

**The Geographies of Schooling and Motherhood:
Narratives of teen mothers in KwaZulu-Natal**

by

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DECLARATION

With the signature below I, Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde, hereby declare that the work I present in this thesis is based on my own research, and that I have not submitted this thesis to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Teen motherhood, as a health and social problem, has raised great concerns in South Africa. Mokgalobone (1999) maintains that in South Africa, teen motherhood is one of the main causes of school disruption, particularly at secondary school level. Bhana et al. (2008) explain that with the promulgation of the South African Schools Act of 1996, it has become illegal to exclude teen mothers from school. This Act calls on schools to assist teen mothers to continue and complete their schooling. Despite this Act, research shows that teen mothers who return to school after the birth of their babies face various problems such as health, social exclusion, stigma and financial constraints, which makes it difficult for them to succeed academically. With this background, the aim of this study was to explore the experiences of teen mothers who return to school after giving birth.

This study was informed by an interpretative approach and social constructionist theory. Positioned within these paradigms, I am interested in understanding the multiple identities of the teen mothers, for example, that of a mother and a learner; and how they navigate these identities. My study is sociological in nature and located within debates from a growing body of research referred to as children's geographies and new sociology of childhood. I believe that children and teen mothers are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Eight (8) teen mothers between the ages of fourteen to nineteen years at a secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal were invited to narrate their life stories. Data generation tools were individual and focus group interviews, and a participatory research tool, photo-voice.

The findings of this study revealed that teen mothers are indebted to people in their lives that have made it possible for them to return to school despite the stigmatisation and adversities they face due to dominant pathologising discourses that circulate within the school and the community. However, there is limited support from the school to enable them to navigate the barriers to accessing quality education and curriculum access that they experience. Schools have no structures to monitor and provide academic, emotional and counselling support to these learners. There are networks of support within extended families and community members but these appear to be rather fragile in a context of dire poverty and under-development. The study also illuminates the emotional geographies of the teen mothers and the multiple contextual influences that shape their emotional lives. Poverty and its effects are over-riding barriers to the wellbeing and quality of life of teen mothers and their babies. However, despite the adversities teen mothers face, there is evidence of resiliency and agency in the complex ways they negotiate their lives and commit to the goal of graduating from high school.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Teen motherhood, as a public health and social problem, has raised great concern internationally (Neiterman, 2012) and in South Africa (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chohan, 2010). Mokgalabone (1999) maintains that teen motherhood is among the most serious causes of school disruption, particularly at secondary education level. In South Africa, research shows that teen mothers who return to school after the birth of a baby face a myriad of problems such as social exclusion, stigma and financial constraints. These constraints often make it difficult for teen mothers to succeed academically (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chohan, 2010). This brings us to the focus of my proposed study which is to explore the experiences of teen mothers who return to school after the birth of a baby.

1.2 The Rationale of the Study

This study was motivated by the fact that teen mothers as adolescents are at a crucial stage of their lives (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2000). They are at a time of heightened risks in all areas of development, that is, emotionally, socially and academically. As a teacher I have interacted directly with teen mothers of all ages over the years. I have become particularly interested in engaging with them to understand how they construct and experience their schooling lives and motherhood. According to Holloway and Valentine (2000) children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live. I also believe that children and young people, such as teen mothers, have agency and have a story to tell about their lives.

Literature is abound with studies on children and childhood that tend to be located in the field of psychology. My study however, is sociological in nature and located within debates from a growing body of research referred to as Children's Geographies and the new sociology of childhood (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1994; Weller, 2003). My aim was to foreground the voices of teen mothers. My review of literature showed that there is limited research that has examined the schooling experiences of teen mothers in an in-depth way, particularly studies emanating from the African continent. With this background, my study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of children's geographies and childhood studies, in general.

My assumptions about children are informed by debates that emanate from the disciplines of new sociology of childhood studies and children's geographies. Research located in these frameworks aim to make meanings of and try to understand children's deep contextual experiences. From my readings, I came to hold the view that there are multiple childhoods with a diverse range of influences (Skelton, 2008; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006).

In this regard, I believe that teen mothers are not homogenous groups in that they have different stories to tell from different contexts. I also hold the belief that children construct their social realities and that their realities are local and very specific to spaces and places of their lives (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1994). Hence, the purpose of this study was to find out about experiences of a small group of teen mothers who have returned to school to complete their schooling after the birth of babies.

This study attempted to explore the following research questions:

- What are everyday experiences of teen mothers?
- How are teen mothers positioned within the school culture?
- How do teen mothers navigate their schooling lives as teen mother and a learner simultaneously?

1.3 Context of the study

The research site for my study was a secondary school located in a deep rural area of Boboyi in Port Shepstone, KwaZulu-Natal. This school had a learner population of 980 learners and is located in a community with poor socio-economic status. The research site was chosen as I am a teacher at a neighbouring school and therefore had access to the school.

