

**ANALYSING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
THE GOVERNMENT IS USING IN IMPLEMENTING
THE RE-ENTRY POLICY IN ZAMBIA'S EDUCATION
SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY OF CHONGWE DISTRICT**

BY

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Sciences, Department of Media and Communication Studies in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree of
Communication for Development (MCD)**

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DECLARATION

I, Fridah Nkonde, declare that this thesis represents my work, has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at this or any other university, and does not incorporate any published work or material from any dissertation.

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Date

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Zambia's Re-entry Policy was introduced in 1997 to allow girls who become pregnant to return to school after giving birth. The policy's goal is to prevent young mothers from being excluded from education and to prevent girls from dropping out of school after giving birth. Despite the policy being introduced 27 years ago, many young girls have continued to drop out of school due to challenges encountered in their pursuit for education. The purpose of this study is to analyse the communication strategies the Government of the Republic of Zambia is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy in Chongwe district of Lusaka Province.

This study used the qualitative approach to analyse the communication strategies the government is using to implement the Re-entry Policy in Zambia's education system. Purposive and random sampling were both used in this study to help the researcher rely on her own judgement when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

In this study, the sample consisted of three (3) Head Teachers, three (3) Guidance and Counselling Teachers, three (3) Teachers, three (3) teen mothers and three (3) parents or guardians of the teen mothers. The sample also consisted of twenty (20) pupils of which ten (10) were girls and the other ten (10) were boys. The total number of participants in the study was thirty-five (35) participants all picked from the selected five Primary and Secondary schools in Chongwe district and from the community.

The findings indicate that the Government had not employed specific communication strategies targeting the implementation of the re-entry policy in the country. The findings were also clear on the fact that despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy, there were no clear messages delivered through appropriate platforms tailored for diverse audiences on the Re-entry Policy. On the part of the Guidance and Counselling Teachers, the findings indicate that most teachers were not getting proper guidance from the Ministry of Health concerning means and ways of communicating the policy to the pupils.

This study recommends that the Government, through the Ministry of Education should embark on awareness raising activities on the Re-entry Policy using Television, Radio, Newspapers, and various Social Media Platforms.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, Honourable Elias Mubanga (MP), my son Lutanda and my two beautiful daughters Luweme-Lusuba and Lulumbi, for their support, commitment, and understanding during my academic life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will introduce and present the background of the study by highlighting the research problem, the aim of the study, the research objectives, and the research questions. The significance of the study will also be discussed in this chapter and the contribution this study intends to provide to the body of knowledge will be explained.

This is an explorative research study analysing the communication strategies the Government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy in Zambia. This study focuses on Chongwe district, Lusaka Province. Jandevi (2019) states that a communication strategy is a blend of communication planning and communication management to attain a specific purpose. Jandevi (2019) argues that to compose a communication strategy, there are several factors which must be considered necessary. First, knowing the public is the first step for a communicator to create effective communication (Jandevi, 2019).

While practicing as a journalist and focusing on community news reporting, this researcher developed a passion for girl child education after writing several stories about girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant and delivering. What even made it worse for the researcher was the time she joined the Non-governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating, the umbrella organisation for gender focused Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). During the implementation of the NGOCC 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the organisation's second pillar on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights exposed the researcher more to the high numbers of girls, who despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy in Zambia in 1997, were dropping out of school due to pregnancy. Chiyota and Marishane, (2020) argue that research indicates that girls getting pregnant in schools are not re-entering school despite the Re-entry Policy having been in place since 1997.

Every girl child who sets her foot in the classroom dreams of realizing her full potential. Such a child deserves to follow her dream and become a leader, politician, changemaker, doctor, engineer

among others. In most societies, women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men. Their life choices and chances are more restricted than those of men. Chauhan and Kumar (2022) state that sex biases are very common everywhere whether it is in educational institution, society in general and in homes.

There are many obstacles standing in the way of girls' education. Even for those girls who do start school, cultural practices like child marriage can bring their education to an abrupt halt. Many are forced to drop out to focus on domestic responsibilities or to raise children of their own. The numbers show that girls who aren't in school face a greater risk of becoming child brides: Girls who have no education are three times more likely to marry before 18 than girls who attended secondary school or higher. In Africa, and particularly Zambia, the complicated interaction of gender, poverty, and regional disparities exacerbates the challenges in ensuring equitable access to education (Khethiwe, 2023). He argues that historically, gendered education patterns have perpetuated inequalities, particularly disadvantaging girls. Deep-rooted cultural norms and traditional roles often limit girls' access to schooling, leading to early marriages and teenage pregnancies (Khethiwe, 2023).

According to Aisevbonaye (2022), teenage pregnancy is allied with socioeconomic challenges leading to different education and employment goals among teenage mothers. Tull (2020) supports the above statement by stating that although 2020 had seen the lifting of restrictive policies banning pregnant learners and learner-mothers from continuing school in most African countries, continuing schooling, exploring employment opportunities, and delaying marriage and pregnancy were challenges for girls that were reinforced through patriarchy and social norms. Evidence suggests that teenage motherhood undermines human capital development such as the education of young girls in developing economies. Morgan, Agyemang, Dogbey, Arimiyaw, and Owusu (2022) state that teenage motherhood is associated with school dropout due to stigmatization and inadequacy of finance to support their studies and the need to care for their child.

According to United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) Zambia (2022), current evidence shows that 1 (one) in every 3 (three) girls (29%) becomes a mother by the age of 18 years – one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world, with at least 35% of young girls in rural areas having given birth before or by the age of 18 years.

I chose to conduct this study in Chongwe, a rural area because according to a study conducted by Masaka (2022), on management of risk factors of children who drop out of school, the number of girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant is higher as compared to the urban areas.

1.1 Background of the study

For many years, Zambian girls were obliged to leave school permanently if they became pregnant. In 1997, the Government of the Republic Zambia introduced the Re-entry Policy that requires all schools to grant girls maternity leave and readmit them to facilitate girls' education. The aim of this policy is to prevent the exclusion of young mothers from furthering their studies. In order to facilitate graduation among female students who become pregnant, Zambia's Re-entry Policy established a process by which maternity leave should be granted. To initiate maternity leave, the girl requesting the leave, the administration of the secondary school she attends, the girl's parents, and the child's father fill out a form stating the date on which the girl agrees to return to school (from 6 months to 2 years after she begins her leave). The Re-entry Policy also obliges schools to ensure a paternity leave of the same length as the maternity leave, for the child's father, if he is a schoolboy, to facilitate joint caretaking of the infant. The girl's parents and the child's father are asked to sign the maternity leave form in order to mutually accept responsibility for caring for the baby and for supporting the girl's return to school (Re-entry Policy, 1997).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Since the introduction of the Re-entry Policy by the Government of the Republic of Zambia in 1997, many young girls continue to drop out of school due to challenges encountered in their pursuit of education. It is assumed in some quarters of society that most people lack information on the Re-entry Policy even though the policy has been in existence for 26 years. It is observed that most young girls, especially in rural areas, completely drop out of school once they become pregnant.

Girl child Re-entry Policy has no force on its own to compel parents and guardians to take back their children to school resulting in low levels of girl child retention in most learning institutions in the country (Daka and Mukandawire, 2022). The two scholars argue that most of the teachers

were not satisfied with the way the policy was managed, adding that the policy document lacked clear directions.

National assembly of Zambia Committee on Education, Science and Technology Report (2019), states that despite the Re-entry Policy being put in place in Zambia, an increasing number of girls do not return to school after giving birth. It has also been observed that a considerable number of pupils do not return to school, or they temporary return and drop out completely after a few months of being in school (Ministry of Education Re-entry Policy Report, 2020).

Therefore, this study is an effort to analyse the communication strategies, the government of the Republic of Zambia is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy. Analyzing the communication strategies, the government is using in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy in Zambia catches the researcher's attention because the communication strategies being used by the government have not been empirically investigated in rural areas, particularly in Chongwe district, hence this study in an effort to fill the research gap.

1.3 Aim or Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy in Zambia.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (1) To assess the communication strategies the Government is using in the implementation of the re-entry policy in Chongwe district.
- (2) To establish family, community, and institutional source of information (awareness levels) on the re-entry policy in selected government schools in Chongwe district of Lusaka Province of Zambia.
- (3) To establish the effectiveness of the re-entry policy in terms of retention of girls who fall pregnant while in school.

1.5 Research Questions

(1) What communication strategies have been employed by the Government in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy?

(2) What are the sources of information on the Re-entry Policy for pupils, families and community members?

(3) How effective is the re-entry policy in Zambia?

1.6 Hypothesis

The following hypothesis are put forward to guide the researcher in her investigation:

(1) Effective communication strategies by the government can lead to proper implementation of the Re-entry Policy.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Despite the implementation of the Re-entry Policy in Zambia, it is not known whether most Zambians are fully aware of the policy. It is one thing to introduce the policy, but it is also another thing to ensure that the policy is known and fully understood by the citizens. The question of why most girls continue to drop out of school after falling pregnant, despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy over 20 years ago, is still being asked in some sections of society. Ogola (2021) states that the Re-entry Policy implementation had several weaknesses, the teenage mothers faced a lot of challenges and that a lot more needed to be done by the policy makers.

However, beyond the disappointing surface statistics that suggest the policy is failing to close the enrollment and completion gaps for young mothers (Ogola 2021), there has been little investigation of the communication strategies being used by the government, in Zambia to implement the policy.

The study is significant because it analyzes the communication strategies being used by the government in implementing the Re-entry Policy, especially in a rural area. Given the numerous studies that show that girls have continued to drop out of school despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy, it is critical that an analysis of the communication strategies being used by the government in implementing this policy is done. This study will contribute to the existing literature

by analyzing the effectiveness of the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy.

