa mudzabwereleso ku sukulu

“All they do is encourage us that, people make mistakes, but when the baby is born you should come back to school.” (Interview with TM2 c on April 26, 2018)

Despite all of them being aware of the policy mainly through other means and not the school, only 9 teen mothers out of 20, representing a 45% were counselled and told the re-enrolment procedures. When asked if there were any support networks to counsel them after they were discovered pregnant, some of the teen mothers responded that:

Sindikudziwa , chifukwa sukulu sinandipangileko zimenezo

“I am not sure about that, because I did not get anything like that from the school” (interview with TM1 a, on April 25, 2018)

Timangova kut kuli a Mother group koma sitinakumanko ndi winaaliyese wa kumeneko

“We just hear that there is mother group but we did not meet any member there” (interview with TM2 b, on April 26, 2018)

Kuli mabuagwe amene amalipilira atsikana sukulu, kuli a mother group, koma sitinakumaneko nawo

“There are NGOs that are paying school fees for girls, there is mother group here but we did not meet any of them” (interview with TM2 c, on April 26, 2018).

In addition, one of the head teachers disclosed that the school does not talk about the re-entry policy to the students in general. This is so because they do not want to look like they are encouraging the students to engage in pre-marital sex knowing that if they get pregnant they will still come back to school. As the remark below indicates:

“We don’t usually put them together to talk to them about the policy. They get to know about it after being found pregnant” (interview with TPS 3 on April 27, 2018).

Moreover, the professional counselors are not readily available to help counsel teen mothers on these issues. This is so because the guidance and counseling teachers and parents are appointed on voluntary basis or by the virtue of just being female. She states as follows:

I was put in charge of these girls because am the only female teacher here (interview with TPS 3 on April 27, 2018).

This means that teen mothers are not given a chance to meet the necessary individuals available that can council and guide them. As such, they go back home without knowing what exactly to do next in as far as re-enrolling is concerned. To add on that, the information that they get from the authorities does not empower them enough to be able to make decisions of returning to school later. Even though the schools have support networks like the mother groups they do not manage to assist all the teen mothers. Besides, the advice that these girls receive is uncertain since the counselors are not qualified except for the small workshops they get from some NGOs. Sometimes they do not get all the information necessary to prepare themselves for challenges that they may face. This faulted counseling process lead to emotional instability and reduces the chances of teen mothers returning to school. One teen mother stated how lack of information about the policy risked her chances of returning to school:

“Nditabwera kuti ndizayambilenso sukulu, anandikaniza chifukwa chakuti sindinasungitse malo. Ndinakhumudwa. Vuto linali lakuti, panthawi imene ndimachoka sindimadziwa kuti timayenera kususngitsa malo”

“When I came to re-enroll I was denied saying I did not reserve a place. I was disappointed. The problem was that the time I was leaving I did not know that one is supposed to reserve a place” (interview with TM2 a, on April 25, 2018)

Despite the presence of the mother support groups, this teen mother did not know that she was supposed to reserve a place, yet it was the duty of the school to enlighten her on the issue. However, the school pointed out that this problem is there because the students and their parents do not come forward about their pregnancy status. As such, it becomes hard for the school to provide all the information necessary to someone who just disappeared. As the following remark shows:

“The main problem here is, when a learner identifies herself that she is pregnant, she drops out of school without saying that, ‘I am pregnant and am going home because of that’ Later on, after maybe 6 or 7 months we hear that she has a baby!. Parents do not come and disclose, had it been that parents do come, we could have been at least in a better position to tell them what to do next” (interview with HTPS 2, on April 26, 2018)

On the same note, some teen mothers undeniably revealed that they leave without letting the school know that they are pregnant. As summarized by one teen mother as below:

“Ineyo, a Head sanadziwe kut dili di mimba, nditagodziwa kut dili di mimba, ndinangosiya sukukulu ndekha. A mother group ndiamene anabwera kwathu kuzadifotokozera za ndondomko yobwerelaso ku sukulu, koma mwana atabadwa sindinawaoneso.”

“As for me, the head teacher did not know that I was pregnant, as soon as I found out that I was pregnant, I dropped out on my own. It was the mother group who followed me at home to tell me about the re-entry process but I did not see them again after the baby was born” (Interview with TM1 b, on April 25, 2018)

According to a study on challenges that teen mothers face conducted by Moonga, (2014) this is similar to what is happening in Zambia and in particular on the Copper Belt Province where these agencies are not doing their job. They only provide payments to teen mothers in form of bursaries and provide them with milk and sugar rather than the emotional support through counseling to equip them with skills necessary for them not to withdraw. Instead of getting support, the study revealed that teen mothers endure misunderstandings and pressure. However, in some other parts of the same country, FAWEZA is training resource persons to undertake capacity building session for **Community Action Groups (CAGs)** in essential life skills. The program is building the capacity of **Community Action Groups** members who also play the role of **Mother and Father Mentors** from each of the participating schools on publicizing affirmative education policies such

as the Re-entry policy, providing basic psycho-social counseling support to pregnant school girls, confidence building, monitoring school attendance, and ensuring duty bearers are held accountable in providing child friendly school environments (FAWE, 2014). On the contrary, Rebmann (2006) in his study, found that in other countries like the USA, teen mother support groups are all over the schools, with qualified psycho-social counselors. They help teen mothers communicate with each other and discuss on how to build strong parenting structures and teach each other about relevant financial, health and educational issues. There are also agencies based on gender, mentoring teens to talk to other teenage parents to get insights from someone who has been in their situation with regard to schooling, parenting and education. Kurgat (2016), concurs that this practice is emulated in Africa in Kenya where students reported that the guidance and counseling department in their schools invited guest speakers to talk to them on unsafe sex with an aim of making teen mothers in schools to avoid sex which could result to subsequent pregnancies. Furthermore, Moonga (2014) argues that guidance and counselling should start from the time they are known to be pregnant up to the time they are ready to come back to school to prepare and equip them with skills on how to handle themselves as mothers and students. Wanyama and Simatwa (2011), emphasizes that schools should, through their guidance and counseling department receive such girls and change the perception of viewing them as mothers and offer support and acceptance. Guidance enables girls to accept what has happened and therefore change their attitude and be positive in life, hence work hard to perform well in their academics.

This encounter between the school, the students and the parents on the issue reveals that the interactions within a person's systems (Meso-system) have a great impact on their development. According to Bronfenbrenner, the interactions within a teen mother's Micro-systems, the school, the home and sometimes the community can bring about positive or negative developments in as far as re-entry policy is concerned. According to UNESCO (2014), Early and unintended pregnancy jeopardizes educational attainment for girls. For this reason, parents and the education sector has an obligation to ensure that pregnant girls and adolescent mothers have the right to continue their education. According to Bronfenbrenner the school is one of the system that is in direct contact with the girls, just as the family is. This being the case, it is the duty of schools to act as social support centers for teen mothers in their attempts to re-enroll after giving birth. Moreover, Schools and parents need to work hand in hand in ensuring that teen mothers return to school otherwise a breakdown in interaction within the two systems will have a negative impact

on teen mothers' education. According to Moonga, (2014) the support teen mothers get from the time of pregnancy to the time they return to school have a great impact in their education completion. However, the study has proved that there is lack of that togetherness between parents and some schools in Machinga (Boma zone) as each system blames the other for lack of teen mother re-enrolment.

4.2.1.2 Opposition/Desertion from schools

The study also established that teen mothers face considerable challenges from their schools in their attempts to re-enroll after giving birth. When they come back to re-enroll they are denied by the school authorities saying that they did not reserve a place. As one of them narrated:

"I came last month to re-enroll, I met the head teacher, and he refused me saying that the time I was leaving I did not ask them to reserve my place. The problem was that the time I was leaving I did not know that one is supposed to reserve the place. The first day I came, I was sent back to come the following week with my mother. When I came with my mother, what he answered me was not promising. My mother asked me to say "are we really going to find a place there? I said am not sure let's keep on trying maybe next term September it will work" (interview with TM2 a, on April 26, 2018).

Another teen mother recited that:

"What I don't like most at this school is that when one has dropped due to pregnancy and they want to re-enroll they say that there is no place for such people, why did your parents not come to report about it, it is not a good thing. Sometimes it happens that some girls have noticed some changes in their bodies they just leave without saying anything, so with the parents' disappointment in you, they fail to come to school to report and reserve your place, so it is better for the school authorities to understand the situations and try to accommodate such situations." (Interview with TM2 b, on April 26, 2018).

Apart from this, the study also found out that schools do not care whether teen mothers have re-enrolled somewhere or not. When asked if they knew someone who re-enrolled somewhere, only one head teacher said yes and all of them narrated that they do not follow the teen mothers to find out whether they have re-enrolled somewhere or not. As summarized by one Head Teacher:

“As I have already said we just hear from friends, aaa maybe that one has left school because of pregnancy and as of now she got married. So the follow ups are not there “(interview with HTPS4, on April 28, 2018).

When asked if they had put some procedures to help them track the girls, one head teacher’s response was:

“We haven’t done anything. Even the guidelines do not show us on how to track these teen mothers. What the guidelines does is just to show us on how to receive those teen mothers who are coming from somewhere else” (interview with HTPS1, on April 25, 2018).