1.4 Methodological Approach

The study was a narrative inquiry and I followed a qualitative approach as my aim was to obtain a deep, contextual understanding of teen mothers' schooling lives. Narrative inquiry is defined as the study of the way human beings experience the world and its main focus is on the subjective experiences of life (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through my analysis of the literature, I decided that narrative inquiry would be best suited to the focus of my study and the research questions I hoped to explore. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to view the problem which is being investigated in its natural setting.

Cohen et al. (2007) explain that a qualitative approach has certain shortcomings such as the sample size being too small for generalizations. However, I wish to stress that my intention was not to generalize my findings but to generate concrete, practical contextual knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2004). I wanted a nuanced, situated view of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2004).

1.4.1 Sampling

I used purposive sampling in the study. Creswell (2009) maintains that purposive sampling enables a researcher to access knowledgeable participants who have in-depth

knowledge about a particular issue. From the pool of learners who agreed to participate, I randomly selected eight (8) teen mothers.

1.4.2 Data generation methods and techniques

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with teen mothers to elicit background information and data on their schooling lives as teen mothers. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that the interview is a social technique and an interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection tool. Therefore, the researcher needs to conduct the interview carefully and sensitively. Cohen and his colleagues further explain that the advantage of the semi-structured interview is that it enables probing, elaboration and clarification of issues (2007).

Focus group interviews allowed participants to interact more with each other than with the researcher. Focus group interviews were used to enable the teen mothers to narrate and reflect upon their experiences as a collective.

Photo voice, as Wang (1999) describes it, is a grass roots approach to research which places cameras in the hands of participants with the aim of giving them a 'voice'. The key assumption underlying the use of photo-voice is that people can best identify and represent their own realities (Wang, 1999). It is a visual method that is very useful in engaging research participants, including children, in expressing their experiences of the spaces and places in their everyday lives (Wang, 1999). Jacobs and Harley (2008) explain that photo-voice gives power to research participants and is non-threatening to them. As Mitchell, de Lange, Moletsane, Stuart and Buthelezi (2005) suggest that photographs offer a challenging opportunity to bring out the different layers of reality. In my study, teen mothers were invited to take photographs (with disposable cameras) that tell the story of their lives as teen mothers who return to school after the birth of a baby.

1.5 The Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter provides the background, focus and the rationale of the study. I also provided a summary of the research methodology employed in this study and the study context. Finally, I present an overview of my research.

The second chapter provides an overview of existing empirical literature and positions this dissertation in its wider research context. In this chapter, I focus on the experiences of teen mothers who return to school after giving birth. A further purpose is to highlight the gaps in the literature and demonstrate how my research seeks to contribute to existing knowledge with regard to understanding social construction of teen motherhood. This chapter introduces the social constructionist theory framing this dissertation.

The aim of chapter three is to demonstrate how the triangulation of data generation methods presented in this study was designed to explore the research questions. Firstly, I provide an epistemological rationale for choosing narrative inquiry and a qualitative approach with the theoretical underpinning of the social constructionist theory. The transparency of sampling and data collection and their relevance to empirical and theoretical problems are demonstrated. Further, I discuss the use of thematic analysis with regard to the data obtained about the teen mothers' life experiences. I conclude this chapter by pointing to ethical considerations as well as practical and theoretical limitations of my methodological approach.

In chapter 4, I present my findings and discuss the themes that emerged from the data. The findings and discussion sections have been combined and presented in conjunction with the existing literature on teen mothers.

In the final chapter, I provide a synthesis of the study and the implications of the study for the education sector and for future research as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Internationally (Nieterman, 2012) and in South Africa, teenage pregnancy has raised great concerns (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Mokgalobone (1999) maintains that in South Africa, pregnancy is one of the main causes of school disruption, particularly at secondary school level. Locally, research shows that teen mothers who return to school after the birth of their babies face various problems (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chohan, 2010). As a result of these problems, teen mothers miss out on their own development and often have to postpone their educational and career dreams until later in life (Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

According to O'Halloran (1998), teenage childbearing is associated with adverse consequences for mothers and their children. Many of these adversities can be due to the economically and socially disadvantaged situations in which teen mothers live even before they become pregnant. An article reported in the Sowetan Live (2013, p. 6), *'The role schools and stakeholders play in reducing teen pregnancy,'* suggests that there are many contributory factors related to the incidence of teenage pregnancy such as the fact that in communities girls are brought up to be submissive to their male counterparts. This means that they are vulnerable in teenage relationships involving the opposite sex. These girls may also agree to engage in early sexual encounters for fear of losing their relationships. Kyei (2012) argues that teenage pregnancy results in a high infant mortality rate, high maternal mortality and other deaths due to sexually related diseases.