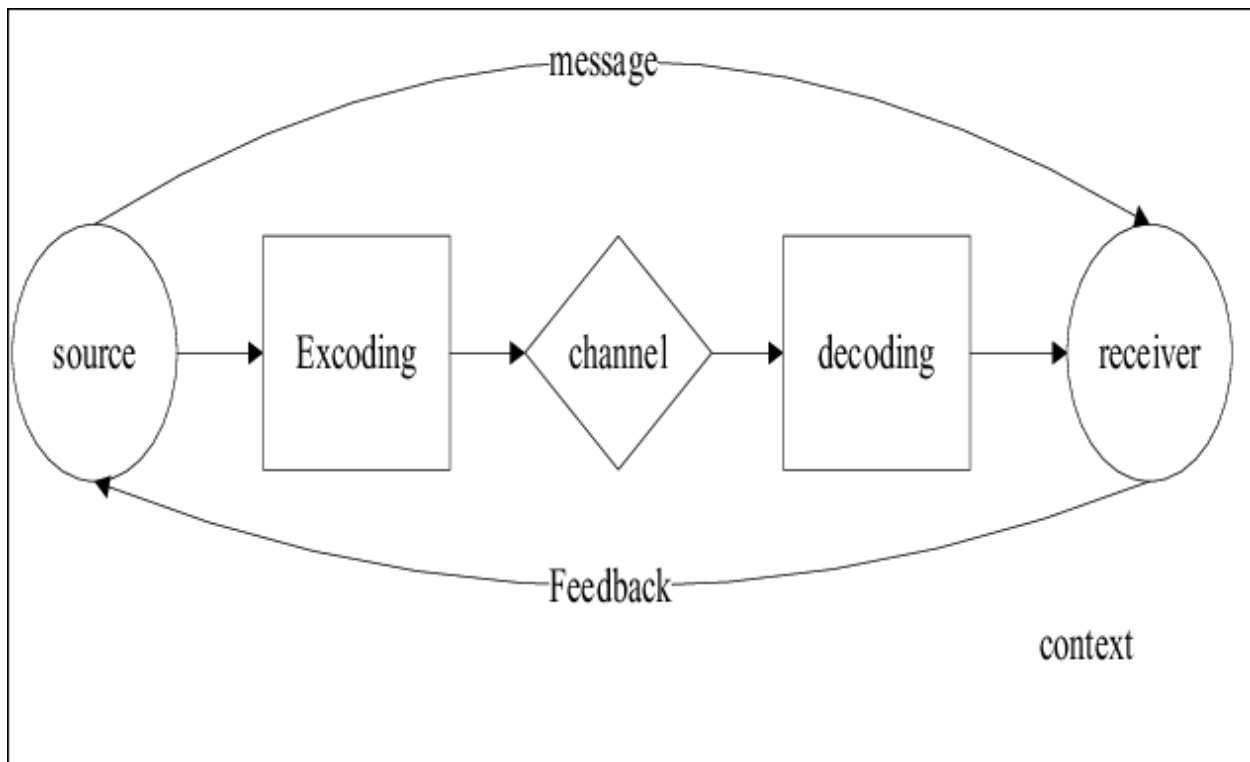


Figure 1: The Communication Process

The outcome of this study will help in the strengthening of policy framework that will address the shortcomings of the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy especially in rural areas such as Chongwe district. The study will be conducted in Chongwe district because of the many initiatives by Senior Chieftainess Nkomeshya Mukamambo II of the Soli people to fight early and teenage pregnancies and keeping the girl children in school. However, this study will seek to address the question of whether such community initiatives are being supported by government's communication strategies on the Re-entry Policy. Furthermore, the study may also stimulate further research interest on the subject.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The **first chapter** will introduce and present the background of the study by highlighting the research problem, the aim of the study, the research objectives, and the research questions. The significance of the study will also be discussed in this

chapter and the contribution this study intends to provide to the body of knowledge will be explained. **Chapter two** reviews studies written on the Re-entry Policy, the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy and analyze how schools are keeping girls who fall pregnant in school. This chapter will also show the gaps or flaws in previous researches that this work intends to fill. **Chapter three** is the theoretical framework which draws upon only one framework for a better understanding of how communication should be done in the implementation of the re-entry policy for girls after pregnancy. The framework employed in this study is the Agenda Setting Theory. **Chapter four** discusses the research methodology that was used in the study. The study used a qualitative approach and an exploratory design. This chapter covers several issues such as the research design that the researcher used, sampling and sampling procedures, study area or site, study population, study sample, sampling techniques, instruments used during data collection, procedure for data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and limitation of the study. **Chapter five** present the findings of the research study from the Interviews, document analysis and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), to be analysed and interpreted by Thematic Analysis and organized by the researcher regarding the logical process outlined in the data analysis approach. **Chapter six** discusses the findings according to the objectives of the study. This section of the research will interpret and explain the findings of the study, and how they relate to the overall research. Finally, chapter seven is the conclusion and recommendation. This chapter synthesises the research, highlights its significance and provides a roadmap for future studies and practical applications. The chapter will also show how research objectives were met through the findings of the study and will inform policy decisions and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is about literature review. It will review studies written on the Re-entry Policy, the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy and analyze how schools are keeping girls who fall pregnant in school. This chapter will also show the gaps or flaws in previous researches that this work intends to fill.

2.1 International Policies that advance girl child education

Policies that advance access to education for girls who drop out of school after teenage pregnancy are not only important to the Zambian government but have been of a major global concern. Many international conventions and treaties reinforce the rights of teenage mothers to on-going education. For example, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 states that everyone has the right to education. The Article also states that education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Further, the same Article states that elementary education shall be compulsory, adding that technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Another policy is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) which establishes an international bill of rights for women. Article 10 of this policy guarantees girls' right to education.

Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) is also another policy which recognizes education as a legal right to every child based on equal opportunity.

All the above policies recognize education as a human right and point out that each child has a right to education and proper measures should be taken to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduce drop-out rates.

2.2 Literature from the Global Perspective

Several studies have been done regarding the Re-entry Policy throughout the world. At international level, there have been various actions and systems that have tried to address the plight of pregnant schoolgirls. It is indisputable that teenage pregnancy is a global problem which governments, the world over, are concerned about. In the United States, pregnancy contributes to high school drop-out rates among girls. Only about 50 per cent of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age, versus approximately 90 per cent of women who had not given birth during adolescence (Breault, 2020). Additionally, Breault (2020) states that children of teenage mothers in the United States of America are more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems, may be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult.

A study conducted by Anderson, Fuessler, Forgach, and Stumpf (2023) contends that teenage mothers in the United States of America are less likely to attain a high school diploma, more likely to experience health problems, and are at a higher risk of facing unemployment resulting in welfare. In their study on Teen Pregnancy, Anderson, Fuessler, Forgach, and Stumpf (2023) found that pregnancy was noted as the reason by 30 per cent of girls who drop out of school. Their study also discovered that only 40 per cent of teen mothers finish high school with less than 2 per cent graduating college by age 30 (Anderson, Fuessler, Forgach, and Stumpf, 2023).

Another key study conducted by Chakole, Sharma, Wasnik, and Wanjari (2022) on unwanted teenage pregnancy and its complications found that teenage mothers are more likely to leave school for childcare compared to other females. Chakole, Sharma, Wasnik, and Wanjari (2022) argue that due to her little schooling, a teen mother may lack the skills necessary for work, making it challenging for her to find and maintain a career and establish her source of income.

Another study is one done by Cook and his colleague on social issues of teenage pregnancy. For example, Cook and Cameron (2020) state that there are strategies aiming to reduce teenage pregnancies and negative social outcomes associated with teenage pregnancy both across the world and in the United Kingdom (UK). Cook and Cameron found that in 1999, the UK government introduced a Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, aimed to increase the proportion of teenage parents in education, employment and training. The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy set itself a high target to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies in England and Wales by 50 per cent by 2010 but that the set target was not met, the actual decrease was 13.3 per cent (ibid 2020: 46)

An interesting study on Teenage Pregnancy and Education by Morales (2019) also agrees with the assertion that teenage pregnancy affects thousands of families and contributes to high poverty rates in the United States because, when young mothers do not complete high school, they will not have further educational opportunities or many career options.

The studies shown above all demonstrate how girls' education is impacted by teenage pregnancies and point to some of the strategies being employed globally, especially in Europe and the United States of America, to keep girls in school.

2.3 Literature on Africa

In Africa, many countries are implementing the Re-entry Policy. There are numerous studies highlighting the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy. For example, a study conducted by Musongo, Kanyiri, and Mathabo (2024) found that the Re-entry Policy was not presenting the expected results because of low levels of awareness by the Guidance and Counseling teachers and non-uniform implementation of the policy. Musongo, Kanyiri, and Mathabo (2024) state that there is need for advocacy efforts for policy sensitization and awareness in primary schools by the Ministry of Education, and that professionally trained Guidance and Counseling officers need to be incorporated in the implementation of the policy. This has been supported by Chanda, Phiri, and Mutepuka (2023) who argue that the issue of the Re-entry Policy needs a lot of attention especially when it comes to its implementation. They contend that to ensure successful implementation, the Re-entry Policy would be advanced by disseminating it since many people don't know about it. Chanda and his colleagues also argue that creating awareness or sensitizing the pupils, parents, teachers and society at large through the media, seminars and workshops about the importance of the Re-entry Policy and the existence of the policy would create the much-needed awareness about the policy (ibid 2023: 75)

Another interesting study is one done by Thwala and his colleagues who have also questioned the guidelines provided in the Re-entry Policy. For example, Thwala, Okeke, Matse, and Ugwuanyi (2021) support the above assertions by stating that there was an absence of knowledge and understanding of both the policy and its guidelines among people. The study by the trio also found that the implementation of the Re-entry Policy is crucial if a teenage pregnant girl child's education is to be realized.

Another critical study by Tarus (2020) on the level of awareness of the re-entry policy of teenage mothers in public secondary schools argues that the Re-entry Policy has not been clearly defined, explained and re-enforced in schools. Further, tracer system was not in place to help follow up girls who do not return after childbirth and that, stakeholders were not educated about the Re-entry Policy, the rights and their responsibilities (ibid 2020: 256).

This has been supported by Imbosa, Majanga and Ouda (2022) who state that the lack of copies of the policy in most schools significantly affected effective policy interpretation and implementation for optimal retention. Other scholars Kamanga, Daka, and Mwale (2022) sustain this argument in their study which found that the Re-entry Policy document lacks clear directions and that it does not stipulate the times that a girl can be re-entered. His study further recommended that the government should evaluate the policy and address the loopholes found in the policy and that the government should ensure that copies of the policy document are distributed in schools (ibid 2022: 1941).

Another crucial scholar whose work focuses on the right to education for pregnant and parenting girls in relation to the Re-entry Policy is Tsitsi Mtukwa. For instance, Mtukwa (2018) in his study found that one of the barriers to the attainment of the Re-entry Policy was the level of awareness about the provisions of the policy among targeted beneficiaries and duty bearers. Mtukwa (2018) adds that both duty bearers and the community were not necessarily aware of the existence and/or provisions of the policy and this lack of awareness naturally affected the ability to make use of the policy.