This could be some of the reasons why the re-entry rate among teen mothers is still low in the region. Going back to school for teen mothers may not be possible if the support they get is insufficient. This is in line with findings on a study on challenges that teen mothers face by Biringu *et al* (2015) from six Sub-Saharan African countries of Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya and Botswana. The study established that most of the re-entry policies convey mixed messages in regard to how policy implementation should occur. In most of these countries for instance, no mechanisms have been put in place on how schools should keep track of these girls. On the same note, MoEST (2018) states that, most girls still drop out of school even after their readmission due to lack of support services. This is largely attributed to lack of documented guidelines and procedures for readmission, negative attitudes towards teenage mothers, socio-economic constraints, lack of psycho social support and counselling. As such girls' fear to return to the same schools because of unfriendly school environments. However, Kurgat (2016), in her study on Administrative Support Factors Influencing Re-admission of Teenage Mothers in Secondary Schools in Kenya-a case of Baringo County found that the majority (56.6%) of the students believed that head teachers invited girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy for re-admission. These statements imply that there are really no clear guidelines on how countries should implement their policies.

4.2.2 Support from Home

The study further revealed that some parents were sympathetic of the teen mothers’ status because of their tender age and the responsibilities that go with the predicament of being a teen mother. Most parents therefore revealed that the support they give to the teen mothers is out of pity for

them and their babies. Often, teenage mothers are not expected to raise the child alone, family members available often support them at the time, usually mothers. As such, some parents assume the responsibility of their teen mothers in order to give them a chance to go back to school. The study also revealed that usually they get moral support rather than financial support since most of these teen mothers comes from economically challenged households. Some parents narrated that:

“The support was about assuring her that we will take responsibility of the baby so that she can go back to school” (Interview with PPS3a, on April 27, 2018).

However, the study revealed that some teen mothers do not get support right from the start of their pregnancy. Some parents become furious upon learning that their daughter is pregnant and make swift decisions that later affect the chances of the teen mothers’ return to school. Instead of giving them the support they need they are forced into marriages or environments that later on becomes a barrier for their return to school. TM1a and TM2c narrated their experiences as follows:

“Makolo anga anakwiya kwambiri, makamaka bamboo anga, mpakana anadithamangitsa ndinapita kwa agogo anga. Koma monga mukudziwa kut amayi amakhaa achikondi kwambiri anabwera kuzanditnga ndikundilimbikitsa panopa ndimakhala nawo.”

“My parents were very pissed off, more especially my father, up to the point that he chased me away, I went to my grandparents’ house, but since you know mothers are very loving she came to pick me up and also encouraged me and now I stay with them” (interview with TM2c, on April 26, 2018)

“Makolo anga anandithamangitsira kunyumba kwa chibwezi changacho. Kenako aunt angga anabwera kuti azanditenge ndizikapita ku sukulu, ndinakana chifukwa ndinali nditakwatiwa komaso apongozi anga ankandisamalira.”

“As for my parents, they chased me away to leave their house and go to my boyfriend’s house. later when my Aunt came to get me, saying she will send me back to school I refused because I was married and my in laws had been taking care of me ever since” (interview with TM1a, on April 25, 2018)

In a study undertaken by Dlamini (2016), on Teenage mother’s experiences of motherhood-schooling, stigma and learned responsibilities in Peri-urban area of Kwa-Zulu natal results showed

that a supportive social environment enables a teenage mother to do well in school. In most cases, teenage mothers who come from supportive families, and who get support from teachers and friends often do better at school than those who lack support. According to Chigona and Chetty (2008, p.271), the more family support a teenage mother gets from her family, the more likelihood there is that she will return to school with performance being attributed to the nature of support they receive at home. Looking at a study by Moonga (2014), on challenges faced by teen mothers in Zambia, he points out that, several teen mothers shared how they were abused by family members by throwing them out of home as they were seen as a disgrace to the family. A study by UNESCO (2010) on pregnant schoolgirls in Tanzania indicated that young mothers reported that the teasing and taunting from their peers start once rumors of pregnancy start circulating. Fergusson and Woodward (2000), argues that the amount of support a teen mother gets from her family and the timing of the pregnancy in her life mainly influence the manner in which the teenage pregnancy affects the educational outcomes of a teenager. With these findings therefore, it can be concluded that there is lack of support for teen mothers from their immediate environment (the family) which later affects their prospects of returning to

4.3 School related factors influencing teen mothers return to school after child birth.

The third research question tried to find out the school related factors influencing teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. The study found that the teen mothers, teachers and parents involved in this study echoed different views on what really influences the teen mothers to continue with schooling or not after giving birth. The school related factors are presented from the perspective of teen mothers who once re-enrolled and dropped out, teen mothers who have ever witnessed other re-enrolled teen mothers, parents and the teachers themselves.

4.3.1. Shame, Stigma and Discrimination

The common challenge that teen mothers who re-entered formal school faced was stigma and discrimination. They presented that they were unfavorably judged relative to their fellow pupils. Two participant teen mothers in this study narrated that people in school regarded them as rebels, problematic and young prostitutes and always talked bad about them. This made them feel ashamed and bad about themselves. A typical example of this negative image that the teen mothers attracted is summed up in TM1 b's experience, who explained that:

“Ndondomeko ndiyabwinobwini muthu akhoza kubwerelaso ku sukulu, koma pali anthu ena amene amakunena zosakhala bwino kumbali. Akhoza kungobera kuzayamba masiku ochepa ndikusiyaso ngati mmne ndinapangira ineyo. Nditabwera kuzayambiraso, anthu ankandinena zosakhala bwino ndiye ndinangoganiza zongosiya basi”.

“The policy is ok, one can go back to school yes! But there are some people who talk wicked things behind your back. She can just come for a few days then drop out again, the case with me, when I came back to re-enroll at this school, people started to talk bad about me and I just decided of dropping out again” (Interview with TM1 b on April 25, 2018).

In most cases, their fellow students say painful comments that it becomes so hard for them to concentrate in class. Another teen mother narrated what some of the students used to say about her:

“Nditakayambirso sukulu, anyamata ankandinena kut ndipite kunyumba ndikasamalire mwana wanga komaso kut ndine tchembere ku sukulu”

“And when I went back to school, the boys bullied me by saying that I should go home and take care of my baby and that I was a mother in school”. (interview with MT1 c, on April 25, 2018)

Since this does not happen in a vacuum it becomes hard for girls who witness such incidences to re-enroll after they are teen mothers themselves. Some teen mothers who have never re-enrolled think that they will face the same mockery once they re-enroll since they have witnessed some being discriminated as well. As explained below:

“Ndikuganiza kut ndikapita ku sukulu ndizikachita manyazi chifukwa ndikudziwa kut azinzanga azikandiseka”

“I think that if I can return to school I will be feeling shy and ashamed because I know my friends will be laughing at me” (interview with TM3 b, on April 27, 2018)

“Anzanga atha kumandijeda kut ndine tchembere, ndasiya mwana kunyumba, zomwe ndikuona kuti zikhoza kumandisokoneza sukulu”

My friends might be gossiping about me, saying “I am a mother (ntchembere), I have left a baby at home”. So that can be affecting me so much and also affecting my academic performance. (interview with TM1 e, on April 25, 2018)

“Palibe chifukwa, kungot ndikuona ngati anzanga akhoza kumandiseka ku sukulu chifukwa ndili ndi mwana. Ndinakwatiwaposoo, ndiye ndikuona kut bola kungokhala pakhomo basi”

“There is no reason, only that I feel my friends will be laughing at me in school because I have a baby, I was married also, so I just think staying at home is the best solution” (interview with TM2 d, on April 26, 2018)

These disparaging remarks, according to participant teen mother 3b and 1e, are so hurtful to the point that they do not wish to go back to school and face the same mockery. One parent added on to say that her daughter is afraid of going back to school in fear of facing the disrespect that other teen mothers face in school. One parent had this to say:

“I think she can’t go back to standard 8 because she is afraid her friends will be laughing at her” (interview with PT1 a, on April 25, 2018)

It was also revealed in this study that even teachers held stereotype views as they regarded the teen mothers who re-entered school as deviants. The teen mothers reported that they had seen some of the teachers passing negative comments on teen mothers who fail to meet their expectations in school. A teen mother stated as follows:

“Zomwe ndinaonako ndi zakuti, akachedwa ku sukulu, ndiye akamafotokoza mavuto awowo kwa aphuzitsi, samawamvekayi, mmalo mwake amalowetsa nkhani ku zobeleva pamene paliso anthu ena oti amalakwitsa mu zina”

“What I saw so far was that, when they (teen mothers) come late to school, and when they were explaining their problems to the teacher they were not heard at all, instead the teacher linked her mistakes with motherhood yet there are also some students who make the same mistakes”. (interview with TM2 b, on April 26, 2018).