The Annual Schools Survey (Department of Basic Education, 2010) revealed that 36 702 girls aged between eight and 14 fell pregnant in 2010. Kyei (2012) noted that the number

of school girls falling pregnant in the Gauteng province in South Africa jumped from 1169 in 2005 to 2336 in 2006 despite a decade of spending on sex education and AIDS awareness. Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013) report that, in 2007, nearly 50 000 learners became pregnant while at school, with high rates in poorer provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. A study conducted by Chigona and Chetty (2008) in the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces revealed that by the age of 18 more than 30% of teens have given birth at least once. It is also important to point out that pregnancy and parenting among school-going learners is not uncommon in South Africa and nearly a third of women have children before they reach the age of twenty (Shefer et al.,2013).

Bhana, Clowes, Morrell and Shefer (2008) explain that with the promulgation of the South African Schools Act of 1996, it has become illegal to exclude pregnant girls from school. This Act calls on schools to assist pregnant girls and teen mothers to continue and complete their schooling. It is well documented that having children often terminates school-going, limiting future employment and work opportunities (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Macleod, 2011). Lutrell (2003) and Macleod (2011) maintain that the South African Constitution (1996) and current education policies ensure that pregnant learners and teen mothers can continue schooling. These researchers further argue that the context of teenage pregnancy is shaped by a wide range of discourses relating to teenage sexuality, pregnancy and motherhood.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of teen mothers at a secondary school level and, hence, explored the following questions: What are everyday experiences of teen mothers who have returned to school? How are teen mothers positioned within the school culture? How do they access to quality education?

This chapter reviews local and international literature on, firstly, the social construction of teen mothers. Secondly, I examine literature related to the schooling experiences of teen mothers. Thirdly, I explore debates on how teen mothers negotiate their lives. In the final sub-section, I present and discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study. My aim was to examine issues of vulnerability, resiliency and agency.

2.2 The social construction of teen mothers

2.2.1 Who are teen mothers?

In order to understand the experiences of teen mothers and to explore the research questions, it is important to define the concept ‘teen mother’. The World Health Organisation (2004) refers to teen mothers as girls who have given birth when under the age of 19. In the South African context, teenage mothers are those girls under the age of 19 who give birth and then return to school (Berry & Hall, 2009). My study focuses on teen mothers who are children. A child is a person or human being under the age of 18 years. This conceptualisation is in keeping with South African Children’s Act No 38 of 2005 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989). My study will focus on eight teenage mothers under the age of 18 years. In the review below, I discuss a few key themes in the literature on the social construction of teen mothers that have relevance for my study.

2.2.2 Teen mothers and intersecting dominant discourses

Weedon (1987) defines discourse as “ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and relations between them” (p.108). Parker (1992 in Chohan, 2010) defines discourse as a set of statements, meanings, stories or images that construct a particular version of events or

objects. Chohan (2010) further explains that discourses that circulate in a society are connected to the way that society is organized. Certain discourse appears and become entrenched as ultimate truths. For example, the discourse of feminism constructs women as nurturing, emotional and vulnerable, thus assuming that women are the only parent able to care for children (Burr, 1995 in Chohan, 2010).

In a recent paper, Fonda, Eni and Guimond (2013) begin their argument by asking a question, 'Is teenage motherhood an issue?' The answer to this question is: it depends on whom you speak to, from where you are coming from and where you are located in history, society and the world. In other words, the question is, what dominant discourses play out? A common example is the discourse of contamination that develops from the idea that the immorality of the teen mothers will contaminate and influence other girls to become mothers as well (Pillow, 2004). As a result of these discourses teen mothers are often stigmatized and their sense of responsibility, mothering skills and maturity are questioned (Rolfe, 2008).

Teen motherhood became a moral issue in the USA when it was pronounced an epidemic by the Alan Guttmacher Report of 1976 (Fonda et al., 2013). Previous to this report, teen motherhood was not viewed as a problem. The social concern was on children born out of wedlock and children who were not cared for by the parents.

In many global contexts, where religious discourses set particular norms, values and controls, teen mothers have two choices: marriage or ostracization. In Sri Lanka, as Jordal, Wijewardena and Olsson (2013) state, motherhood within marriage is highly valued. Sex out of wedlock is socially unacceptable and can create health problems such as illegal abortions and suicide. Single motherhood as a result of premarital sex, is shameful in Sri Lanka (Jordal et al., 2013). In Canada, a study by Neiterman (2012) found teenage pregnancy and teen mothers to be problematic and a social problem. Neiterman (2012) identifies three major

themes that dominate academic and public discourse on teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood: the welfare of teen mothers and their children; the health and well-being of mother and child; and the discourse on morality of teen mothers.

One can see the interplay of the above discourses in the South African context. In South Africa, teenage pregnancy and teen mothers are mainly viewed as a social problem. Macleod (2001) explains that the construction of teen mothers as a problem is influenced by various discourses such as: teen mothers are not good mothers; are promiscuous; and financially dependent. In some contexts it has been argued that teen mothers are not yet physically and psychologically fit to manage motherhood for, for example, teen mothers are immature, less knowledgeable, are prone to have high levels of stress and are less receptive to their babies (Macleod, 2001). Within these debates, there circulates the underlying discourse of what it means to be a 'good mother' (Macleod, 2001). The assumption is that good mothers are skilled, cognitively more mature, more responsive and informed and physically and psychologically prepared to deal with motherhood. Neiterman (2012) explains that the ideology of intensive mothering suggests that women should have skills and the maturity to invest in their children emotionally and physically. Since teen mothers do not meet these conditions, they are not constructed as 'good mothers'.