In Kenya, a study conducted by Omariba, and his colleagues brings out communication challenges being faced in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy. For example, a study conducted by Omariba, Ondieki and Mogoi (2024) highlighted the need for concerted efforts by education stakeholders, government agencies, and community organizations to improve awareness and implementation of the school Re-entry Policy in primary schools. Addressing the identified challenges and building upon successful practices can contribute to creating a more supportive educational environment for all learners in Kuria East Sub-County and similar contexts across Kenya (Omariba, Ondieki and Mogoi 2024)

An important study conducted in Kenya also brought out some of the communication challenges being faced in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy. Mwanza (2018) argues that although

parents and adolescent mothers have accepted the Re-entry Policy, his study established that more information was needed for beneficiaries to make better use of it. Literature has shown that re-entry policies in Africa tend to be ineffective due to poorly disseminated information among parents, adolescent mothers and policy implementers (Mwanza, 2018).

A study conducted by Musyoka, Mwalw'a, and Wambiya, (2024) on Parental Support and Implementation of Re-entry Policy for Girls After Pregnancy in Public Mixed Secondary Schools in Kenya found that the Re-entry Policy may not be implemented without the involvement of the parent. It recommended the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) to create awareness about the existence of the policy using media of wide coverage, social media, door-to-door, social gatherings, churches, and seminars. The other recommendation the study provided was the need for the school principals to continue talking about pregnancy and re-entry and facilitate conversations in schools.

Khumalo, and Hadebe (2024) support the above contentions on the awareness levels of the Re-entry Policy. For example, their study revealed that there were some gaps in the policy implementation which made the girl child remain vulnerable and fail to tap into the re-entry policy.

In Tanzania, a key scholar Ngaza and his colleague maintain that there were particularly conflicting views about how to interpret the guidelines and different practices regarding when teenage pregnancy was discovered, when pregnant girls should leave school for delivery, how long pregnant girls should be absent from school and re-entry to school after delivery, among others.

In another Tanzanian study, Network (2021) states that availability of guidance and counselling service is critical in making out of school and teenage mothers return to school, remain in school until they complete their studies, learn effectively and excel in their studies. Guidance and counselling services helped them to make important decisions that have restored their hopes (Network, 2021)

In Lesotho, Letsie (2021) argues that despite the constitutional, legal and policy provisions to protect pregnant and parenting adolescent girls, punitive and discriminatory strategies against them undermine countries' human rights commitments.

An interesting study done by Psaki, Haberland, Mensch, Woyczynski, and Chuang (2022) on policies and interventions to remove gender-related barriers to girls' school participation and

learning in low- and middle-income countries, the quartet concluded that while some effective and promising approaches existed to address gender-related barriers to education for girls, evidence shows that barriers to education, including lack of support for girls' education, Sexual Reproductive Gender-Based Violence, lack of safe spaces and social connections, and inadequate life skills still existed.

In a study done in Kenya by Tobister, Jonah, and Emilly (2024), it was found that many teenage mothers dropped out of school due to lack of awareness of the Re-entry Policy, which led to practices that shrank the policy space despite how broad and enabling it appear on paper.

Another key study done in Kenya recommends that the government and the other stakeholders should develop and deliver campaigns meant to sensitive the community members about the Re-entry Policy which would make students, teachers and community members understand the existing policy and how it protects the rights of teenage mothers (Okondo, 2022). The study concludes that with the understanding of the policy, learners and teachers will appreciate and provide support to the young mothers who seek re-admission (ibid 2022: 63).

A Zimbabwean study also revealed that school authorities believed that pregnant and young mothers were prone to underperforming in their education due to a variety of challenges which contributed to girls who made an effort to return to school encountering unsuitable educational setting (Muzingili, Muntanga, and Zvada 2024)

A study by Bah and Odwe (2024) also argues that school leaders, who should drive educational change, often hinder the implementation of national inclusive policies due to personal beliefs, value systems and limited awareness, training, and support (Undie and Birungi 2016). They may disregard or resist reintegrating pregnant girls to safeguard their school's reputation—as such pregnancies challenge societal norms against premarital sex (Bah and Odwe, 2024).

2.4 Literature from Zambia

With regards to Zambia, the Re-entry Policy which was launched in 1997 is still facing policy implementation challenges. For example, in their study on the Re-entry Policy implementation challenges and support systems for teenage mothers in Zambian secondary schools, Chiyota and

Marishane (2020) conclude that teenage mothers that re-enter schools in Zambia are limited compared to those that get pregnant at secondary school level. According to Chiyota and Marishane (2020), this is hindered by many challenges related to their education and childcare support. Their argument is that failure by policy implementers to listen to teenage mothers' views and challenges related with childcare, financial and social support system makes it tough for them to appreciate the Re-entry Policy rendering it a simple piece of regulation on paper with the slightest positive impact on teenage mothers' lives (ibid 2020: 115)

Another study conducted by a key scholar Muyunda (2021) finds that the Re-entry Policy implementation in the selected secondary schools was not practical to a high degree. He argues that the study findings indicated that the policy was silent, and that there was no awareness of the policy in secondary schools due to unclear policy goals and objectives (ibid 2021:1). This has also been supported by a study conducted by Chiyota (2020) who contends that more remains to be done in terms of the Re-entry Policy implementation by various stakeholders adding that the policy is not well implemented as there are no re-entry policy guidelines in schools, and that there is lack of clarity on the guidelines compelling stakeholders to implement it their own way.

Sinkala (2021) also adds to the debate about the lack of clarity on the Re-entry Policy by insisting that several challenges regarding awareness about the re-policy, readmission, guidance, and counselling hamper the re-entry of teenage mothers into the school system. His study recommended that solutions to the challenges being faced in the implementation of the policy required a shift from top-down to bottom-up approach through participation of teenage mothers, school administrators and teachers, as well as the parents/ guardians of the teenage mothers.

A key study which examined the effects of the Re-entry Policy on teenage mothers in Zambia done by Phiri and Machila (2019) also points to lack of awareness of the policy. Their study recommended that stakeholders needed to increase awareness on the policy to promote the re-entry of teenage mothers after childbirth. Phiri and Machila (2019) stated that the lack of awareness on the Re-entry Policy was attributed to lack of information on it generally.

A key scholar Muthikwa (2020) supports the above sentiments on the lack of awareness of the policy. For example, Muthikwa (2020) states that the Zambian government through the Ministry of Education needed to raise awareness on the existence of the Re- entry Policy at a National,

County and Sub County levels. He suggests that sensitization should be done to students, teachers, parents and the community on the existence of the policy and its importance.

In another Zambian study, Nalwimba (2023) contends that despite the policy that permits girls to return to school after completing maternity leave, the rate of re-admission has remained low, a suggestion that pregnancy leads to a high probability of dropping out of the school system.

A study by Ndopu and Kabwe (2020) found that the Re-entry Policy was not being explained to the people very well for it to hold best results. This may support the notions that the policy lacks proper sensitization direction from the ministry to bring about tangible benefits into the education sector (ibid 2020: 28)

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature on the Re-entry Policy, the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy and has also examined literature on how schools are keeping girls who fall pregnant and return to school.

This author reviewed literature from the global, African and Zambian perspectives. The issues that came out from the literature reviewed above were the high numbers of teenage mothers, the lack of awareness of the re-entry policy, the unclear guidelines of the Re-entry Policy, and ineffective implementation of the policy due to poor communication strategies on the policy.

The reason behind reviewing literature from global, African and Zambian perspective was to have a clear understanding of how different countries in the world were dealing with the issue of teenage pregnancy and education for the girl child.

Based on my notion that the world has made substantial progress in increasing basic levels of education and that access to education is now seen as a fundamental right, I was prompted to review literature globally to see how the issue of teenage pregnancy, girl child education and the Re-entry Policy were being handles. Also, considering the fact that developed countries have tremendously improved their communication system, I was interested in finding out the communication strategies they have employed in keeping teenage mothers in school.

My focus on literature from Africa was also based on my assumption that most African countries have the highest rates of education exclusion.

The focus on Zambia was to give me a better understanding of what the real problem was and what strategy was being used to tackle the high numbers of school dropouts. I was interested in finding out the communication approaches different schools were using to keep teenage mothers in school.

However, studies on the communication strategy being used to implement the Re-entry Policy in Chongwe district were not known hence creating a gap in knowledge which needed to be filled.

The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework currently. Chapter three will focus on the Agenda Setting Theory.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws upon only one framework for a better understanding of how communication should be done in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy for girls after pregnancy. The framework I employed is the Agenda Setting Theory. I used the Agenda Setting Theory as a lens in understanding communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy. One of the primary principles of this theory is the suggestion that the media plays a significant role in determining the salience and importance of issues for the public. The first-level agenda setting deals with the salience of objects, such as issues, politicians, organizations, public figures etc., while the second-level agenda-setting deals with the salience of attributes (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

The two proponents of this theory McCombs and Shaw argued that the media makes certain political, economic, and social salient issues in the society. The media can't tell people what to think, but it can tell them what to think about. I found a way to criticize the communication strategies being used in the implementation of re-entry policy with the objective of bringing to light the relationship between the media and public opinion. Mass media utilizes a wide variety of advertising techniques to get their message out and change the minds of people.

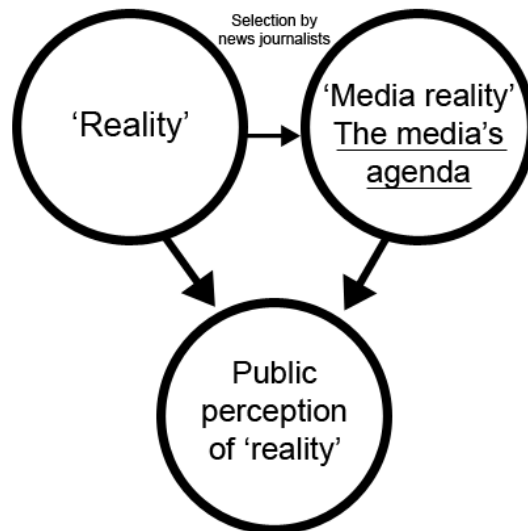


Figure 2: Agenda Setting Theory

This Agenda Setting Theory is premised on Media Agenda Influence and Public Agenda Influence. Under Media Agenda Influence, the theory states that the media highlights certain topics or issues, which consequently become more salient and relevant for the public. By giving emphasis to particular issues, the media can shape public opinions and the public's agenda. On the other hand, Public Agenda Influence is where the media not only affects what people think about but also how they think about it. Through repeated exposure and framing of certain issues, the media can influence the public's priorities and understanding of those issues.