The above scenario is regarded as a common block and as something that prevents many teen mothers from returning to school after giving birth. They are always afraid of facing such public ridicule from their fellow learners and the teachers. As such they opt to stay at home and find other

opportunities in the society. The common option that these teen mothers go for is marriage since they have already been proved failures in school. One teen mother stated that:

“Ndinakwatiwa tsopno, amuna anga sangandilore kut ndizichoka pakhomu kupita ku sukulu mmawa uliwosem. Ndikuona ngat akhoza kundiiza kut ndisankhe pakati pa sukulu ndi banja. Sukulu inandikanika kale ndiye banjaso lisandikanike”

“I am a married woman now, I don’t think my husband can allow me to be leaving for school every morning, I think he would tell me to choose between marriage and school. I already failed in school and I cannot risk it to fail again in my marriage for something I know I cannot manage.” (Interview with MT1 d on April 25, 2018).

Moreover, the study established that some of the decisions the schools make in justification of following the policy guidelines are punitive in nature. Chilisa (2002) argues that some policy guidelines constitute an indirect form of violence on the affected girls as they are entrenched in ideologies of exclusion. For example, some schools force girls to be out of school for a year even though the baby has died. One of the Head teachers disclosed this act by explaining that:

“The one who is at likwenu primary gave birth to a still born so she wanted to re-enroll to school soon after that, so we said no, according to our rules, you still need to go back home. Though she has enrolled somewhere, she travels a very long distance to there than when she was here.” (Interview with HTP 3 on April 27, 2018).

This teen mother was denied the chance to re-enroll even when her baby had died facing the challenge of walking a very long distance while there is a school within her proximity. In Malawi, many primary and secondary schools are located far away from homes, a factor that limits access to new entrants and affect retention of girls in school (MoEST, 2018). This encounter exposes the girl to many problems that can jeopardize her education and eventually lead to school dropout. According to Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (MoEST, 2018) the policy encourages the teen mother to stay at home so that she can nurse the baby till it is grown for her to be able to go back to school. Despite this statement however, girls are still sent home even though there is no baby to take care of.

These findings are in line with findings of Ahikire & Mandanda (2014) in their survey on Re-entry of Pregnant girls in Primary and Secondary Schools in Uganda, found out that, many schools use

expulsion as a disciplinary measure to deter other girls from getting pregnant. Shaming the pregnant girls through public expulsion has been shown to severely compromise girls' ability to re-join the school after giving birth. On the other hand, MoEST (2018) states that, readmitted teen mothers are bullied and experience discrimination from their fellow learners and teachers. Such attitudes create stigma in the readmitted learners and consequently affect learning and academic performance. Furthermore, he found out that it is common for girls to withdraw from school once they established, before the school, that they were pregnant, in order to avoid the shameful procedure of expulsion. Besides, SmithBattle (2007), in his study on Teen mothers' educational aspirations, competing demands and limited school support found that some school policies and practices create additional barriers that undermine teen's aspirations to return to school. According to him, re-continuing and remaining in school is often complicated by cumbersome enrollment processes, stringent attendance policies, lack of educational options and bureaucratic mismanagement. Not only that, according to MoEST (2018), the 1993 and 2006 re-admission policies lacked clarity about its procedures and processes which proved to be lengthy, bureaucratic and cumbersome for learners trying to re-enroll. As a result, many more teen mothers attempt to re-enroll but fail. The processes therefore frustrate the teen mothers to the point that they just give up.

4.3.2 Previous school performance

Another factor that influences teen mother's return to school established by the study is previous performance in school. The study found that there are low chances for teen mothers who were already not performing well in school to re-enroll after giving birth. However, those who were performing well in school prior to pregnancy have the impetus to advance in their education as such they have the zeal to return to school. This is evidenced in one of the teen mother's narratives. She said that;

Komaso nditalemba mayeso sindinakhoze, ndiye ndikuganiza kut ndizingotaitisa nthawi yanga kukayambilaso sukulu chifukwa sindikhoza mkalasi

And again after I wrote the exams, I did not pass, so I think I will be wasting my time going back to school because I do not do well in class (interview with TM2 e, on April 26, 2018).

One parent also explained that going back to school could have been easy for her daughter if she was selected to a Secondary school after writing her Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations. *“For her, she wrote standard 8 examinations and got a pass so I think I need to find a private school for her because if she was selected to go to secondary school it could have been easy for her to go back to school (interview with PP1, on April 25, 2018)* This means that, previous school performance determines whether one can go back to school or not after giving birth. Besides, teen pregnancy has become a scapegoat for girls who already wanted to drop out because of poor performance in school.

These findings are in line with a study conducted in Kenya by the Division of Family Health/GTZ Support Unit (2008), which found that girls with poor performance were more likely than the best students to become pregnant. Moreover, there is a lack of return to continued schooling among these girls. This is fueled by low expectations of advancing in education, as such, they are influenced to permanently drop out from school. On the other hand, Meekers and Ahmed (2009) in their study on Pregnancy related school dropouts among young women in Botswana found that the majority of girls who dropped out of school following a pregnancy and subsequently returned to school stayed in school until they graduated to the next level. They further concluded that this was so because these girls were already performing better prior to pregnancy. They speculate that highly motivated students with good school performance prior to pregnancy are those most likely to return. SmithBattle, (2007), is also of the same view as he states that some girls drop out before becoming pregnant, perhaps to avoid embarrassment of bad grades. Therefore it can be concluded that previous low school performance among girls will prevent them from returning to school while previous high school performance will encourage girls to return to school after giving birth.

According to Bronfenbrenner systems theory, Johnson (2008) states that the school is an entity in the microsystem of a developing individual, in this case the teen mother. This is so because it is a structure in which the teen mother was in direct contact before getting pregnant. As such, whatever happens in the school before and after a teen mother withdrawing have an impact on their choices of returning to school or not.

4.4 Household related factors influencing teen mothers return to school after child birth.

The fourth research question tried to find out the household related factors influencing teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. The evidence from the interviews with head teachers,

teen mothers and parents revealed that at the household level, four key factors prominently influenced the likelihood of teen mothers returning to formal schooling. These factors were the structure of the house-hold in terms of decision making, the availability of financial support from the family or resources for childcare while they attend school, household responsibilities and time lost at home while nursing the baby.

4.4.1 The structure of the house-hold in terms of decision making

The study established that everyone in the household had the power to influence the teen mother's return to school except for few cases where fathers had the final say on the decision of teen mothers return to school. Out of 20 teen mothers interviewed, 2 representing 10 percent narrated that their fathers denied them the opportunity to return to school with the idea that they are grown-ups and should take up the responsibilities of marriage. However, 80 percent said that their fathers were ok with them going back to school, with their mothers encouraging them more than anyone else. The only challenge that they face is that they lack financial support. All the 4 female parents revealed that they discussed with their husbands and came to decisions together regarding the returning of their daughter to school. The decision of them returning to school could be made by anyone else in the family including themselves. One teen mother narrated that she had made the decision of getting married on her own and her parents have no say because that's what she wants. She narrates as follows

Makolo anga sanasangalare kuti ndinasankha kuti ndisabwerelenso ku sukulu, koma pandekha, ndinapanga chiganizo kuti ndingokwatiwa ndi abambo ake a mwanayu. Makolo anga akhoza kundithandiza ku nkhani ya ndalama koma kungoti ndasankha kukwatiwa.

My parents are not happy with my decision of not going back to school, but on my own, I made the decision of just getting married to the father of my child. Of course my parents can support me financially but it is just that I have chosen to get married. (Interview with TM2 e on April 26, 2018).

This means that anyone in the teen mothers' environment can influence her to return to school. The immediate environment, which is the micro-system has a greater impact on teen mother's choices to return to school or not. Mothers are the ones that encourage the teen mothers the more to return to school. With the support they get from their husbands they are able to encourage and send their daughters back to school.

This is contrary to a study by Haberland (2015) On the Case for addressing gender and power in sexuality and HIV education, which established that in Mafara households, the decision making on school re-entry for teen mothers was influenced by the interests of fathers; sometimes in consultation with older sons. As such, much priority is given to male members of family as compared to female members more especially teen mothers. According to USAID (2010), Gender relations conferred unequal power between fathers and mothers over the decision making process within households making the mothers unable to protect their daughters right to educational support. According to USAID (2010), a good number of families, especially fathers does not value the role of education and understand how it will help their girl achieve her goals, as such, they are less likely to support her to return to school.

These scenarios indicate how the microsystem which is the immediate environment of a teen mother influence her development. Family members both contribute to an individual's attitude and values about aspects affecting their everyday lives. According to Bronfenbrenner ecological theory.