In a study undertaken by Bhana, Morrell, Shefer and Ngabaza (2010) in the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces, teachers were asked to give their views on teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in the context of their own schools. The findings were that teachers related to pregnant teenagers and teen mothers in diverse ways, ranging from views such as the problem of children having children, their inability to cope with academic demands and the disruptive influence of motherhood on their studies. Bhana et al. (2010) argue that teachers use readily available meanings to construct teen mothers as social problems, who are slated for sexual immorality and for causing disruption to their academic

progress in school. Rolfe (2008) acknowledges that these teen mothers have become the targets of blame in society, as either causing or contributing toward negative social and financial problems. This blame is evident within dominant moral discourses driven by ‘moral’ concerns about teenage sexuality and dependence on others (Rolfe, 2008).

Macleod (2001) explains that general discourse portrayed in many societies is that teen mothers are located at a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. Thus, teen mothers are viewed as both child and adult (Macleod, 2001). The issue is that this is confusing and debilitating for the teen mother who is striving towards independence (Macleod, 1991). Holgate and Evans (2006) also make a point that teen mothers may experience a misfit between societal expectations and their own ambitions and aspirations.

Chigona and Chetty (2008), based on their study, argue that as a result of stigmatization and marginalization, teen mothers have been placed at the bottom of the power structure. Chigona & Chetty (2008) further explain that these negative constructions of teen mothers leave them with emotional scars to heal and force them to forgo schooling.

Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013), in their study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal and in Western Cape in 2005 and 2007, found that some school authorities continued to stigmatise and ‘other’ pregnant learners and teen mothers thus entrenching their exclusion and marginalization in the school and community.

2.3 Teen mothers negotiating their lives

2.3.1 Teen mothers - vulnerability, agency and resilience

In the literature studied, teen mothers are often constructed by society as powerless and a very vulnerable group that has been oppressed and marginalized by powerful groups such as parents, teachers and learners (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Chohan, 2010;

Mokgalobone, 1999; McGaha-Garnett, Tyler & Alvarez, 2013). Some empirical studies explore the issue of power and discourses that play out in the lives of teen mothers. For example, researchers have used the work of the post structural theorist, Foucault to understand and explain issues of power and power relations in the lives of teen mothers (Foucault, 1988 in Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

The study by Jordal et al. (2013) in Sri Lanka shows how abandoned single mothers, including teen mothers, are sexually, economically and socially vulnerable. These authors further acknowledge that it can be challenging for these young women to face single motherhood within a complex social environment, where social norms strongly condemn pre-marital sex and single motherhood. Further, these young women's choices and agency are likely to be restrained by patriarchal norms within their social environment. In the South African context, early pregnancy and motherhood result in multiple dilemmas and vulnerabilities for teen mothers (Chigona & Chetty, 2008) such as social exclusion and the judgement of promiscuity.

Despite the negative constructions, there has been documented evidence of agency and resilience amongst teen mothers. McGaha-Garnett et al. (2013) found that in the USA, many teen mothers have aspired to complete their schooling. The study examined the emotional resilience of adolescent parenthood and found that adolescent motherhood could be a struggle for many teen mothers who lack social support and sustained family involvement. McGaha-Garnett et al. (2013) state that there is a need for teen mothers to receive intervention and supportive services from relatives and community agencies. The researchers argue that emotional support helps to bolster the confidence and emotional well-being of teen mothers.

Bottrell (2007) defines resilience as the ability to succeed despite adversity and personal vulnerabilities. Bottrell contends that, for teen mothers and their children who are already at high risk of poverty and its associated problems, resiliency building is critical for them to a brighter future. On another dimension, Pillow (2004) argues that obtaining an education for teen mothers is no longer perceived as a right but something that the teen mothers owe society because education prevents them from becoming welfare dependent. Nevertheless, education is an important conduit to empower teen mothers socially and economically.

More recently, researchers on teen mothers have given individual agency prominence (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Jordal et al. (2013) defines agency as an “ability to set and pursue one’s own goals and interests” (p.12). Drawing on research from New Childhood Studies and sociology of childhood, Morojele and Muthukrishna (2011) state that children and young people, including teen mothers, are capable of independent thinking and are self-determining actors who can contribute to enhancing their lives. The implication is that this includes teen mothers under the age of 19 years. Jordal et al. (2013) however, laments the dialectic between individual agency and social forces. Social navigation involves individuals actively moving within their social environments and being moved around by forces that circulate. This is particularly evident in the lives of teen mothers.