The Agenda Setting Theory helped me analyze my research problem which is the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the re-entry policy in Zambia's education system.

There is a possibility that since the introduction of the re-entry policy in Zambia in 1997, stakeholders in the education sector see nothing wrong with the fact that despite the Re-entry Policy, girls have continued to drop out of school due to lack of information about the policy. By uncovering the many inadequacies in the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy in Zambia, I hope to offer communication strategies that can help implement the policy effectively. This could lead to the reduction of school dropouts for teenage mother due to lack of information about the policy.

Communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy can better be described in the Agenda Setting Theory particularly in the use of various media channels. Agenda Setting Theory takes the view that the stakeholders and players in the education sector such as policy makers, the Ministry of Education, Counselling and Guidance Teachers, Head Teachers, Teachers, students and parents, should be engaged in media activities on the Re-entry Policy by enhancing the knowledge base for thinking about and can even help in identifying current policy gaps (Shivakoti and Howlett, 2022). As McCombs and Shaw (1972) put it, agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as "accessibility". Media provides information, which is the most relevant food for thought, portrays the major issues of society and reflects people's minds.

According to the theory, the influence of media affects the presentation of the reports and issues made in the news that affects the public mind. The news reports make it in a way that when a particular news report is given importance and attention than other news, the audience will automatically perceive it as the most important news and information given to them. The priorities

of which news comes first and then the next are set by the media according to how people think and how much influence it will have among the audience. I am confident that giving prominence at the issue of the Re-entry Policy on various media platforms can improve the communication strategies being used in the implementation of the policy. Also, allowing people such as the Ministry of Education, Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers to use various media channels such as television, radio, social media, and newspapers to explain the Re-entry Policy guidelines could help raise awareness on the importance of the policy.

Referring to McCombs and Shaw (1972) Kazun, (2019) in his study states that much of our knowledge of today's world is mediated by mass communication. Most of the events ignored by the media do not really exist for us. In this regard, it is logical to assume that the intensity of the media debate influences the public attention to certain issues, as claimed by supporters of the agenda-setting theory. Valenzuela (2019) supports the above assertions by stating that the repetition of messages about public issues in the news day after day constitutes a major source of journalism's influence on the audience. Another study supports the important role that the media plays by stating that the ubiquity of news, which social media has only deepened, enables people to learn the media agenda with little deliberate effort on their part (Feezell, 2018).

Therefore, it can be argued that concerns and challenges about the lack of awareness about the re-entry policy can be well understood by critically analyzing the communication strategies being employed in the implementation of the policy. Through the Agenda Setting Theory, the communication methods being used by the government in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy can be analyzed. This could lead to awareness and better understanding of why the country was still recording high numbers of school dropouts for girls despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy. Also, this would help deal with the lack of proper communication strategies, thereby improving the communication strategies and making the policy more effective.

A critical study by Naser (2020) contends that as is widely acknowledged, the growth of digital technologies has brought about momentous changes in the media environment as well as shifts in the way public opinion is formed, in turn spawning critically important debates about the very direction of society. Obiaje (2022) supports the above assertion by stating that nowadays, the vertical media process has undergone a rapid transformation with the growing trend of horizontal media - occasioned by the Internet which allows netizens to become sources and creators of

information and influence - meaning, information is now distributed horizontally instead of top to down. Making reference to McCombs and Shaw (1972), Manzoor and Khan (2019) assert that the agenda-setting effects proposed that news media had the ability to decide what should be in the news and so it sets the agenda. When news media treated some issue prominently it made that issue more noticeable for the public. Another key study by Stern, Livan, and Smith (2020), states that the media continues to play a central role in directing what information the public attends to, how it is presented, and with what they associate that information. It is therefore important to have a stable, balanced and varied set of opinions presented to the public.

As identified in the literature review (Chapter 2) it is important that all stakeholders in the education sector are fully engaged in raising awareness and improving the communication methods being used to promote the Re-entry Policy in the country. This involvement could contribute to dealing with the gaps in the communication strategies the country is using to implement the policy. It could also bring about an opportunity to relook at the Re-entry Policy guidelines that have proven to be problematic.

Agenda Setting Theory thus provides a framework for thinking about the Re-entry Policy in terms of an entitlement. It also provides a theoretical base for engaging all stakeholders in media activities to raise awareness about the re-entry policy and how it can be better implemented. Involving individuals in the education sector, particularly to raise awareness about the Re-entry Policy would also give an opportunity to other stakeholders who may not even have heard of the policy. So far, agenda setting theorists provide a way of thinking about developing a “fair” society by ensuring that teenage mothers are given a chance to go back to school.

Also, because of the circumstances the girls find themselves in; teenage mothers and single, their voices also need to be heard on different media channels. It is therefore easy to make assumptions about their experiences. To better understand what the girls and their families have to say, and how they place themselves in relation to school exclusion or re-entry, it would be prudent to involve them in media activities. In order to better comprehend the communication strategies being used in the implementation of the re-entry policy, this study drew from the narrative theory to highlight young mothers “stories, their voices and those of their parents, and search how the girls and their families construct their understanding of the situation, while at the same time giving them an opportunity to reposition themselves in relation to the policy.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Agenda Setting Theory informing the current study. The chapter explains in detail the Agenda Setting Theory strong points as presented by other scholars.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in the study. The study used a qualitative approach and an exploratory design. The qualitative approach was considered applicable in relation to the ambition to collect in-depth and explanatory information of formal but also informal factors. This chapter covers several issues such as the research design that the researcher used, sampling and sampling procedures, study area or site, study population, study sample, sampling techniques, instruments used during data collection, procedure for data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and limitation of the study.

Exploratory research is defined as research used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing research problem but will not provide conclusive results. For such research, a researcher starts with a general idea and uses this research as a medium to identify issues, that can be the focus for future research.

4.1 Research Design

This study used the qualitative approach to analyse the communication strategies the government is using to implement the Re-entry Policy in Zambia's education system. Tenny, Brannan and Brannan (2022) state that qualitative research gathers participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. It answers the hows and whys instead of how many or how much. Stutterheim and Ratcliffe (2021) state that qualitative research is participatory and offers substantial opportunities for meaningful community engagement, which promotes agency and empowerment, and redresses power imbalances. The two authors further state that qualitative research informs further scientific inquiry and plays an important role in ensuring that people focus on important and relevant aspects researching more about a topic.

Aurini, Heath, and Howells (2021) expanded qualitative research by stating the following:

Qualitative research allows us to study a phenomenon in a continual fashion with the goal of discovering new findings to understand the social world, (Aurini, Heath, and Howells 2021: 7)

It is against this background that this study used a combination of interview, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and document analysis.

4.1.1 Sampling and Sampling Procedures

In this study, I used both purposive and random sampling. Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgement when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The reason for using purposive sampling is for the better matching of the sample to the aims and objectives of the research, thus improving the rigor of the study and trustworthiness of the data and results (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, and Bywaters, 2020). The researcher used purposive sampling to select a specific group of individuals and units for analysis, considering the clear idea of the characteristics and attributes the investigator has and is interested in studying (Heath, 2023).

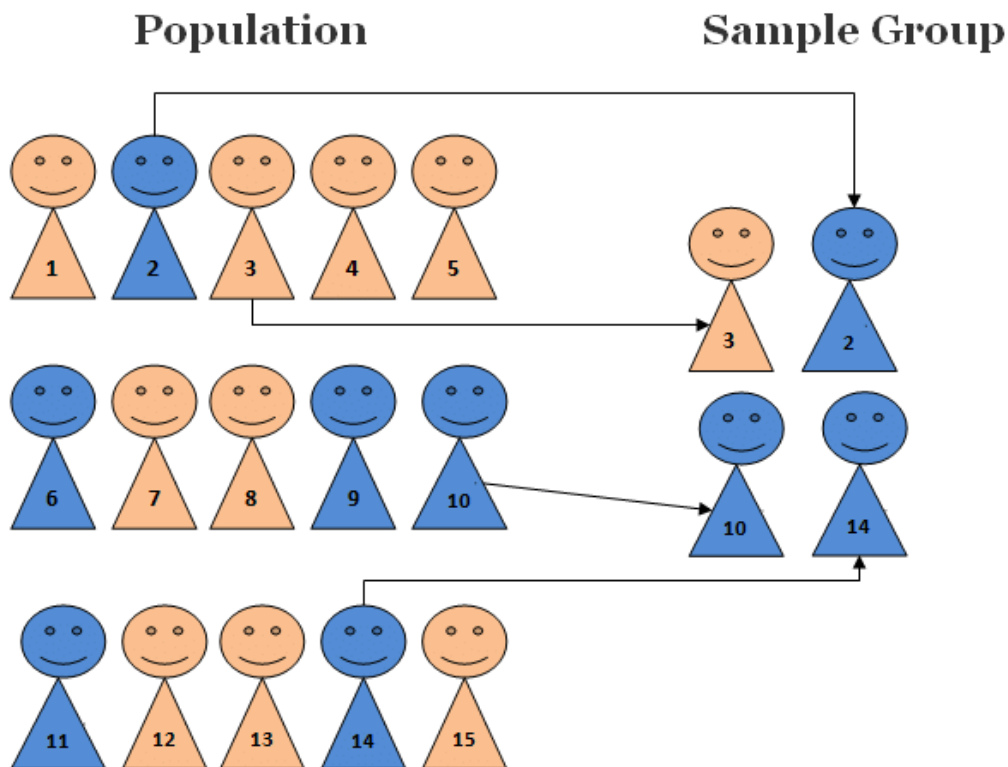


Figure 3: Random Sampling

In this study, I selected the respondents based on their knowledge of the subject and their availability. For the Head Teachers, Guidance and Counseling Teachers and ordinary teachers, I chose those who had enough grasp of the subject to give relevant information to the study topic: *Analysing the communication strategies, the government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy in Zambia's education system: A case study of Chongwe district*. Given the research topic at hand, most of the pupils were chosen based on their availability. In this respect, the following below were the respondents selected for this study:

- I interviewed pupils from Chongwe, Chishuko, and Matipula Primary Schools. I also interviewed pupils from two secondary schools, namely Chainda and Mukamambo II Girls Boarding School.
- I interviewed Head Teachers from Mukamambo II Girls Boarding School and Matipula Primary School.
- I conducted Focus Group Discussions with pupils from Mukamambo II Girls Boarding School and Chongwe Primary School.
- I interviewed teen mothers and parents/guardians from Chongwe's Chainda Village.
- I interviewed Guidance and Counselling Teachers and ordinary teachers from Matipula and Chainda Primary Schools, and Mukamambo II Girls Boarding School.