4.4.2 Availability of financial support

Most of the teen mothers narrated that lack of female labour and resources in their homes to take care of the child while they are in school is one of the common reasons why they are not in school. The study also found out that most men responsible for the pregnancy showed no interest to support these mothers and their babies financially. Out of 20 teen mothers, 7 revealed that that they received support from their baby fathers whilst the rest relied entirely on their families. Young mothers from households with limited livelihood options have no choice but to engage in paid work so as to supplement their families increased consumption needs. Moreover, most of them opt for marriage in hope that their husbands will provide for their needs and the baby's needs. As one teen mother explained:

“Ngakhale nditanena kut ndikufuna kubwerelanso ku sukulu ndikuganiza kuti zidzakhalabe zovuta kuposa kale chifukwa makolo anga adzayenera kuti azisamalira anthu awiri. Ndiye ndikuganiza kuti njira yabwino ndikukha pakhomo ndikummathandiza makolo anga kugwira tchito kuti mwana wangaso azithandizika”

“Even if I say I want to go back to school now, I think it will be worse than before since my parents will need to take care of us two. So I think the best way is to stay at home, help my parents here and there so that my baby can also be helped” (Interview with TM3 e, on APRIL 27, 2018)

To add on that, the study found that once girls get pregnant, the chances of getting financial support from the family members for their education decreases. This is so because parents fear that they will be wasting their money to send teen mothers to school as they are afraid that she will get pregnant again. The head teacher for Primary School 1 revealed that:

“Financially, some parents do not have the finances to send back their daughter to school since she is already spoilt and would rather send someone rather than a mother” (interview with HTPS1 on April 25, 2018)

Out of 20 teen mothers, 12, representing 60% reported that they are not in school because they lack resources like school uniforms, exercise books and that there is no one to support them as their parents are poor and disappointed with them. Some of their explanations were as follows:

“Vuto lake ndilomwelo la kusowa kwa sukulu fees ndi zofunkira zina za ku sukulu ngat uniform ndi makope. Makolo anga alibe nazo ntchito za sukulu yanga chifukwa ndinawakhumudwitsa.”

“It is the same problem of school fees and other school necessities like school uniform and exercise books. My parents do not care about my education because I disappointed them at first.” (Interview with TM1 b on April 25, 2018)

“Ndichifukwa chakut makolo anga sakufuna chifukwa cha mavuto a ndalama. Ndizovuta kut ndiwawuz makolo anga kut ndufuna ndibwerelenso ku sukulu chifukwa cha mmen zinthu zilili kumbali ya za chuma”

“It is because my parents are not very willing because of financial constraints. It is hard to tell my parents that I want to go back to school because of the way things are financially” (interview with TM2 b on April 26, 2018)

“Makolo anga anndiuza kut zazakwanitsa kundiipirila sukulu fees kutsogoloku ndi zomwe ndi ndinapanga. Ndi bwino kungosiilatu ndikukwatiwa”.

“My parents told me that they will not manage to pay school fees for me in future after all with what I have done. So it is better that I drop out permanently and get married”.
(Interview with TM3 a, on April 27, 2018)

One teen mother narrated that despite her baby being old enough for her to go back to school, the only challenge she faced was lack of finances for her education.

The baby is grown now but I am failing to go back to school because of lack of financial support, I lack exercise books, school fees, uniform and all **(interview with TM1 e, on April 25, 2018)**

Rural poverty has made it difficult for the young mothers’ families to fully take on the responsibility of meeting the needs of the new born babies and the mother all together. While the babies can eat from the family pot once they are weaned; the young mothers’ families cannot afford to provide additional requirements such as milk and soap. According to Moonga (2014), these situations are worsened if the man responsible for the pregnancy is not even working or accept the responsibilities of looking after the child. This has implications on the young mothers’ chances of returning to formal schooling.

These findings are similar to what Moonga (2014) found in his study about the challenges teen mothers face. It was seen from the discussions that some parents were not ready or willing to assist these teen mothers. They viewed educating teen mothers as wasting time or resources which should be given to others who are serious with school. Again, Mulama (2008) states that pre-mature termination of girls’ education due to pregnancy has serious ramifications as it aggravates the problem of educational wastage. At family level, it is found that wastage of resources is apparent because by the time the girl drops out of school, she may not have acquired a meaningful education which discourages the parents to invest in their education again. On top of that, Grant & Hallman (2008) in their study on the pregnancy-related school dropout and prior school performance in kwa-zulu Natal found out that teen mothers often experience lack of resources and support both at home and at school prior to the pregnancy and more so afterwards. Furthermore, SmithBattle, (2007), in his study on “Teen mothers rise in educational aspirations, competing demands and limited schools support” found out that teen mothers who grow up in poor families with inferior schools and high unemployment rate know that quality education and employment opportunities

are still limited whether with a child or not. As such, they are not motivated to go further with their education. He further states that, these ten mothers experience an accelerated life-course as they assume family responsibilities and care for their babies and younger siblings to help their families survive on the economic margins. This family labor to improve the household economy therefore, competes with chances of re-enrolling into formal schooling.

4.4.3 Time spent at home

The study also established that “time” was another factor that influences the teen mother’s return to formal schooling after giving birth. Three teen mothers cited that the time they were given to wait before they re-enroll was long such that the passion for school was lost:

Chilakolakoso cha sukulu chinandithela chifukwa ndakhalitsa pakhomu

I have lost interest in school because I have overstayed at home (interview with TM3c, on April 27, 2018)

According to MoEST (2018), the re-entry policy requires teen mothers to spend 1 year at home nursing the baby and that they go back to school after they have weaned the baby. However, Wakesa (2010) argues that the time they spend at home is just too long for them such that they lose a lot and it becomes hard for them to fall back in track after re-enrolling. This is in tandem with findings of Dlamini (2016) in his study on “Teenage mothers’ experiences of motherhood-schooling, stigma and learned experiences in Kwa- Zulu Natal” found out that many teenagers who drop out of school often do not return because of the long disengagement with the school. He further states that, for every year that a teenage girl is out of school, chances of her returning decreases. This can be as a result of other opportunities that are open to them while they are at home such as marriage.

4.4.4 Family Responsibilities

Each and every person has responsibilities so as the teen mothers are expected to take up some responsibilities in their homes. The study established that with the coming of the baby in the family teen mothers found themselves in having additional responsibilities on top of the ones they had before having the baby. The thought of adding more school responsibilities sets them back. As one teen mother stated as follows:

“Ndimatopa kwambiri. Ndimadzuka mma 4 mammawa kukonzekera za ku sukulu ndikuphika chakudya cha mwana, ku sukuluso kumakahala tchito yambiri, ndikabwerako, ndimapitiliza kusamalira mwana wanga ndikukonzaso chakudya cha madzulo. Panopa bola ndimapumako.”

“I used to get tired a lot. Waking up at 4 am to get prepared for school and prepare breakfast for my baby. There was also a lot of work to do at school. When I came back from school, could resume my duty of looking after my baby and preparing supper for the family. At least now I have time to rest” (interview with TM4 e, on April 28, 2018).

This explanation from the teen mother means that the triple accountabilities that teen mothers found themselves in are a hindrance to their prospects of returning to school. Most teen mothers find it hard to balance the 3 tasks of being a mother to their baby, a daughter to her parents and a student in school. This is so because all these comes with different responsibilities that are conflicting in nature. As such teen mother choose to drop one responsibility and in most cases it is school because they cannot choose not to be a mother or a daughter.

This finding corresponds with the finding of Mwenje (2015), who found that young mothers face serious challenges in re-entry and reintegration due to their triple roles of daughter, student and mother. These roles shape the way they live their daily lives in the family as well as within the school and wider community. Brown (2010) and Wakesa (2010) argues that; these simultaneous roles usually co-exist, overlap and conflict as the young mother tries to balance them. As a young unmarried mother, living under the authority of her parents means that she will also have to fulfill her socially prescribed role of daughter which brings in the aspect of labour. For those who are married, it becomes even worse as they have to play the additional roles of wife and daughter-in-law. SmithBattle (2007), argues that, the world of work often competes with the world of school because of the family and the child care responsibilities that bestowed on the teen mothers. As such, teen mother’s motivation to return to school is often complicated and sometimes thwarted by these competing work demands, family and child care responsibilities such that they opt to stay at home to minimize the responsibilities.

In this case, both the Micro, Meso, Exo and the Macro systems have an impact on teen mothers’ choices of returning to school. If the Micro-system, which is the immediate environment of an individual does not have the favorable conditions for development the individual suffers. In this

case lack of resources in the family deprives the teen mothers to re-enroll so as to get the basic need of education for their proper development. According to Krishnan (2010), development is not only shaped by the immediate environment but also by interaction with the larger environment. As such, it is not rational to overlook the influence of the surrounding in as far as household related factors are concerned. In most cases, poor neighborhoods are associated with high unemployment rates. Unemployed households are in most cases the ones that hold up teen mothers from going to school so that they can help with household chores and labour to sustain the lives of the family members. In addition, lack of employment affects the aspirations of teen mothers as they have no role models to look up to which therefore de-motivates them from going back to school after giving birth. Again the interaction between poor households and inferior schools further minimizes the chances of teen mothers returning to school. Apart from the four systems of the family systems theory, Krishnan (2010) identified time as another component of Bronfenbrenner model, which encompasses various aspects, such as chronological age, duration and nature of periodicity. He further states that an event can have profound impacts on individuals. The timing of the teenage pregnancy and its consequences therefore can determine whether a teen can return to school or not after giving birth.

4.5 Community related factors

On top of the school and household factors, the study found that the community as a whole also has an impact on the teen mother's return to school after giving birth. The factors that emerged are stigma and discrimination and pressure to get married.