Macleod (2001; 2003) confirms that teen mothers have agency and are competent individuals who can challenge the social system and social forces that influence their lives. Smith and Baker (2000 in Macleod, 2001) explained that if society considers children as having participation rights then the concept of children and teen mothers as agents and social actors has to be embraced. They should have a voice in matters that concern them and issues in their lives.

Germez (1991) points out that some teen mothers thrive in the face of adversity while others flounder. Rolfe (2008) asserts that some teen mothers show perseverance and motivation to reach their goals to complete their secondary education. These scholars argue that research should focus on, and identify, what elements within the individual and their social environment create the ability to bounce back or persevere under difficult circumstances (Germez, 1991). In my study, the aim is to explore the agency and resilience of teen mothers in the context of schooling.

2.3.2 Experiencing spaces of ‘othering’

At this point, it is deemed necessary to explain what ‘otherness’ means and what are the complexities of the notion of ‘otherness’. De Beauvoir (1989) in her book, *The Second Sex* refers to the ‘other’ as a minority and the least favoured ones. This suggests an active process of exclusion of the ‘other’ in a devalued manner.

I found that the study by Mac an Ghail (1988) who examined the experience of ‘othering’ by a group of Afro-Caribbean and Asian young women, on the basis of race, class and gender in schooling contexts, offered useful insights for my study on the power of particular discourses. Pillow (2004) argues that ‘otherness’ is exacerbated by discourses surrounding teen pregnancy, and discusses discourses in the society that make teen mothers the ‘other’. For example, teen mothers are identified as ‘children having children’, as irresponsible and promiscuous, teen mothers are socially constructed as a problem, and as social welfare mothers (Pillow, 2004, p. 35). Such discourses may entrench ‘otherness’ and deny the teen mothers their rights as regular learners at school.

In my study, I aimed to explore the issue of ‘othering’ in the context of teen mothers. Do they remain the neglected ‘other’? Are they being socially constructed as a problem? Are they marginalised in their social environment? How do they navigate ‘othering’?

2.3.3 Navigating the social spaces of parenting and schooling

In the South African literature on teen mothers, I found many studies in regard to teen mothers in diverse contexts that have interrupted their schooling due to pregnancy (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009; Bhana et al, 2010). It is also estimated that from 2002 to 2006 between 66 000 and 86 000 teen girls reported pregnancy as the main reason for interrupting their schooling (Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009). Grant and Hallman (2006) show that 29% of 14-19 year- olds who drop out of school due to pregnancy return to school by the age of 20 and, of this figure, only 34% complete their final year of schooling. Chigona & Chetty (2008) reported that those who do go back to school after giving birth face a number of challenges, in particular a lack of support from teachers.

Studies have shown that navigating the various intersecting social worlds in which they live is filled with tensions and complexities. Bhana et al. (2010) contend that the ability to navigate the world of parenting and schooling is strongly associated with race, class and gender. Chigona and Chetty (2008) explain that local conditions in schools reflect many contradictory processes, some of which undermine the institutional environment that should support gender equality. In rural areas, teenage pregnancy is 60 % more prevalent and linked to steeped cultural practices reproducing unequal gender relations as well as economic disadvantage and poverty (Bhana et al., 2010). It can therefore be argued that the social and economic contexts through which schooling is experienced have effects for teen mothers' well-being. Bhana and her colleagues also noted that disadvantage is mediated through social structures and that many teen mothers are disadvantaged not by pregnancy alone but also by social structures that create barriers to access education (Bhana et al., 2010).

Bhana et al. (2010) further explain that in their study, many teachers regard the presence pregnant learners and teen mothers in their classroom as a threat to the collective academic performance of the class and classroom harmony. Teachers construct teen mothers in a deficit light and question the capabilities of teen mothers to cope with the school academic demands (Bhana et al., 2010).

A number of recent local studies with teen mothers and pregnant learners revealed how the translation of the legal measures supporting pregnant and parenting learners is mediated by the context of the school and the broad community and other relevant stakeholders such as principals, teachers, parents and other community members (Bhana, Clowes, Morrell & Shefer, 2008; Bhana, Morrell, Shefer & Ngabaza, 2010). Often legal imperatives that protect the right to education for teen mothers are violated in insidious ways.

Like many other sub-Saharan countries, South Africa has taken steps to protect pregnant teenagers and teen mothers' right to education. The South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) makes it illegal to exclude teen mothers from school for being pregnant (Bhana, Morrell & Shefer, 2008). According to the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa no. 108 of 1996, everybody has the right to basic education. Thus, it is illegal to deny teen mothers the opportunity to continue their schooling after the birth of their children (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001). However, mothering responsibilities, peer pressure in addition to school ethos and culture may negatively affect teen mothers in their attempt to cope with school work (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001).