4.1.2 Study Area or Site

The study was conducted in Chongwe district in Zambia. Chongwe is a semi-rural district next to Zambia's capital city, Lusaka. As of the 2022 Zambian Census, the district had a population of 313,389 people.



Figure 4: Chongwe District

4.1.3 Study Population

Study population refers to the entire group or phenomenon being studied, while the sample is a subset used to represent it practically, Ahmad (2023). Another key scholar Ayudhia (2019) state that population of a research is defined as the people who appeal to the interest of the researchers in generalizing the outcome of the research.

The population in this study consisted of all the school head teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, teachers teaching teen mothers, pupils, teen mothers, parents s or guardians to the teen mothers, and community members in Chongwe district.

4.1.4 Study Sample

Kibuacha (2012) defines a sample as the number of individuals included in a research study to represent a population. In this study, the sample of the respondents used was selected using purposive sampling. I used purposive sampling because according to Campbell (2020), it is simple and straightforward as there are about its complexity. The reason for purposive sampling is the better matching of the sample to the aims and objectives of the research, thus improving the rigor of the study and trustworthiness of the data and results.

Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are

selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. It involves selecting participants because you believe that they might contribute something to your analysis.

In this study, the sample consisted of three (3) Head Teachers, three (3) Guidance and Counselling Teachers, three (3) Teachers, three (3) teen mothers and three (3) parents or guardians of the teen mothers. The sample also consisted of twenty (20) pupils of which ten (10) were girls and the other ten (10) were boys. The total number of participants in the study was forty (40) participants all picked from the selected six Primary and Secondary schools in Chongwe district and from the community.

The representative sample size that was used is 35 participants. According to Mocănașu (2020), adequacy of sample size is a key marker for the research's quality. The question 'how many interviews are enough for one qualitative research' is constantly contentious among qualitative researchers in social science. For this repeatedly occurring question, especially among novice practitioners, most scholars opt to say no universally guiding rule to decide on a required number of samples for qualitative research rather 'it depends'.

But Bekele (2022) argues that the issue of 'how many interviews are enough for one qualitative research' also raises another insight among researchers urging them to look for different things, i.e., on what circumstance would be making a decision about the required number of respondents depend?

Hennink and Kaiser (2022) confirm that qualitative studies can reach saturation at relatively small sample sizes as results showed that 9-17 interviews & or 4-8 FGDs reached saturation. They added that most studies had relatively homogeneous study populations and narrowly defined objectives similar to this study.

This study was consistent with the recommendations put forth by Sharma (2024) who proposes that based on methodological considerations and experience, a number of researchers have recommended rules of thumb for sample size for specific qualitative research designs. Sharma (2024) argues that generally, these rules of thumb recommended by different authors show agreement, while at times some variations are also observed; for instance, recommendations for

sample size in single case studies range from 4 to 30, whereas for grounded theory, they range from 5 to 35.

4.1.5 Sampling Techniques

The study used purposive sampling technique in selecting the study sample because it considered the small population of variables which were the teen mothers, head teachers, Guidance and Counselling teachers, teachers, pupils and guardians to teen mothers.

According to Ames, Glenton, and Lewin, S (2019) purposive sampling helps ensure that we include studies representing a wide geographic spread, rich data and a focus that closely resembled our synthesis objective. The researcher relies on his/her own judgement to select sample group members. Purposive sampling is mainly popular in qualitative studies.

Denieffe (2020) however argues that although purposive sampling sets out to identify cases that meet predefined criteria, researchers need to consider that those cases falling outside pre-set criteria may in fact be needed to ensure the research question is fully answered. Denieffe (2020) further contends that it could be said that purposive sampling narrows the range of variation and focuses on similarities. Although this could be deliberate to get an understanding, the sample should also capture elements of similarities and differences. Denieffe (2020) also observes that purposive sampling allows for the essential task of generating new knowledge through the processes of comparison and contrast.

In the current study, the participants were selected using purposive sampling because of the nature of the study which was qualitative. The five schools were selected because they were located in the central part of the district.

4.1.6 Instruments for Data Collection

This research had three data collection tools inclusive of Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and document analysis check list.

Interviews and focus groups are common techniques for collecting qualitative data, particularly about people's experiences, attitudes, and motivations.

Interviews involved asking individuals questions about the topic and this study interviewed 20 (10 boys and 10 girls), and 15 others who include Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling teachers, teachers, parents and guardians to teen mothers, and teen mothers.

Additionally, a voice recorder was used as a supplementary to the interview guide. Data was collected between November 14 and November 19, 2024. The interview guide and FGD guide consisted of questions on the communication strategies the government was using to implement the re-entry policy, the communication strategies the school management was using in implementing the re-entry policy, the challenges teen mothers face in accessing information on the re-entry policy after delivery and measures taken by school management to address these challenges.

Focus Group Discussions were a more specific form of group interview, and this study conducted 3 FGDs with 4 students in each group. Interactions between participants were encouraged. As a researcher, I played the role of a facilitator encouraging the discussion, rather than an interviewer asking questions.

4.1.7 Data Collection Procedure

This study was qualitative in nature. As such, it used the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), document analysis check list, and interview as methods of collecting data. A Focus Group Discussion is a form of qualitative research method in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging.

While individual interviews explore the experiences of (usually) one participant, focus groups are conducted with three or more people who share an experience or concern (Tsindos ,2023). Dalehefte (2022) states that the point is that the participants should discuss together and understand one another without focusing on understanding the researcher's requests. Dalehefte stresses that participants should be able to create their patterns of orientation in the discussion. Thus, the researcher can identify the patterns that underlie their communication to unveil their orientation

structure in analysing the groups' conversations. With regard to time, Lauri (2019) states that the group discussions are facilitated by the researcher and usually take between 60 and 90 min.

The interview method was used to collect data from the head teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers, teachers and parents or guardians to teen mothers. The Focus Group Discussion was used to collect data from the pupils.

The study also used document analysis to review documents that the schools were using in relation to the Re-entry Process, and these could be circulars, directives, policies, guidelines, reports on readmissions submitted to higher authorities and minutes of school meetings paying particular attention to school resolutions on schoolgirl pregnancies.

4.1.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an iterative and complex process. The focus of analysis is to bring out tacit meanings that people attach to their actions and responses related to a phenomenon. Although qualitative data analysis softwares are available, the researcher is the primary instrument who attempts to bring out these meanings by a deep engagement with the data and the individuals who share their stories (Ravindran, 2019).

Interviews, document analysis, and FGDs data were analysed using Qualitative Thematic Analysis. Thematic analysis, the often-used methods of qualitative research, provides concise description and interpretation in terms of themes and patterns from a data set (Majumdar, 2022). Naeem, Ozuem, Howell, and Ranfagni, (2023) state that thematic analysis is a research method used to identify and interpret patterns or themes in a data set; it often leads to new insights and understanding. The trio is however quick to point out that it was critical that researchers avoided letting their own preconceptions interfere with the identification of key themes.

In this study, the focus was on the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the re-entry policy: A case of Chongwe district. The fact that thematic analysis is broadly applicable to address a wide range of research questions (Rosairo, 2023) enabled the researcher to be sensitive to the data and to extract a meaning from it (Rosairo, 2023).

Using the thematic analysis technique developed by Braun and Clark in 2006, themes were extracted for the current study. To understand the content at a higher level and reflect the

underlying experiences, fears, and perceptions of the Head Teachers, teachers, pupils, teen mothers and parents or guardians of teen mother, the process involved categorizing relevant content to the topic of the study, coding the content according to its meaning, and extracting common categories/themes relating to the set objectives of the study. The integration of the themes into an organised narrative that gave insight into the phenomenon under investigation was one of the final steps of the analysis. Findings were validated and supported by previous research.

4.1.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account in this study. All the data collected was strictly treated as confidential and not used for any purposes other than the intended one. This study also obtained ethical approval from the Ministry of Education (District Education Board, Chongwe district). An informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their voluntary participation in this study. The confidentiality of participants was maintained as no personal identifying information was collected from the interviews or Focus Group Discussions.

4.1.10 Limitations of the Study

This study was done primarily on a purposive sample and its generalization is limited. Further, due to the small sample size, that is few people from selected schools in Chongwe district, the analysis on the communication strategies the government is using in implementing the re-entry policy in, from an educational management perspective, is limited to those particular schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the study methodology by focusing on the Research Design, Sampling and Sampling Procedures, Study Area or Site, Study Population, Study Sample, Sampling Techniques, Instruments for Data Collection, Data Collection Procedure, Method of Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations, Validity, and Limitations of the Study.

Firstly, this study used a qualitative research approach and employed purposive sampling. The sample was drawn from schools (Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers, Teachers, and Pupils), and the community (teen mothers, parents or guardians of teen mothers). In light of this, twelve (12) people were interviewed, and FGDs were conducted with 20 pupils.

Secondly, this research had three data collection tools inclusive of Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and document analysis check list.

Thirdly, interviews, document analysis, and FGDs data were analysed using Qualitative Thematic Analysis.

Lastly, qualitative research is conducted within a number of paradigms, or ways of understanding the nature of reality and knowledge, each associated with different ways of defining, understanding and reporting quality. The quality of this study, therefore, was assessed through trustworthiness and authenticity instead of validity and reliability. Four criteria are widely used to appraise the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the research study from the Interviews, document analysis and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), to be analysed and interpreted by Thematic Analysis and organized by the researcher regarding the logical process outlined in the data analysis approach. These findings will be organized and presented in a coherent manner to give way to an unsentimental discussion which will be done in the next chapter. Therefore, the qualitative findings are presented under themes guided by the research objectives as shown below:

1. To assess the communication strategies the Government is using in the implementation of the re-entry policy in Chongwe district.
2. To establish family, community, and institutional source of information (awareness levels) on the re-entry policy in Chongwe district.
3. To establish the effectiveness of the re-entry policy in terms of retention of girls who fall pregnant while in school.

5.1 Characteristics of Participants

Age

According to the data set this research study was working with, the age range of participants of this research study was between 14 and 18 years for pupils and above 30 for Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers, Teachers, parents or guardians of teen mothers.