4.5.1 Stigma and discrimination

The study found that in the communities, teen mothers are isolated because of the strong beliefs and perceptions that that they are deviants; prostitutes and misfits who people do not need near their children believing that they can spoil others with their behavior. As such people in the communities shun their daughters from mingling with them. Moreover, they are regarded as failures. The findings further revealed that teen mothers are influenced by their bitterness and anger that comes because of the stigma and discrimination from the society. They want the society to recognize them that despite having a baby whilst young they can still do better in life. Participant TM2 c narrated that:

“Ndikudziwa ndinalakwitsa, ndipo zinandipangitsa kuganiza zobweleranso ku sukulu kukalimbira ndikuti ndizaakhoze ku amandinenawo azachite manyazi.”

“I know I have made a mistake and this has made me think of going back to school to work hard so that I should not fail again and try to prove wrong those that think I am a failure”
(interview with TM2 c, on April 26, 2018)

These findings are in line with the results of the study on “Bending the private-public gender norms: negotiating schooling for young mothers from low-income households in Kenya” conducted by Nelima (2010), who found out that teen mothers suffer discrimination and rejection as the community does not value or recognize them as they call them prostitutes and perverse and hence, very few like to associate with them. According to UNESCO (2014), teen mothers face expulsion from home and school; get ashamed and stigmatized by family, community members and peers. Stigma and discrimination affect young single mothers in particular, since marriage-also at an early age confers on girls a recognized social status that legitimizes pregnancy. One reason for stigma is opposition to young people being sexually active before or outside of marriage for moral and religious reasons. According to Yardley (2008), adolescent mothers are regarded with low expectations by society, or often they are treated with disrespect and derision which lead to loss of self-esteem, depression and dropping out of school. However, SmithBattle (2007) in his study on Teen Mothers’ Rise in Educational Aspirations, Competing Demands and Limited school Support conducted in South Africa argues that, discrimination makes some teen mothers reach to a point where they re-evaluate their goals, decrease risky behavior and recommit to education as a pathway to their future opportunities. As such discrimination from the community can encourage teen mothers to re-enroll in anticipation for a brighter future. Therefore, it can be concluded that stigma and discrimination can have both positive and negative outcomes in as far as re-enrolment of teen mothers is concerned.

4.5.2 Marriage

Since teen mothers are regarded as adults in the society, they begin a new life with new friends and everything changes. One teen mother described that the time she was at home nursing her child she got attached to some married women in the village since all her friends were always in school and there was no one to be with. As such, all she got from them were talks about marriage. Therefore, she decided to get married as well.

Some teen mothers naturally prefer marriage than going back to school for their personal reasons. For example, TM2 stated that: *“The time I was giving birth, people were already in school, by then the baby was still young, unfortunately the baby died. My boyfriend however wants us to get married and I will go for that”* (interview with TM2 e, on April 26, 2018).

This implication is associated with this cultural conviction that associates motherhood with adulthood. This finding is in line with a study that was conducted in Tanzania by Lema (1997), who found that a girl was regarded an adult after giving birth and was expected to assume adult responsibilities. Atumbe *et al.*, (2010) in his study established that the change of status meant that a teen mother had assumed adult responsibilities and was supposed to leave home and be independent, thereby expecting the teen mother to get married. On the other hand, Wakesa (2010) established that these girls seek marriage or are forced by their parents as a way of legitimizing the pregnancies and the child birth. Ahikire and Mandanda (2014), also agrees with the above statements by pointing out that it is a common practice in many cultures to marry off the teenage girl to the man or boy who impregnated her and many parents follow this tradition.

In relation to Bronfenbrenner ecological theory, Krishnan (2010), argues that the ability of people to make good decisions about themselves depends upon the context in which they find themselves more especially the quality of the neighborhood and the community. In this case, the kind of community in which teen mothers find themselves in determine whether they can return to school or not. The community can either positively or negatively influence teen mothers on their choices to return to school after giving birth. For example, individual people in the community can influence teen mothers not to return to school by encouraging them to get married. On the other hand, some profit and non-profit sectors eg Community Based Organizations (CBOs) may adopt a more formal strategy to come together and work to address critical issues in a community for example the bring back girls to school campaign being championed by a lot of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) in the communities.

4.6 Personal factors

The study also established that one of the factors that influence teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling comes right within themselves.

4.6.1 Education future prospects

Despite all the challenges all together, the study found out that, some teen mothers are inspired by the benefits of education that come later in life like employment. Out of 20 teen mothers interviewed, 6 teen mothers narrated that they are going back to school only that they are waiting for their babies to reach 2 years old. They further narrated that the reason they want to go back to school is that they want to be able to help their babies in future once they are educated and have been employed. On their own, they had realized the importance of education. As narrated by TM 2a, *“When you go back to school you work hard so that you should become a better person in future after getting employed”*.

Another teen mother cited that she had changed the way she used to think about school after she gave birth:

“Ndili ndi maligaliro abwino tsopano okhudza tsogolo langa kusiyana di nthawi imene sindinali ndi mimba. Mwanayu amandipangitsa kut ndiziziganizila kwambiri kuposa kale”.

“I have good aspirations about my future than before I got pregnant. The baby makes me think about myself more than before”. **(Interview with TM2e, on April 26, 2018).**

These findings are consistent with findings of SmithBattle (2007) in his study on teen mothers rise in educational aspirations competing demands and limited school support. The study found that some teen mothers reach to a point where they re-evaluate their goals, decrease risky behavior and recommit to education as they anticipate their future education prospects. Whereas school success is a low priority before pregnancy, the responsibility of caring for a child provides a compelling reason to reinvest in education as a pathway to future opportunities. This is why, according to Pillow (2008), at least 25% of pregnant teens return to school after having dropped out for the sole purpose of bettering themselves and for the larger goal of becoming good mothers to their children in future. Such teen mothers often describe mothering as a gain that contributes to their maturity rather than a loss that jeopardizes their future. SmithBattle (2007) further argues that some longitudinal studies have confirmed that such teen mothers do better over time and gain some high school diplomas and eventually get employed in stable positions. Therefore, the advantage of teen mothering is that it transforms the meaning of education to some teen mothers and often reset the

course of these teen mothers as they re-evaluate their goals and priorities for the future and their prior academic achievement.

4.7 Addressing challenges that prevent teen mother re-enrolment

The last research question tried to find out how challenges that prevent teen-mothers to re-enroll after giving birth can be addressed. The teen mothers, teachers and parents involved in this study echoed similar views on how challenges that teen mothers face can be addressed. Their opinions involved establishment of rules, sensitization campaigns and strong support to teen mothers.

4.7.1. Establishment of rules

Teen mothers, teachers and parents narrated that there is need for the Government of Malawi to put in place rules or policies that will punish those stigmatizing and discriminating teen mothers. The penalties should be very hard that the perpetrators should not repeat the act again. These policies should encourage teachers to take full responsibility to protect the students from the discrimination. However, if the discrimination is from teachers themselves, they should be fired so that teen mothers should find peace in schools. Teachers explained that chiefs should set by-laws concerning the policy and that they should set a good example to their people by not keep teen mothers at home. In this line some respondents reported that:

“Boma likhazikitse malamulo ndi ndondomeko ku ziletse anthu mma sukulu kusala ndikulanga amene amasala azimayi achichepele mma sukulu”.

“The government should set rules and policies to prevent people in schools from discriminating and punish those discriminating and stigmatizing the teen mothers” (interview with TM1 a, c and d on April 25, 2018).

One parent said that:

I suggest that there should be penalties against anyone who discriminate against the teen mothers and the teen mothers should be protected against the teachers and fellow students because it pains as parents when we hear that such kind of a thing had happened to our girls (interview with PPS1 a, on April 25, 2018).

4.7.2 Sensitization and Awareness Campaigns

Teen mothers' parents and teachers enlightened that government should engage in sensitization and awareness campaigns concerning the re-entry policy. Parents and the community should be sensitized to understand and allow their children when they have decided to go back to school after giving birth. They should encourage their children to re-enroll and not force them into early marriages. They also need to be sensitized on how to deal with problems teen mothers face in school and what procedure to follow to help their children re-enroll. Students should be sensitized about the re-entry policy and its guidelines and procedures in detail whether pregnant or not. Fellow students should be briefed about problems teen mothers face in school and encourage them not to discriminate them but rather help them achieve what they want. 2 teen mothers narrated that:

“kudziwitsa makolo kut azivetsetsa ana awo pamene asnkha kut abwereleso ku sukulu”

“Sensitizing Parents so that they should understand their children when they have decided to go back to school” (interview with TM1 d, on April 25, 2018)

Makolo akuyenere kudziwitsidwa kut azilimbikitsa ana awo kut abwerelenso ku sukulu akabeleka osati kuwakakamiza kukwatiwa asanakhiwimw”

“Parents should be sensitized to encourage their children to go back to school after they give birth and not force them into early marriages” (interview with TM1 e on April 25, 2018)

Pakuynera kukhala tsiku lapadela lokumbutsa ophunzira za azimayi achichepere ku sukulu nndikumafotokoza ma dongosolo oyenera a ndondomeko obwerelanso ku sukulu mwatsatanetsatane. Kulimbikitsa anthu ku sukulu kut asamasale atsikanawa koma kuwathanditse kut akwanilitse cholinga chomwe abwelera ku sukulu.”