Chigona and Chetty (2007) revealed that upon school re-entry, teen mothers experienced various challenges in balancing motherhood with the demands of schooling. These researchers documented that teen mothers in their study lacked support from schools. Chigona and Chetty (2007) argue that whilst most challenges experienced by teen mothers in

this study are quite similar to what is reported by teen mothers in the USA, there are differences between the two groups. Pillow (2004) and Lutrell (2003) reported that teen mothers in the USA might have a chance of attending separate schools and counselling might be readily available to the schooling teen mothers. Chigona and Chetty (2007) acknowledge that South Africa does not have separate schools for teen mothers and there is a serious lack of school counselling as a resource.

Hallman and Grant (2004) have shown that both pregnancy and mothering are leading reasons for teen mothers dropping out of school. For instance, teen motherhood changes the context in which teen mothers live and make decisions. As a result of motherhood, teen mothers have to allocate time for household duties in addition to care giving responsibilities (Hallman & Grant, 2004).

As explained, even more challenging are the discourses surrounding teen motherhood and the effect that these have on their educational experiences, in particular, attitudes towards them. Pillow (2004) states that the discourse of education as a responsibility is based on the argument that obtaining an education is not a right to teen mothers but something that they owe the society if they are not to be welfare dependent and a burden to the taxpayers (Pillow, 2004).

Poverty and economic disadvantage impacts the lives of teen mothers who return to school. Hallman and Grant (2004) found that in the USA a higher rate of pregnancy was observed among poor young women and teen mothers. Their study indicated that poverty inhibits the schooling of teen mothers in particular, both directly and indirectly. Kaufman, Wet & Stadler (2001) also noted that the children of teen mothers in the USA are often in conditions of limited resources and with uncertain ties to a larger kin network that might be expected to contribute to healthcare, clothing or education.

Chigona and Chetty (2007) argue that many teenagers cannot afford to take their children to a crèche or hire a babysitter due to poverty. These researchers also found that some of the teen mothers in their study came from homes in which many family members share limited space. This situation makes it difficult for teen mothers to study after school hours. Bhana et al. (2010) concurs that becoming pregnant and being a teen mother in school poses risks for educational success and this situation often ends schooling and disrupts the leap from education to employment with negative outcomes for teen mothers and their children.

In my study, I aimed to explore how teen mothers navigate the social spaces of parenting and schooling, and the intersecting factors that influence the two spaces.

2.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The social construction of childhood, as outlined by James and Prout (1997), will form the theoretical framework for my study. Childhood is seen as a negotiated process where children are active in constructing their own social worlds and interpreting the meaning of their worlds. Social constructionist theory seeks to understand human conduct in a social setting. Burr (2005) argues that social construction theory is concerned with the everyday social world of an individual and the way in which the self is constructed and, in turn, constructs in social interactions. The focus is also on examining the social, cultural and historical discourses embedded in social interaction. Burr (2005) further explains that this theory has the potential to explain how particular discourses enable the privileging of certain social groups and the marginalisation of others.

Berger and Luckman (1966) claim that human life exists as it does because of various social and interpersonal influences i.e. cultural, political, social influences in specific times and places. Constructionism concentrates on investigating the social influences on individual

lives. Further, Berger and Luckman (1966) argue that the world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally. These theorists argue that we experience everyday life in terms of differing degrees of closeness and remoteness, both spatially and temporally.

According to Berger and Luckman (1966), everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by individuals and is subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world. Berger and Luckman (1966) maintain that it is a world that originates in thoughts and actions and it is maintained as real by these. Schwandt (2003) further explains that constructionists view knowledge and truth as created and not discovered. This is consistent with the view of Berger and Luckman (1991), that reality is socially defined. Social constructionists are concerned with nature and construction of knowledge, how it emerges and how it comes to have significance for individuals, groups and society. They view knowledge as created by the interactions of individuals within society which is central to constructionism (Schwandt, 2003). For example, Burr (2005) suggests that identity originates not from inside the person but from the social realm. Socialisation takes place through significant others who mediate the objective reality of society and render it meaningful and in this way it is internalised by individuals (Berger & Luckman, 1991). This is done through the medium of language. Language makes thoughts and concepts possible and not the other way around. Language provides a means of structuring the way the world is experienced (Burr, 2005). In my study, I was interested in the dialogical encounters experienced by teen mothers.

Berger and Luckman (1966) maintain that social constructionism places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct reality. In trying to understand the lives of teen mothers who return to school, the social practices that impact their lives and social intersections became the focus of enquiry. Macleod (2001) explain that the major concern of social constructionism is to deconstruct how people and groups participate in the creation of their perceived reality. This includes

asking questions about views a society holds: how the social world is arranged and organised; the assumptions that are created, institutionalised, entrenched and sustained, for example, regarding teen mothers and teenage pregnancy.