Grades of Study

This research study focused on pupils from both primary and secondary. For the primary section, pupils engaged in this study were drawn from upper primary, which is from grade five (5) to seven (7). For secondary schools, all the five grades were engaged.

Schools

This research study only focused on five (5) schools namely Chongwe, Chishuko, and Matipula Primary Schools and Chainda and Mukamambo II Girls Boarding School in Chongwe district.

Gender

The study used purposive sampling to balance the gender of the participants. Hence, the dataset comprised of eighteen (18) females and seventeen (17) males.

5.2 Communication strategies the Government is using in implementing the re-entry policy in Chongwe district.

The Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers, and Teachers appeared knowledgeable about the re-entry policy.

“I am aware of the re-entry policy because it is something that we really pay attention to at this school. I can also safely say that I understand the guidelines very well, which makes it very easy for me to help a girl child not to drop out of school after falling pregnant,”

“When a girl child falls pregnant, she is accorded an opportunity to report back. Parents or guardians to both the girl and the boy are called to the school. The boy and his parents are requested to sign the form to accept the responsibility of the unborn child and the mother. The boy and his parents sign the form as an indication to accept to financially and materially support the teen mother. Thereafter, the girl is allowed to attend lessons until her maternity leave commences,”

Most of the teachers mentioned workshops organized by the Ministry of Education to have played a huge role in helping them understand the re-entry policy, and the guidelines provided in the policy.

They explained that it was through workshops that they understood the re-entry policy but also admitted that the engagements with the Ministry of Education on the Re-entry Policy were not adequate to deal with the problem of girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant.

When teachers were asked about the communication strategies the Government was using implementing the re-entry policy, most of them stated that there were no clear strategies communicated to them.

“I personally think that there are no strategies put in place or communicated to us because as a Guidance and Counselling Teacher myself, I just use my own initiative to communicate the Re-entry Policy to the pupils. It is also rare that we get to meet, for example, staff from the ministry to deliberate on such issues. In my position as Guidance and Counselling Teacher for over six (6) years now, I have only attended one meeting concerning the re-entry policy,”

When asked to explain the advantages of having proper communication strategies in implementing the re-entry policy, most of the teachers said it would help deal with the problem of girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant. They mentioned that even though teachers found time to talk about the re-entry policy during school assemblies for example, most of the parents to the girls did not know anything about the policy. They stated that lack of sensitization of the Re-entry policy in the community was contributing to the high numbers of girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant.

“If you look at Chongwe, this place is a bit rural. We have chiefdoms here and most of our girls come from various villages here in Chongwe. Inasmuch as we may find time to talk about the re-entry policy in school, it is difficult to engage parents who do not know anything about it when their child falls pregnant. For most of the people here, when a girl falls pregnant, she needs to stop school and take care of the baby as a form of punishment,”

When asked about their role as teachers to help ensure that girls who fall pregnant return to school after delivery, most of them stated that it was only easy to help both the girl and her family when they were willing to be assisted.

“Our role in this whole policy is to ensure that girls who fall pregnant return to school after delivery. We have had situations when a girl falls pregnant while in school and she is helped to stay in school until the pregnancy grows. We have engaged parents or guardian of such pupils and explained the re-entry policy guidelines to them. In such situations, it’s always easy to follow up with them and ensure that the girl returns to school after delivery.

But we have also had difficult situations where parents to the teen mother completely refuse to cooperate with us,”

Asked whether the school had deliberate programmes to communicate the re-entry policy to the pupils, most of the teachers said what they were doing was not enough. They mentioned that the only time they had to communicate or touch on the Re-entry Policy was during school assemblies but that, from what was happening in the district, it was clear that it was not effective.

“I will give a practical example. I am the only Guidance and Counselling teacher at this school, but I also have other duties like any other ordinary teacher here. The only time I get to interact with the pupils is when I am free and when I do not have any classes. When I create time to interact with the pupils, I have a very long queue outside my office and all the pupils come with unique issues which I need to attend to. There are times when I fail to meet all of them because of time. It’s also difficult to create programmes to discuss the Re-entry Policy with the pupils due to other competing needs in school,”

5.3 Family, Community, and Institutional source of information (awareness levels) on the Re-entry Policy in Chongwe district.

Asked whether the pupils knew anything about the Re-entry Policy and what they knew about it, some of the pupils knew while others were completely ignorant about it. Those who knew the policy were able to explain that it is a policy that allowed girls who fall pregnant to take leave and go for maternity and then continue with their education after delivery.

Out of the 20 pupils engaged in the interviews and Focus Group Discussions, only eight (8), representing 40 percent seemed knowledgeable about the policy.

“I don’t know anything because no one has explained it to me. I have seen pupils coming to school pregnant and being supported by the school management, but I still don’t understand anything about the policy,”

Asked whether they had heard anything about the Re-entry Policy from school or through their Guidance and Counselling Teachers, those who expressed ignorance about the policy responded in the negative.

“I may have heard maybe someone mention it, but I don’t know anything about it. I don’t understand it and I would like to know more about it,”

The pupils who know and understand the policy mentioned that they heard it from schools and from the media.

“I once heard our Guidance and Counselling Teacher talking about it. I got interested in the topic and went to inquire further. She gladly explained it to me. From that time, I have been reading about it,”

Others gave credit to their parents and guardians for enlightening them on the re-entry policy.

“I did not hear it from school or the media. I first heard about it from my parents when they were telling me about the importance of school and how they looked forward to seeing me complete my grade 12. They mentioned to me that even though government had introduced the Re-entry Policy in schools for girls who fall pregnant, it wouldn’t be a good idea for me to do it,”

5.4 Effectiveness of the Re-entry Policy

In an effort to establish the effectiveness of the Re-entry Policy in terms of retention of girls who fall pregnant while in school, they were asked to explain whether it was easy for a girl who fell pregnant while in school to return to school after delivery.

They explained that even though there was a policy that allowed girls who fell pregnant to go back after delivery, it was not easy for most girls in Chongwe district to return to school. They stated that the sad reality was that most girls were still dropping out of school after falling pregnant because they did not know or understand what the Re-entry Policy was all about.

They mentioned that for some schools that paid attention to the Re-entry Policy guidelines, the only girls that would go back to school after delivery were those whose parents or guardians fully understood the policy and were willing to support their child.

It was also established that girls who completely dropped out of school came from homes that were not supportive and did not know much about the policy.

“I discovered that I was pregnant when I engaged our Guidance and Counselling Teacher over how I was feeling. At that point, we immediately went to the hospital, and it was confirmed that I was pregnant. My parents were called by the school management and were informed about my situation. I was made to stay in school until I was no longer comfortable to sit in class due to the pregnancy. My parents were made to go through the Re-entry Policy guidelines and were also informed on the date that I needed to report back to school after delivery. I thank God for my parents who supported me throughout my pregnancy. I am now in grade 12 and will be completing my secondary education next year,”

They explained that it was easy for girls who fell pregnant while in school to go back when both the school and the parents or guardian of the teen mother understood the policy.

“My daughter fell pregnant when she was in grade nine (9) in 2022. She has a baby, and she is still at home because no one told me that she could go back to school. Even the school did not make any follow ups to check on her...some of us in these villages rely on what we hear from teachers, traditional leaders, and community leaders. If no one mentions anything, we remain in the dark because we do not even have Television sets and radios to get some of the important information we are hearing today,”

It was discovered that girls who fall pregnant find it difficult to go back to school after delivery due to lack of information on the Re-entry Policy. They stated that the media which plays a very important role of informing and educating people on important issues was being underutilised to sensitise people on the Re-entry Policy.

“I could not go back to school after delivery because I was not given the full information on the Re-entry Policy. When I was in school, I used to hear people talking about the policy. I must mention also that even in the village where I come from, some people would talk about a policy that allows girls who fall pregnant to go back to school after delivery. But when I fell pregnant, no one engaged me on my situation. My parents at home too, did not make any effort to ensure that I returned to school after delivery. Information on the Re-entry Policy here in Chongwe is a bit scanty and we need serious help on how this policy is being communicated,”

When asked about what communication strategies the government would employ to ensure that girls who fell pregnant while in school returned after delivery, they gave the following responses:

◇ Re-entry Policy Sensitisation Programmes in Schools:

They stated that there was a need for schools to come up with deliberate programmes that would help sensitise pupils on the Re-entry Policy. They said having Guidance and Counselling Teachers and making announcements on the Re-entry Policy during school assemblies was not enough.

“As teachers, we know that the way we announce or talk about the Re-entry Policy during school assemblies is not enough. During school assemblies, we have so many items to communicate to the pupils and most of them do not even pay attention to the announcements. Coming up with sensitization programmes in schools would help,”

◇ Increasing Guidance and Counselling Teachers in Schools:

They mentioned that most Guidance and Counselling Teachers in schools were overwhelmed because of the number of issues they needed to deal with from the pupils.

“Our pupils go through a lot nowadays and all they need are people to talk to get some help. It is very difficult for most Guidance and Counselling Teachers because they are overwhelmed. In my school, I am the only Guidance and Counselling Teacher. The issue here is that I also have other things to attend to like teaching which makes it very difficult for me to divide my time and attend to all the pupils in need of my help,”

◇ Use of Information, Education and Communication Materials

They stated that the use of Information, Education and Communication material on the Re-entry Policy would help spread the word and prevent girls from dropping out of school after falling pregnant.

“Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials can help create awareness on the re-entry policy in schools, and in the communities. IEC are indispensable components of community development. Using more IEC materials on the Re-entry Policy will serve as the foundation for creating awareness among pupils, parents or guardians of teen mothers, and the community on the Re-entry Policy,”

◇ Community Sensitisation Meetings

They mentioned that community sensitization meetings on the Re-entry Policy would help provide reliable information on the re-entry policy to communities. It was stated that the information shared during the sensitization meetings could be shared with those who were unable to attend the meetings.