“There should be a special day to remind students in school about teen mothers in school and explain about all the procedures of the re-entry policy in detail. Encourage the school not to discriminate these teen mothers but rather help them to achieve what they have come to school for” (interview with TM2 b and c on April 26, 2018)

One parent explained that she wants her daughter to go back to school but she is not aware of what to do for her to go back to school:

To say the truth as a parent, I do not know the procedure can follow so that she returns to school (interview with PPS2 a, on April 26, 2019)

4.7.3 Strong support systems

Teen mothers and parents also highlighted that there is need to provide strong academic, emotional and financial support for teen mothers trying to enroll and those re-enrolled. 3 teen mothers echoed that the government should device programs and policies to enable teen mothers remain in school. 2 parents unveiled that NGOs should intervene by talking to girls and providing contraceptives to them to avoid subsequent pregnancies. Moreover, parents emphasized that teachers should take up much responsibility in supporting teen mothers for them to work hard in their academics. Again parents emphasized that the government should regulate the support network systems such as the mother groups as they tend to assist teen mothers close to them. One head teacher suggested that schools should be giving out tokens to teen mothers as a way of motivating them academically. For this to happen, it was suggested that government should pump a lot of money into the SIP (School Improvement Plans) and the SIG (School Improvement Grant) Emotionally 1 teen mother suggested that groups should be formed by NGOs, where teen mothers can meet and discuss issues affecting their everyday lives and be given special attention in school. Some responded that:

“Calling the teen mothers to explain their problems how they are coping in school because there are some who are discriminated but cannot figure out themselves how to report” (interview with TM2 c, on April 26, 2018).

“There should be programs to help those teen mothers who have returned to school financially and in many aspects of their day to day lives” (TM3 c).

“NGOs should also take part to in giving contraceptives to these teen mothers so that they don’t become pregnant again” (interview with PPS2a, on April 26, 2018).

“Government should pump a lot of money into the SIG so that we should assist those girls who have been re-enrolled” (interview with HTPS4 on April 28, 2018).

Furthermore, it was suggested, by Head Teachers that the government should establish many Community based Child Care Centers to provide an option for teen mothers to find care for their babies while they attend to school. One head teacher narrated that:

The other thing is that Machinga does not have CBCCs which I think could have helped since the teen mothers could be leaving their babies at these ECD centers and then come to school and learn without worries (Interview with HTP3, on April 27, 2018).

4.7.4 Challenges addressed by the policy

These observations have already been stipulated in the revised re-admission policy for Primary and Secondary schools in Malawi by Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (MoEST, 2018). The policy states that Develop school based guidelines and procedures for reducing stigma and discrimination for learners readmitted in schools. It will ensure that the School Management Committee (SMC) create a conducive environment for readmitted learners so that they remain in school. This include making sure that there is no discrimination towards re en-enrolled teen mothers. The policy shall also take strict administrative action of teachers involved in defiling the teen mothers. Emotionally, the policy ensures that Counselling and psycho social support are institutionalized in all schools for readmitted learners. The counseling for learner minors who are pregnant or were in early marriages will be provided by child protection officers. To add on that, the policy states that it will ensure Special support mechanism at the family and community level to support the teenage parents/guardians and that Communities and local leaders are sensitized on all matters relating to readmission policy. It states that it will do this by Sensitizing parents or guardians of teen age parents to take care of the child during school session and Promote establishment of community day care centers for children just to mention a few. Despite all of this being highlighted in the Re-admission policy, respondents cited them as solutions to the problems teen mothers face. This being the case, it implies that despite being suggested in the policy, they are not practically observed. The solutions are already there in the policy however they are not being implemented by the policy stakeholders.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study on factors that influence teen mother's re-enrolment into formal schooling after giving birth. The structure of the chapter was based on the themes that emerged from the research questions. In relation to that, the study found that:

There is a very low rate of re-enrolment among teen mothers in Machinga Boma zone. In terms of support, it was found that teen mothers do not get enough support from both school and home to re-enroll. Sometimes, they face resistance from school authorities in their attempts to re-enroll back into school. Most of the time, they are restrained by poverty and the multiple responsibilities that comes with being a teen mother. To add on that, the long time they wait at home before they can re-enroll takes out the passion for them to report back to school. However, the study also established that there are some factors that encourages teen mothers to re-enroll into formal schooling despite the challenges they face. Previous school performance plays a role in teen mothers' return to school in way that those who performed well before dropping out easily returns. Stigma and discrimination from the community forces some teen mothers to go back to school so that they can do better in life just to prove wrong those that think they are failures. Educational future prospects like employment also inspires some teen mothers to return to school. To address the challenges that prevent teen mother re-enrolment into formal schooling, the study suggested some solutions which have already been stipulated in the revised readmission policy for Primary and Secondary schools. Building on the findings outlined and discussed in this chapter, the next chapter will provide a conclusion and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.0 Chapter overview

The purpose of the study was to examine factors that affect teen mother re-enrolment after giving birth to Primary schools in Machinga District, Malawi. Precisely the study sought to find out the current status of re-enrolment of girls after giving birth, the kind of support they are given to re-enroll after giving birth, the school and home related factors affecting teen mother re-enrolment and the solutions to address challenges teen mothers face when re-enrolling and after they have re-enrolled. This chapter presents the conclusions of the results and the implications.

5.1 Status of re-enrolment of girls after giving birth

The first research question sought to find out the current status of girls' re-enrolment after giving birth in Machinga Boma zone by interviewing head teachers from four sampled schools. Findings from the four head teachers interviewed showed that schools face challenges to get records of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy as such they, do not have the exact reflection of the status of teen mother re-enrolment in their records.

Responses from the interviews the researcher conducted revealed the records schools keep about teen pregnancies are only for those that come forward about their pregnancy status and that those who come to re-enroll are not actually those who withdrew from the same school. Most of the times the girls leave school silently and when confronted about it before leaving, they hide information. Despite using the mother group to follow those who just disappear, head teachers opened up to say that they do not reach out to all of them since some might have moved to different places. As such it becomes hard for the schools to record them as dropping out due to pregnancy since they do not have the evidence that they are really pregnant. It was therefore not possible to get documented records of all school-girl pregnancy cases reported over the last 3 years; neither were there any official records on of the number of young mothers that had returned to school. Even though they have the numbers, they do not necessarily reflect the exact status of teen mother re-enrolment since they have few records of those who drop out than actually those who drop out due to pregnancy. This is as a result of the tendency of just disappearing after discovering being pregnant among the girls.

Despite these challenges, however, schools still keep records of those who come forward as being pregnant and reserves a place that they will come back to re-enroll though they do so in very small numbers as in the case of 2014-2018 school sessions, in the zone. The results show that the current status of teen mother re-enrolment in Machinga, Boma Zone is at the rate of 22%.

5.2 Support rendered to adolescent mothers to re-enroll after giving birth

The second research question sought to establish how adolescent mothers are supported to re-enroll after giving birth. Teen mothers were asked to explain whether there were any support networks in schools to counsel and guide them after they were found pregnant, whether anyone explained to them in detail about the re-entry policy and what happened when they tried to re-enroll. Teachers were asked to explain how they help those dropping out so that they are comfortable to come back and how they receive those re-enrolling. Parents were asked to explain the kind of support they give to teen mothers. Responses the researcher got from the respondents through interviews and focus group discussions showed that teen mothers do not get enough support from both school, home and community to re-enroll.

Firstly, teen mothers complained that there is lack of support networks in schools to counsel and guide them after falling pregnant. As a result, they are unaware of the proper guidelines they are supposed to follow when they want to re-enroll. Despite teachers stating about having mother support groups, most of the teen mothers revealed that they never met such groups after being discovered pregnant. Some teen mothers revealed that the common thing the school authorities talked to them after being found pregnant was to come back to school after giving birth and in addition to some piece of advice by way of encouraging them that being found pregnant is not the end of their life. Because of this, most teen mothers are denied to re-enroll by the school authorities saying that they did not reserve a place when leaving which is as a result of unawareness of the policy guidelines. In addition, it was also found that the school does not talk about the re-entry policy to the students in general. This is so because they do not want to look like they are encouraging the students to engage in pre-marital sex knowing that if they get pregnant they will still come back to school which still leave the students ignorant about the policy. It was also discovered that there is lack of professional counsellors in the schools since they are appointed on voluntary basis or by the virtue of just being female. Moreover, schools do not follow up on teen mothers to find out if they have re-enrolled somewhere so as to intervene where necessary.

On support from home, the study revealed that some parents were sympathetic of the teen mothers' status because of their tender age and the responsibilities that go with the predicament of being a teen mother. Most parents, therefore, revealed that the support they give to the teen mothers is out of pity for them and their babies. Often, teenage mothers are not expected to raise the child alone, as family members available often support them at the time, usually mothers. As such, some parents assume the responsibility of their teen mothers in order to give them a chance to go to back to school. However, it was revealed that usually they get moral support rather than financial support since most of these teen mothers come from economically challenged households. In addition, teen mothers cited that they do not get support right from the start of their pregnancy. Some parents become furious upon learning that their daughter is pregnant and make swift decisions that later affect the chances of the teen mothers' return to school like forcing them into early marriages.