In addition to the lens of social constructionism, the debates from the research areas of children's geographies and new sociology of childhood formed important conceptual frameworks for my study and influenced my epistemological assumptions about children and childhood, and how to undertake research *with* children. Holloway and Valentine (2000) state that children's geographies are the area of study in human geography that explores places and spaces of children and young people's lives. Children's geographies has adopted the view that children, as social actors, are competent witnesses to speak for themselves about their experiences and the social worlds in which they live (Hood, Kelly, Mayall and Oakley, 1996; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Children's geographies research is undertaken in a variety of different spaces. Spaces and places are means by which societies organize themselves and distribute resources (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Pain et al., 2001). Children's geographers, such as James et al. (1998), argue that childhood is socially constructed in different ways in different time and places.

My study provides a voice for mothers to articulate how they are positioned within social structures and spaces such as the family, peer group and school. Teen mothers' experiences of public spaces differs from one to another depending on the nature of that space and the power dynamics within them. James et al. (1998) argue that children are often controlled and organized according to specific institutional processes. Further, spaces which are designed and controlled by adults are based not only upon the protection of children but power relationships of control.

The perspective from children's geographies aligns with that of new childhood studies or the new sociology of childhood (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). The sociology of childhood frames children as active agents in the construction of their own social worlds. James and Prout (1990) in Holloway & Valentine (2000) argue that childhood is a distinct and interesting phase in human experience and that children are fully formed and complete individuals with perspectives of their own. In other words, childhood is conceived of as a series of negotiated social relationships within which children are social actors. When I entered this study, I was influenced by the above perspectives. I have come to believe that children are actively able to construct their own meanings of their experiences in various social spaces. They are not adults in the making but individuals in their own right.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of existing empirical literature dealing with teen motherhood. In this study, I focused on the social, cultural and educational discourses that shape the social construction of teen motherhood. The aim of the literature review was to map out the relevant empirical literature pertaining to my study and to show where my study is located within the existing knowledge on teen mothers.

The literature review highlighted the limited research on narratives of teen mothers in the African context. Further, there is only a small body of research that explores the relationship between teen mothers and the school as an institution and its immediate community, including principals, teachers, parents and learners. In the following chapter, I present the research methodology and design of my study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teen mothers who have returned to school to complete their schooling. My aim was to foreground the voices of teen mothers. Having done a review of literature, it shows that there is limited research that examined the schooling experiences of teen mothers in an in-depth way, in particular studies emanating from the African continent.

This chapter is organized in the following way: Firstly, I provided an introduction. Secondly, I discuss some key methodological issues and my epistemological stance. Thirdly, I explain my research design which includes the research context, research participants, methods of data generation and the data analysis process. Finally, I discuss the ethical issues that emerged, the study limitations and my reflections as the researcher.

3.2 Methodological Issues

The study entailed a qualitative approach as my aim was to obtain a deep, contextual understanding of teen mothers' schooling lives. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to view the problem which is being investigated in its natural setting.

Cohen et al. (2007) explain that a qualitative approach has certain shortcomings such as the sample size being too small for generalizations. However, I wish to stress that my intention was not to generalize my findings but to generate concrete, practical contextual knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2004). I wanted a nuanced, situated view of reality (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2004). Further, Cohen et al. (2007) argue that a researcher is often too close to the participants and there is the chance of compromising objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This is related to the issue of trustworthiness which I discuss in a sub-section below.

My study is positioned in a space between an interpretive and critical paradigm. Merriam (1998) argues that the interpretative approach is used to understand the lives of participants, in this case teen mothers. My aim was to know the world of human action and to understand the subjective meanings of the action to the actors (Bester & Du Plessis, 2010). This study was informed by social constructionist theory. Burr (2005) defines social constructionist theory as a multi-disciplinary framework that focuses on a critical stance towards knowledge that is taken for granted. Burr (2005) explains that this theoretical lens enables the researcher to gain insight into the discourses that underlie particular relations of power.

Positioned within these paradigms, I was also interested in the multiple identities of the teen mothers, for example, that of a mother and a learner; and how they navigate these identities. As my study was a narrative inquiry, I believed that in the act of narrating their experiences, the teen mothers would reveal their multiple identities and the various subject positions they take as they negotiate their lives (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I was keen to make sense of the discourses that positioned teen mothers in particular ways and the power relations that impacted the teen mothers' lives. I was intent on looking at dominant constructions of teen mothers.

As a teacher, I have interacted directly with teen mothers of all ages over the years. I have become particularly interested in engaging with them to understand how they are constructed and how they experience their schooling lives and motherhood. According to

Holloway and Valentine (2000), children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live. I also believe that children and young people, such as teen mothers, have agency and have a story to tell about their lives.

Many studies on children and childhood tend to be located in the field of psychology.

My study is sociological in nature and located within debates from a growing body of research referred to as children's geographies and new sociology of childhood (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1994; Weller, 2003). With this background, my study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of children's geographies and childhood studies in general.

My assumptions about children are informed by debates that emanate from the disciplines of new sociology of childhood studies and children geographies. Research located in these frameworks aim to make meanings of and tries to understand children's deep contextual experiences. From my readings, I came to hold the view that there are multiple childhoods with a diverse range of influences (Prout & James, 1990; Skelton, 2008; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006).