“For us in the villages, we rely on people coming from different organisations to come and share information on various issues. We need community sensitization meetings on the Re-entry Policy if we are to prevent our girls from dropping out of school when they fall pregnant,”

◇ The use of media

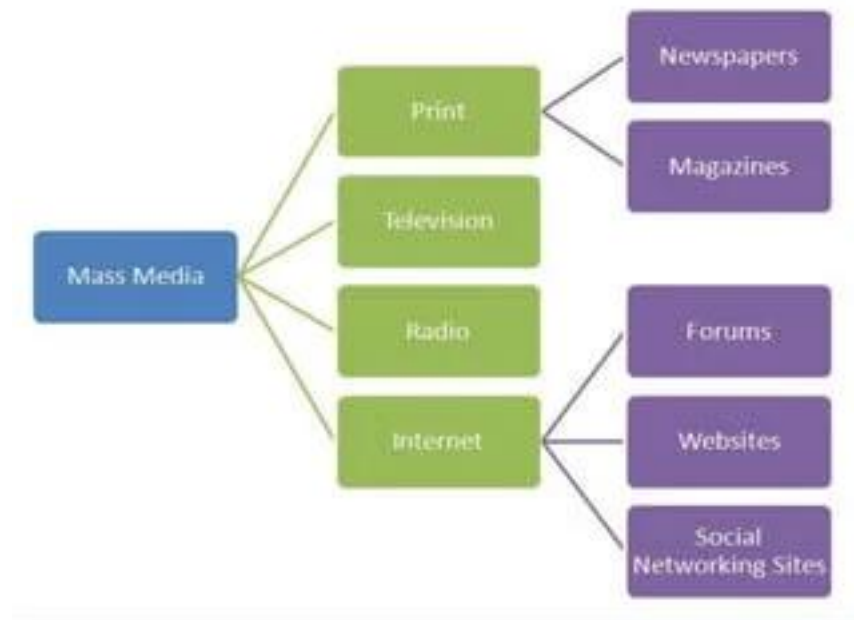


Figure 5: Mass Media

The media plays an important role of informing, educating and entertaining the public. They stated that it was clear that the Ministry of Education was not making proper use of the media to inform the public on the Re-entry Policy.

“Why don’t they come up with programmes on the Re-entry Policy on various radio stations? Community media houses can play a very important role in informing the public on the Re-entry Policy. Some spot adverts on the Re-entry Policy on different radio and TV

stations can also do wonders. People pay attention to messages that are consistent in the media,”

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings according to the objectives of the study. This section of the research will interpret and explain the findings of the study, and how they relate to the overall research. This section will also explain the significance of the findings, and how they advance the reader's understanding of the research problem. It also answers questions posed in the introduction. The findings are discussed in the very same way as they were in the previous chapter and relate to the characteristics of participants and the research objectives indicated below:

1. To assess the communication strategies the Government is using in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy in Chongwe district.
2. To establish family, community, and institutional source of information (awareness levels) on the Re-entry Policy in Chongwe district.
3. To establish the effectiveness of the re-entry policy in terms of retention of girls who fall pregnant while in school.

6.1 Communication Strategies the Government is using in implementing the Re-entry Policy

Hyland-Wood, Gardner, Leask, and Ecker, (2021) in their study on effective government communication strategies in the era of COVID-19 state that an effective communication strategy is a two-way process that involves clear messages, delivered via appropriate platforms, tailored for diverse audiences, and shared by trusted people. The trio argued that a diversity of community groups must be included in engagement activities and highlighted the implications of emerging digital technologies in communication and engagement activities.

The findings indicate that the Government had not employed specific communication strategies targeting the implementation of the Re-entry Policy in the country. The findings were also clear on the fact that despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy, there were no clear messages delivered through appropriate platforms tailored for diverse audiences on the Re-entry Policy. On the part of the Guidance and Counselling Teachers, the findings indicate that most teachers were not getting proper guidance from the Ministry of Health concerning means and ways of communicating the Re-entry Policy to the pupils. From the finding, it is clear that most teachers

use their own initiatives, which are not uniform, to communicate the Re-entry Policy to the pupils, parents or guardians of teen mothers, and teen mothers.

In agreement, Masngut and Mohamad (2021) state that communication in the media may assist the government in fostering positive support from the public. Mheidly and Fares (2020) agree with Masngut and Mohamad on the importance, of using the media to inform people on important issues by stating that the media is a powerful avenue for the dissemination of information. The two authors add that the media plays an important role in changing attitudes and intentions, and in influencing behavior.

Wukich (2021) states that through social media, public officials share information with the people they serve. He further argues that the flow of information through social media between government and community members was important, as opposed to the underlying message content as illustrated by public roles. Selecting suitable communication strategies may foster active liking and sharing of posts on social media, which in turn, might raise the public's awareness of various issues, according to Ngai, Singh, Lu, and Koon, (2020). Alhassan and AlDossary (2021) also argue by stating that to increase public engagement, government should consider the public's need for information which in turn, could raise public awareness regarding issues.

With regards to the Government being creative in the communication strategies being used to implement the Re-entry Policy, the findings indicate that not much had been done. Che and Kim (2024) in their study on social media and COVID-19 state that appropriate communication strategies should be developed stage-by-stage. De Villiers and Molinari (2022) agree by stating that consistent and credible communications, backed up by open access to the numerical data that underlie the decisions, ensure that citizens/stakeholders feel part of the issue.

Advantages of developing communication strategies

Communication strategies are deliberate plans and tactics used by individuals or entities to convey messages effectively to their target audience. They encompass the choice of channels, crafting of messages, and feedback mechanisms to ensure clarity, comprehension, and desired impact.

1. Navigating Complex Situations

According to Salamondra (2021), for communication to be effective, we must be mindful of our message and indirect communication, actively listen, and engage in challenging conversations. In his article on Effective Communication in Schools, Salamondra further states that developing communication strategies help navigate complex situations, thereby making communication easier.

2. Effective distribution of information

Germaine (2021) states that effective communication must take into consideration the following elements: (1) clear, consistent message, (2) communication delivery strategy, (3) testing to assure understanding, and (4) allowing feedback or raising concerns. He argues that communication strategies help distribute information effectively.

3. Increased engagement

Ajayi (2021) states that strategic communication informs, educates and influences. The author further highlights that when the public is well informed, educated and influenced, engagements on a specific topic increases.

4. Successful implementation of projects

Guuru and Adede (2022) state that communication strategies are roadmaps designed to organize internal and external communication so that an organization's overall strategy can be executed. The two authors argue that without the development of communication strategies, it is difficult for an organisation to achieve success.

6.2 Re-entry Policy awareness levels among pupils

Imbosa, Majanga, and Ouda (2022) state that despite the Re-entry Policy being a major positive step toward achieving retention of expectant and parenting students, the low awareness levels among teachers and pupils was still a problem. Thwala, Okeke, and Matse (2022) agree by stating that the lack of awareness and understanding of both the Re-entry Policy and its guidelines among participants needed to be addressed.

The findings indicate that awareness levels on the Re-entry Policy were still very low. From the upper primary schools, the results show that most of the pupils did not know much about both the Re-entry Policy and the guidelines. With regards to the secondary schools, the findings indicate that despite the pupils hearing about the Re-entry Policy, they did not clearly understand what it was all about. From the findings, it was clear that some of the pupils were also blank on the Re-entry policy guidelines. Interviews with teachers also revealed that the Ministry of Education still needed to do more in terms of engagements with the teachers on the Re-entry Policy. Despite knowing about the policy, most of the teachers did not fully understand the guidelines.

In agreement, Musongo, Kanyiri, and Mathabo in their study on the Implementation of Girl Mothers' Re-Entry Policy in Selected Primary Schools in Northern Province stated that the Re-entry Policy was not bearing the expected fruits because of low levels of awareness by the Guidance and Counseling Teachers and non-uniform implementation of the policy. They further state that advocacy efforts for policy sensitization and awareness in primary schools should be maximized by the Ministry of Education, adding that primary schools should have professionally trained Guidance and Counseling officers.

Ogola (2021) in his study on the implementation of the Re-entry Policy states that the absence of clarity on the guidelines had forced the headteachers and principals, who are the implementers, to use their own discretion. Sinkala (2021) adds by stating that schools are mandated to sensitise the learners, parents, and the wider community on the Re-entry Policy adding that awareness levels about the policy by teachers, parents, and teen mothers were very low.

6.3 Effectiveness of the Re-entry Policy

A Government is a body of people that work to effectively and successfully guide a unit or community. One thing government does is set and administer policy. They use customs, laws, and institutions to exercise political, executive, and sovereign power with the intent of managing a state of wellbeing that benefits all aspects of the community or unit.

Three scholars Bali, Capano, Ramesh (2021) state that a policy can only be effective when it systematically identifies the most appropriate means to solve a problem, or an element of the problem. Mukherjee and Bali amplify the trio's statement by stating that if public policy is

primarily about problem-solving, then policy design is essentially about developing policy solutions in a deliberate manner that accomplishes that purpose.

The findings indicate that despite the introduction of the Re-entry Policy, girls were still dropping out of school. The findings further indicated that the re-entry policy was not effective as the number of girls who were dropping out of both primary and secondary schools after falling pregnant were still very high. It was discovered that numerous reasons contributed to the girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant. Some of the reasons included lack of awareness about the Re-entry Policy, lack of support from the parents or guardians of the teen mother, lack of support from the school when the girl returned to school after delivery, lack of financial support for both the baby and the teen mother and stigmatization of the re-entered girls, among others.

In agreement with the above statements on policy, Phiri (2020) states that the re-entry's effectiveness has been hampered by the lack of proper tracking of cohorts at school level to ensure that all girls in that cohort re-entered school, stigmatisation of the re-entered girls, lack of childcare facilities, preference by guardians to marry off their daughters and revoking of scholarships for such pupils.

Like other scholars, Khumalo and Hadebe (2024) in their study on the effectiveness of the Re-entry Policy state that the policy has not been very effective, especially in the rural areas due to the limited knowledge of the school's Re-entry Policy thus their perceptions are based on the amount of knowledge that they have. Muli, Piliyesi, and Koros (2023) agree with the above assertion by stating that it was very difficult to harvest proper results from the Re-entry Policy because the importance of the policy has not been conveyed to most schools and the community through the implementation of programs, workshops, and seminars.

A key scholar on the Re-entry Policy Kukali (2021) states that without professional development programs to increase teachers' understanding of the re-entry policies, especially for female teachers, it was difficult to implement the policy effectively. Kukali (2021) adds that the school curriculums should introduce an extensive advocacy program for lower-level classes and girls.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.0 Introduction

This chapter on conclusion and recommendation synthesises the research, highlights its significance and provides a roadmap for future studies and practical applications. The chapter will also show how research objectives were met through the findings of the study and will inform policy decisions and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1 Research Question One

What communication strategies are being employed by the Government in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy?

Generally, it was found that the Government had not developed any communication strategies in the implementation of the Re-entry Policy in schools. Head Teachers, Guidance and Counselling Teachers, and Teachers were depending on the school assemblies to engage pupils on the Re-entry Policy. It was also found that most school managements hardly engaged the pupils on the Re-entry Policy considering the number of pupils who expressed ignorance about the policy during interviews.