5.3 School related factors influencing teen mothers return to school after child birth

The third research question tried to find out the school related factors influencing teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. The school related factors are presented from the perspective of teen mothers who once re-enrolled and dropped out, teen mothers who have ever witnessed other re-enrolled teen mothers, parents and the teachers themselves. From the study it was found that teen mothers face shame, stigma and discrimination from the school and are sometimes influenced by previous school performance whether to re-enroll or not.

From the interviews and focus group discussions conducted, it was established that the common challenge that teen mothers who re-entered formal school faced was stigma and discrimination. They presented that they were unfavorably judged relative to their fellow pupils as people in school regarded them as rebels, problematic and young prostitutes and always talked bad about them. This made them feel ashamed and bad about themselves. In most cases, their fellow students say painful comments that it becomes so hard for them to concentrate in class. Since this does not happen in a vacuum it becomes hard for girls who witness such incidences to re-enroll after they are teen mothers themselves. Some teen mothers who have never re-enrolled think that they will face the same mockery once they re-enroll since they have witnessed some being discriminated as well. It was also revealed in this study that even teachers held stereotype views as they regarded the teen mothers who re-entered school as deviants. The teen mothers reported that they had seen

some of the teachers passing negative comments on teen mothers who fail to meet their expectations in school. Moreover, the study established that some of the decisions the schools make in justification of following the policy guidelines are punitive in nature. For example, some schools force girls to be out of school for a year even though the baby has died despite the leave being given for the sake of the baby.

Another factor that influences teen mother's return to school established by the study is previous performance in school. The study found that there are low chances for teen mothers who were already not performing well in school to re-enroll after giving birth. However, those who were performing well in school prior to pregnancy have the impetus to advance in their education as such, they have the zeal to return to school. One parent also explained that going back to school could have been easy for her daughter if she was selected to a secondary school after writing her Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations

5.4 Household related factors influencing teen mothers return to school after child birth.

The fourth research question tried to find out the household related factors influencing teen mothers' return to school after giving birth. The evidence from the interviews with head teachers, teen mothers and parents revealed that at the household level, four key factors prominently influenced the likelihood of teen mothers returning to formal schooling. These factors were the structure of the house-hold in terms of decision making, the availability of financial support from the family or resources for childcare while they attend school, household responsibilities and time lost at home while nursing the baby.

The study established that everyone in the household had the power to influence the teen mother's return to school except for few cases where fathers had the final say on the decision of teen mothers return to school. Out of 20 teen mothers interviewed, 2 representing 10 percent narrated that their fathers denied them the opportunity to return to school with the idea that they are grown-ups and should take up the responsibilities of marriage. However, 18 percent said that their fathers were ok with them going back to school, with their mothers encouraging them more than anyone else. The only challenge that they face is that they lack financial support. All the 4 female parents revealed that they discussed with their husbands and came to decisions together regarding the returning of their daughter to school. The decision of them returning to school could be made by anyone in the family including themselves.

In terms of financial support, most of the teen mothers narrated that lack of female labour and resources in their homes to take care of the child while they are in school is one of the common reasons why they are not in school. The study also found out that most men responsible for the pregnancy showed no interest to support these mothers and their babies financially. Out of 20 teen mothers, 7 revealed that they received support from their baby fathers whilst the rest relied entirely on their families. Young mothers from households with limited livelihood options have no choice but to engage in paid work so as to supplement their families' increased consumption needs. Moreover, most of them opt for marriage in the hope that their husbands would provide for their needs and the baby's needs. Furthermore, the study found that once girls get pregnant, the chances of getting financial support from the family members for their education decreases. This is so because parents fear that they will be wasting their money to send teen mothers to school as they are afraid that she would get pregnant again. Out of 20 teen mothers, 12, representing 60% reported that they are not in school because they lack resources like school uniforms, exercise books and that there is no one to support them as their parents are poor and disappointed with them.

The study also established "Time" as another factor that influences the teen mother's return to formal schooling after giving birth. Three teen mothers cited that the time they were given to wait before they re-enroll was long, such that the passion for school was lost.

Each and every person has responsibilities so as the teen mothers are expected to take up some responsibilities in their homes. The study established that with the coming of the baby in the family teen mothers found themselves in having additional responsibilities on top of the ones they had before having the baby. The thought of adding more school responsibilities sets them back. These triple accountabilities that teen mothers found themselves in are a hindrance to their prospects of returning to school. Most teen mothers find it hard to balance the 3 tasks of being a mother to their baby, a daughter to her parents and a student in school. This is so because all these comes with different responsibilities that are conflicting in nature. As such teen mother choose to drop one responsibility and in most cases it is school because they fail to balance being a mother a daughter and a student at the same time.

5.5 Community related and personal factors

On top of the school and household factors, the study found that the community as a whole also has an impact on the teen mother's return to school after giving birth. The factors that emerged were: stigma and discrimination and pressure to get married. Moreover the drive to re-enroll comes from right within sometimes.

The study found that in the communities, teen mothers are isolated because of the strong beliefs and perceptions that that they are deviants; prostitutes and misfits who people do not like near their children believing that they can spoil others with their behavior. As such people in the communities discourage their daughters from mingling with them. Moreover, they are regarded as failures. The findings further revealed that teen mothers are influenced by their bitterness and anger that comes because of the stigma and discrimination from the society. They want the society to recognize them that despite having a baby whilst young they can still do better in life.

Since teen mothers are regarded as adults in society, they begin a new life with new friends and everything changes. One teen mother described that the time she was at home nursing her child she got attached to some married women in the village since all her friends were always in school. As such, all she got from them were talks about marriage. In so doing, she decided to get married as well. However, some teen mothers naturally prefer to get married than going back to school for personal reasons.

Despite all the challenges, all in all, the study found out that some teen mothers are inspired by the benefits of education that comes later in life like employment. Out of 20 teen mothers interviewed, 6 teen mothers narrated that they were going back to school only that they were waiting for their babies to reach 2 years old. They further narrated that the reason they wanted to go back to school was that they wanted to be able to help their babies in future once they get educated and get employed. However, some teen mothers change their perception about school after giving birth.

5.6 Addressing challenges that prevent teen mother re-enrolment

The last research question tried to find out how challenges that prevent teen-mothers to re-enroll after giving birth can be addressed. The teen mothers, teachers and parents involved in this study echoed similar views on how challenges that teen mothers face can be addressed. Their opinions involved establishment of rules, sensitization campaigns and strong support to teen mothers.

Teen mothers, teachers and parents narrated that there is need for the Government of Malawi to put in place rules or policies that will punish those stigmatizing and discriminating teen mothers. The penalties should be very hard that the perpetrators should not repeat the act again. These policies should encourage teachers to take full responsibility to protect the students from the discrimination. However, if the discrimination is from teachers themselves, they should be fired so that teen mothers should find peace in schools. Teachers explained that chiefs should set by-laws concerning the policy and that they should set a good example to their people by not keep teen mothers at home.

Teen mothers also highlighted that government should engage in sensitization and awareness campaigns concerning the re-entry policy. Parents and the community should be sensitized to understand and allow their children when they have decided to go back to school after giving birth. They should encourage their children to re-enroll and not force them into early marriages. They also need to be sensitized on how to deal with problems teen mothers face in school and what procedure to follow to help their children re-enroll. Students should be sensitized about the re-entry policy and its guidelines and procedures in detail whether pregnant or not. Fellow students should be briefed about problems teen mothers face in school and encourage them not to discriminate against them but rather help them achieve what they want.

It was also emphasized by the study that there is need to provide strong academic, emotional and financial support for teen mothers trying to enroll and those re-enrolled. 3 teen mothers echoed that the government should device programs and policies to enable teen mothers remain in school. 2 parents unveiled that NGOs should intervene by talking to girls and providing contraceptives to them to avoid subsequent pregnancies. Moreover, parents emphasized that teachers should take up much responsibility in supporting teen mothers for them to work hard in their academics. Again parents emphasized that the government should regulate the support network systems such as the mother groups as they tend to assist teen mothers close to them. One Head Teacher suggested that schools should be giving out tokens to teen mothers as a way of motivating them academically. For this to happen, it was suggested that government should allocate enough money into the SIP (School Improvement Plans) and the SIG (School Improvement Grant). Emotionally, 1 teen mother suggested that groups should be formed by NGOs, where teen mothers can meet and discuss issues affecting their everyday lives and be given special attention in school. Furthermore,

it was suggested, by head teachers that the government should establish many Community based Child Care Centers to provide an option for teen mothers to find care for their babies while they attend to school.

However, all these observations have already been stipulated in the revised re-admission policy for Primary and Secondary schools in Malawi by Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (MoEST, 2018). The policy ensures that:

The readmission procedures for learners to be readmitted in school are decentralized and less bureaucratic. The School Management Committee (SMC) create a conducive environment for readmitted learners so that they remain in school, for example counselling and psycho social support.

Schools strengthen and establish their preventive measures to address school dropout among learners, for example, social protection services such as cash transfers and bursaries are accessed by those readmitted in school.

The community support mechanisms and services to retain readmitted learners in school are strengthened, for example, by sensitizing the community and local leaders on all matters relating to the readmission policy.

There is coordination, collaboration and networking of stakeholders in provision of various services in relation to readmission policy, for instance, a strong coordination and collaboration with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Gender Disability and Social Welfare and other relevant government departments in the implementation and monitoring of the readmission policy.

Despite all of this being highlighted in the re-admission policy, respondents still cited them as solutions to the problems teen mothers face. This implies that, what the policy states and suggests, is not practically observed by the policy stakeholders. The procedures used in schools for re-admission are not user friendly and the school environment is not conducive for the readmitted mothers. Teen mothers still face stigma from the community. Moreover, there is weak collaboration, networking and uncoordinated efforts among various stakeholders in addressing issues of school dropout due to early pregnancies.

5.7 Implications of the study

One of the implications of the study is that pregnant teens should follow proper procedures when they are withdrawing from school. They should refrain from just disappearing but rather seek proper guidance and counseling. This is crucial as it will give them a chance to reserve a place so that it should not be hard for them when they are re-enrolling. Schools on the other hand should introduce a strong tracking system to follow up those who have just disappeared to find out whether they have re-enrolled somewhere or not. Trained counselors should be made available in all schools to counsel and guide girls after falling pregnant and teachers should be trained on the same. It is also important for the school to educate the students mainly girls about the policy and its guidelines even before they are pregnant. Moreover, teachers should be sensitized not to unfavorably judge teen mothers in school. Again teen mothers should be trained on how to deal with challenges they face in school

Parents need to be encouraged to continue supporting their daughters by taking care of their children while they attend school. They should also be empowered through small scale businesses to be able to help their daughters financially. They should be encouraged to support their daughters' decisions of returning to school. Moreover, responsible men for the pregnancies should be encouraged not to run away from their responsibilities. On top of that, Government and NGOs should intervene by sponsoring returned teen mothers financially through bursaries. Thus, there is need for government entities and the private sector to devise special programs that entirely aim at supporting teen mothers and their babies for them to get the support they need to return to school. They should also aim at reducing the administrative burden on young mothers aspiring to return to school, and easing other social and economic barriers preventing re-enrolment after childbearing. More importantly, the government, the school authority and the parents must work as a family unit or system to understand the needs and situations of teen mothers so that they can be helped.

5.8 Suggested areas for further Research

1. The role of Community Based Child Care Centers in the Implementation of the Re-admission policy.
2. Challenges that the babies of the teen mothers experience in the absence of their mothers.

3. Establish if talking about re-entry would actually increase sexual activity amongst the students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

I am Tamara Nkhoma, a Master of Education student from the University of Malawi; Chancellor College. I am conducting a study on factors that influence teen mothers return to school after giving birth. As such, I am conducting this Focus Group Discussions/ Interview with you to collect data on the mentioned topic. The information that will be obtained will be kept confidential and is purely for academic purposes. The pseudo names (codes) will be used for identification of each one of you so that you remain anonymous. Your participation is highly valued because it will help in my academic achievement and generation of knowledge and better understand the topic. Should you feel uncomfortable or change your mind during the discussions/ Interviews you are free to withdraw. Thank you for your cooperation

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEEN MOTHERS

1. Can each one of you introduce herself; your name (will change to code + school code), age, education level (highest class reached), number of children and marital status. (Do it separately).
2. Are you aware of the girls' re-entry policy?
3. What is your view on this re-entry policy?
4. What was the reaction of the head teacher, your parents and others after they found out you are pregnant?
5. Were there any support networks to guide and counsel you at your school after being discovered that you are pregnant?
6. If yes to 5, how was it done and what kind of advice did they give you.
7. Have you ever had any thoughts of returning to school?
8. If yes to 7, from whom did this idea come from?
9. If it was from you, what did your parents say about it?
10. After you fell pregnant, did anyone ever talk to you about the policy? Who? If yes
11. Where is the father of your child? if single

12. Why do you prefer staying at home instead of being at school?
13. What was the reaction of your parents on your choice of staying home rather than returning to school?
14. Have you ever tried to re-enroll?
15. If no to 14, what prevented you to re-enroll?
16. If yes to 14, what were your experiences/challenges in school when you re enrolled? And how did you try to cope with these challenges?
17. Did you try to share these experiences with the school authorities?
18. If yes to 17, what were their responses?
19. If no to 17, what hindered you from sharing the experiences
20. Was there any system to help you cope with school?
21. What do you think can be done to deal with these challenges that teen mothers face to e-enroll into formal schooling?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

1. Can you please tell me more about yourself; name, age, level of education and marital status,
2. What is your view on girls' re-entry policy?
3. Do you have records of teen mother drop outs at this school?
4. Do you have re-enrolled teen mothers at this school?
5. Among the ones who dropped out from 2014-2017, how many have returned to school?
6. Do you know some who have re-enrolled somewhere else?
7. What strategies are there to track teen-mothers' re-enrollment to another school
8. As a school what do you do when a girl falls pregnant while in school?
9. How do you feel when your student falls pregnant?
10. Do you have any support networks that provide guidance and counseling to pregnant girls?
11. If so, how do you counsel them and what kind of advice do they get?
12. What happens to the boys responsible for the pregnancy?
13. What mode of support do you give teen mothers who have re-enrolled after pregnancy?

14. What strategies have you put in place to help teen mothers who have re-enrolled?
15. Do you ever talk to the students about the re-entry policy in general?
16. Why do you think students prefer to stay at home rather than re-enroll?
17. What do you think can be done to deal with these challenges that teen mothers face to e-enroll into formal schooling?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. Can you please tell me more about yourself; name, age, level of education and marital status.
2. What is your view on girls' re-entry policy?
3. What kind of support did you give to your daughter after you found out she was pregnant?
4. What happened or how did you feel when your daughter got pregnant
5. Why is your daughter not in school?
6. Why did you choose to send your daughter back to school after giving birth?
7. Who made the decisions for her to return to school?
8. What are some of the challenges you know your daughter face both at school and at home?
(it will depend whether she is in school or not).
9. What do you do as parents to help teen mothers cope with the situation there are in?
10. What do you think can be done to deal with these challenges?

Appendix B
ALIGNMENT TABLE

No.	Research Question	Data Source	Data collect. Instrument & item number
1	What is the current status of re-enrollment of girls after giving birth	Head teachers	Semi-structured interviews- Items; 3,4,5,6 on interview guide for head teachers
2	To what extent are adolescent mothers supported to re-enroll after falling pregnant	Head teachers	Semi-structured interviews Items; 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, on interview guide for head teachers
		Teen mothers	Focus group discussions Items; 4, 5, 6,8,9,10,11, 16, 17, 18 and 20 on FGD guide.
		Parents	Semi-structured interviews Items; 3,5,7,and 9 on interview guide for parents
3	What are the school-related factors affecting girls' re-enrollment?	Head teachers	Semi-structured interviews Items; 14, 16, and on interview guide for head teachers.
		Teen mothers	Focus group discussions Items; 2, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20. On FDG guide
		Parents	Semi-structured interviews Items; 5, 6 and 8 on interview guide for parents
4	What are the home-related factors affecting girls' re-enrollment?	Head teachers	Semi-structured interviews Items; 16 on interview guide for head teachers.
		Teen mothers	Focus group discussions Items; 4, 9, 12, and 13 on FDG guide
		Parents	Semi-structured interviews Items; 5, 7 and 8
5	How can the factors that affect girls' re-enrollment be addressed?	Head teachers	Semi-structured interview Item; 17
		Teen mothers	Focus group discussions Item; 21
		parents	Semi-structured interviews Items; 9 and 10.

Appendix C
APPROVAL LETTERS

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Email: machingadem@gmail.com



Ref MHG/DEM/SIP
The District Education
Manager
P.O. Box 24
Machinga

Date: 15th April, 2018.

Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba
Malawi

Att: Tamara Nkhoma

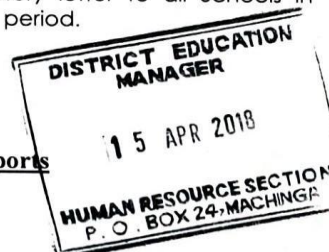
LETTER OF REFERENCE FOR TAMARA NKHOMA (MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS, CHANCELLOR COLLEGE.

I write to confirm that Tamara Nkhoma, a Master's Degree student is allowed to carry out her research in Boma Education Zone, here in Machinga.

This letter will also be taken as introductory letter to all Schools in Machinga Boma Zone during her research period.

George Mdinga

For: Director of Education, Youth and Sports



Phone: (+265) 01 549 290
Fax mail: (+265) 01 549 290
Email:.....
Ref. No 4/7/



Communication should be addressed to:
The District Commissioner,
Machinga District council,
Private Bag 1,
Machinga

15th April, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN MACHINGA BOMA EDUCATION ZONE

This reference letter is provided to Miss Tamara Nkhoma, a Masters student in the Education Foundations Department at University of Malawi, Chancellor College to collect data in Machinga Boma Education zone for academic purposes.

Your assistance rendered to her will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

L. Majamanda

For: The District Commissioner Machinga

The District Commissioner
Machinga District Council

15 APR 2018

Private Bag 1

Machinga