It was found that the media (Television, Radio, Newspapers, and social media) was not being used effectively to share information on the Re-entry Policy with community members.

According to the Agenda-Setting Theory, mass media determines the issues that concern the public rather than the public's views. Under this theory, the issues that receive the most attention from media become the issues that the public discusses, debates, and demands action on. This means that the media is determining what issues and stories the public thinks about. Therefore, when the media fails to address a particular issue, it becomes marginalized in the minds of the public.

7.1.2 Research Question Two

To what extent are the pupils aware of the Re-entry Policy?

According to the findings of this study, awareness levels on the Re-entry Policy were still very low especially in the rural area, learning from this research's study area, Chongwe. It was found that for pupils who knew something about the Re-entry Policy, they still did not fully understand the policy guidelines and what they meant. According to those interviewed, they had not even seen the Re-entry Policy document in their schools. It was also found that some pupils did not know anything about the Re-entry Policy, adding that it was the first time they had heard about it. Those who knew nothing about it mentioned that despite seeing girls who fell pregnant return back to school, they did not understand anything.

7.1.3 Research Question Three

How effective is the Re-entry Policy in Zambia?

The findings of this study found that the Re-entry Policy was not effective in the rural areas of Zambia due to lack of information about the policy. It was found that even the teachers who were mandated to share information about the policy were not doing much due to low awareness levels of the policy, especially the guidelines, among themselves. This study also found that the teachers did not share as much information about the policy with the pupils due to lack of time. Some Guidance and Counselling teachers mentioned that they did not have time to engage the pupils on the Re-entry Policy guidelines due to the busy schedules in the schools.

7.2 Policy Implications of this study

The research findings have content that can be very useful in an effort to help the Government come up with strategies on how best the Re-entry Policy can be communicated to the general public, especially people in rural areas. The results can also help the Government, through the Ministry of Education, to come up with deliberate programmes on the Re-entry Policy for both primary and secondary schools in an effort to increase the awareness levels on the policy.

The findings can also help the Government come up with capacity-building programmes for Guidance and Counselling Teachers on the Re-entry Policy.

Lastly, the findings can help Guidance and Counselling teachers in schools to find better ways of engaging the pupils on the Re-entry Policy.

7.3 Implications for Students

Pupils from both primary and secondary schools should have the correct information on the Re-entry Policy to help prevent girls from dropping out of school when they fall pregnant. Pupils should also understand the policy guidelines so that they can also share the information with their parents or guardians and the community at large. Therefore, this research suggests as following:

- The school management for both primary and secondary schools should share full information with the pupils on the Re-entry Policy.
- Schools should prioritise engagements with the pupils on the Re-entry Policy.
- Schools should come up with programmes, activities and safe spaces where the Re-entry Policy can be discussed.

7.4 Study Limitations

The first limitation of this study is that data collection for this research was done during the exam period of both grade nines (9) and Grade twelves (12), so it was a bit of a challenge to get people to participate especially where focus group discussions were concerned. So much time was spent on waiting for some pupils to finish writing their exams before they could participate.

Secondly, even though the District Education Board Secretary had given the researcher permission to visit some selected schools, some teachers were a bit apprehensive about the exercise. This too made the researcher spend longer hours at certain schools explaining what the research was all about.

Thirdly, some teen mothers I interviewed became emotional after talking about what they had gone through and needed a shoulder to cry on. The researcher took time to listen to all they wanted to say and offered advice. This too, made the researcher spend more hours with some teen mothers.

Lastly, this study had limited funds to work with, hence the recommendations of future studies that can look at this subject from a broader perspective to understand the situation in the country, especially in the rural areas.

7.5 Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusion, implications, and limitations, I make the following recommendation:

- The Government, through the Ministry of Education should embark on awareness raising activities on the Re-entry Policy using Television, Radio, and Newspapers. Ministry of Education and schools' social media platforms should also be flooded with information on the policy.
- The Government, through the Ministry of Education should begin sensitising communities, especially in rural areas, on the Re-entry Policy. Role plays, songs, and community conversations should be considered for the sensitization programmes.
- The Government should invest in capacity-building activities for Guidance and Counselling Teachers on the Re-entry policy.
- The Government should ensure that Guidance and Counselling teachers are not given other responsibilities like teaching.

7.6 Future Studies

My passion for girl child education and empowerment motivated me to conduct this research. This study has therefore brought out various notable issues that need to be looked into by further studies.

Hence my recommendations for future studies are as below:

1. The challenges faced by schools educating teen mothers in government schools.
2. The Role of the Non-governmental Organizations in the effective implementation of the Re-entry policy in government schools.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: Letter to Chongwe District Education Board Secretary

Fridah Nkonde-Mubanga

3 Lewanika Close, Off Brentwood Drive-Kabulonga Lusaka nkondefridah@gmail.com

4th November 2024

The District Education Board Secretary
Chongwe District
LUSAKA PROVINCE

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THE GOVERNMENT IS USING IN IMPLEMENTING THE RE-ENTRY POLICY IN ZAMBIA: A CASE STUDY OF CHONGWE

My name is Fridah Nkonde-Mubanga, a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Masters in Communication for Development. I am currently conducting my academic research on the Communication Strategies the Government is using in implementing the re-entry policy in Zambia: A case study of Chongwe district.

I am therefore writing to seek authorization from your office to allow me engage three (3) primary schools and three (3) secondary schools in your districts. My research will involve interactions with both the teachers (Guidance and Counselling) and the pupils.

With your permission, I would like to visit the schools between November 14 and 19 2024.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely

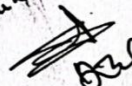


Fridah Nkonde-Mubanga (Mrs)

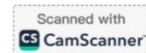


Authority Granted for the
Following Schools:

1. Chongwe Primary
2. Chinshiko Primary
3. Nalipula Primary
4. Silver Rest Secondary
5. Chainda Secondary
6. Mukamba of Gwelo



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APPENDIX B: Consent Form

Be assured that the information I am collecting, will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with maximum confidentiality.

To participate in the research, you will need to give your informed consent. By ticking the boxes, you are indicating that you understand the nature of the study and that you agree to participate in the research.

Please tick the following points if you agree to take part voluntarily

I understand that I have been provided with an explanation of the research in which I am participating and I have been given the name and telephone number of an individual to contact if I have questions about the research.

I understand that participation in the research study is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time

APPENDIX C: Research Interview and Focus Group Discussion Guides

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NOTE: This interview will be used multiple times. Ideally, the students will be interviewed individually.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewee (Unique Identifier): _____

Introduction

I would like to welcome you to this interview and thank you so much for accepting to be interviewed by me on the Re-entry Policy implementation in Zambia. In this interview, I will be asking you questions about the Re-entry Policy in relations to girls dropping out of school after falling pregnant. Feel free to tell me anything you know about the policy and note that you are free not to answer questions you are uncomfortable with. You are also free to take a break during the interview and discontinuing the interview is also allowed.

QUESTIONS

Head Teachers

1. How is your school management implementing the Re-entry Policy?
2. Has the Re-entry Policy in your school achieved the desired results? Explain.
3. Does the school management sensitise teachers on the Re-entry Policy? Explain.
4. Do the majority of teen mothers report back to school after giving birth? Explain.
5. Are the members of the community aware of the Re-entry Policy? Explain.
6. Do you have a deliberate school internal management policy that is used to sensitise pupils about early pregnancies? Explain.
7. How is your school management handling issues of stigma to teen mothers?
8. What challenges is your school facing in implementing the re-entry policy?
9. How can the challenges above be mitigated?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Teachers

1. Are you aware of the Re-entry Policy?
2. What do you know and where did you get the information from?
3. How do you communicate the Re-entry Policy information to the pupils?
4. Do most girls report back to school after giving birth?
5. Does your school management sensitise both teachers and pupils about the re-entry policy? Explain.
6. Do you spend time, as a teacher, discussing the Re-entry Policy with your pupils?
7. Do you think the Re-entry Policy is bringing desired results in the school? Explain.

Guidance and Counselling Teachers

1. What do you know about the Re-entry Policy?
2. As a Guidance and Counselling Teacher, do you sensitise the pupils on the Re-entry Policy? How?
3. From your experience as a Guidance and Counselling teacher, do girls report back to school after giving birth? Explain.
4. Do you have documents to show re-admission cases of Re-entry Policy?
5. Do you think the Re-entry Policy is producing results? Explain.
6. Is the community aware of this policy?
7. What do you think are the reasons for some pupils not to report back to school after giving birth?
8. What are the weaknesses of the Re-entry Policy?

Teen Mothers

1. What do you know about the Re-entry Policy?
2. Have you ever come across information on the Re-entry Policy in the media?
3. What did you do when you discovered you were pregnant?
4. How did the school take it when they discovered that you were pregnant?
5. Is the school management helping you when it comes to your studies?
6. Is the family where you come from supportive to enable you to continue with your studies? Explain.
7. What are some of the challenges you face at school/home when it comes to your studies?
8. Do you face any stigma from any of the members of staff at the school or from your friends? Explain.

Parents and Guardians

1. What do you know about the Re-entry Policy? Explain.
2. How did you get to know about the Re-entry Policy?
3. Have you ever discussed the Re-entry Policy with the school?
4. Have you ever attended any sensitisation programme about the Re-entry Policy in your community or at the school?
5. Have you ever watched, read, or heard anything about the Re-entry Policy in the media?
6. What are the weaknesses of the Re-entry policy?
7. Do you think the Re-entry Policy is beneficial to you? Explain
8. What challenges do you face as a parent in educating your girl child?

Focus Group Discussion for pupils

1. What do you know about the Re-entry Policy? Explain.
2. Have you ever had a discussion with teachers about the Re-entry Policy in class?
3. Does the school management talk about the Re-entry Policy during school assemblies?
4. Have you ever heard anything about the Re-entry Policy in the media? Explain.
5. Is the school management doing enough to sensitise you about the re-entry policy? Explain.
6. Have you ever attended any sensitization program about the Re-entry Policy in your community.
7. Have you ever seen any posters about the Re-entry Policy in your school or community?
8. Do those who become pregnant report back to school after delivery? Explain.
9. Do you discuss issues of early pregnancy/Re-entry Policy with your parents? Explain.
10. Is the re-entry policy a good policy? Explain.

End of Discussion.

Thank you for your participation!