In this regard, I believe that teen mothers are not homogenous groups, in that they have different stories to tell from different contexts. I also hold the belief that children construct their social realities, and that their realities are local and very specific to spaces and places of their lives. The purpose of this study was to find out about experiences of a small group of teen mothers, who are children, who have returned to school to complete their schooling after the birth of babies.

This study attempted to explore the following research questions:

- What are everyday experiences of teen mothers?
- How are they positioned within the school culture?
- How do they navigate their schooling lives as teen mothers?

3.3 The Research Design

According to Neuman (2011), a qualitative approach has the potential to use several research methods to enable a deep understanding of the problem that is being investigated. In the subsections below, I provide an account of the design of my study, including the design decisions I made.

3.3.1 Narrative inquiry

The research method I selected was narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is defined as the study of the way human beings experience the world, and its main focus is on subjective experiences of life (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through my analysis of the literature, I decided that narrative inquiry would be best suited to the focus of my study and the research questions I hoped to explore. First and foremost, I wanted to foreground ‘voice’. In other words, I wanted to listen to the voices of my participants in relation to how they navigate critical social spaces in their lives as teen mothers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this study, teen mothers narrated their experiences of being a mother and a learner simultaneously. In the act of narrating their experiences, they were able to provide insight into their identities and how these are navigated (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Due to the critical nature of my study, I selected a research design that would allow teen mothers to freely express their meaning making in their own terms (Cohen et al., 2007).

In a narrative inquiry, participants' everyday events and experiences are recalled and stories told about them. The researcher systematically gathers, analyzes and represents participants' stories as told by them. In other words, the narratives are reconstructions of the person's experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Stories bring together layers of understandings or meanings about a person (Clandinin, 2006). In the stories can emerge how participants' make sense of events in their lives and the values and beliefs that underpin their hopes, intentions and actions (Clandinin, 2006; Riessman, 2008). According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), stories reflect subjective meanings, and through the stories, a sense of self and identity are negotiated.

3.3.2 Participatory research methods

My narrative inquiry also drew on participatory research methods. I knew that researching about vulnerable social groups, including teen mothers, is highly sensitive, as Munro, Holly, Rainbird and Leisten (2004) stress. Teen mothers in many contexts are often unable to protect their own interests and suffer negative labelling, stigmatization, exclusion and discrimination (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Macleod & Tracey, 2010). Since I had participants who were teenage mothers in my study, I needed to ensure that I did not add to their vulnerability.

Participatory research was deemed very relevant to my study as I did not want my research participants to be constructed as objects of study. My aim was to have them as partners in my research – in other words, I would research their lives *with* them. A defining characteristic of the participatory approach is collaboration, and the acknowledgement that marginalised or vulnerable groups have specific knowledge of their own lives which needs to be valued. The aim is to reduce the distance between the researcher and the research participants with respect to power. Thus, the whole research process is aimed at achieving an

increased level of participation by participants, even if they are children (Katsuia & Koistinen, 2008).

Holloway and Valentine (2000) maintain that children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of social worlds in which they live. As a result, children should be actively involved in research that affects their lives. I provide insight into the specific participatory techniques I used in my study in a sub-section below.

3.3.3 The study context

The research site for my study was a secondary school located in a deep rural area of KwaZulu-Natal. This school had a learner population of 980 learners. The school is surrounded by a community of poor socio-economic status. It was chosen based on the fact that I work as a teacher in close proximity to the school and have access to the school.

3.3.4 The participants

The participants were selected using purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling assisted me to access knowledgeable people who have in-depth knowledge about the particular issue, in this case teen mothers (Cohen et al., 2007). I specifically sought out teen mothers who had returned to school.

Early in my study, I found that teen mothers were a hard-to-reach group due to their vulnerability and marginalisation. I noticed that there were no records of teen mothers at the school. As a result, I found that snowball sampling was an appropriate sampling tool to use. I hoped I could rely on a few teen mothers whom I knew had babies and had returned to school as a resource to locate others. Snowball sampling is valuable in qualitative research and also useful where the communication networks are undeveloped (Cohen et al., 2007, p.159).

Cohen et al. (2007) point out that snowball sampling has a disadvantage in that tracking potential participants depends on the willingness of the first participant and there is a great chance of a limited sample. I did find that it was not easy to access teen mothers because of the fact that many teen mothers are secretive about the birth of their child and try to hide the fact that they are mothers. However, this proved to be an appropriate sampling strategy in my study.

Through snowball sampling I was able to identify eight participants out of ten teen mothers who agreed to participate in the study. They were between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age and were in Grades 9 and 12. Each teen mother was individually asked to voluntarily participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained through letters sent to their guardians or parents (refer to appendix C). This was done because these teen mothers were minors. The parents of the eight learners consented to the participation of their children in my study.

After receiving consent from the teen mothers' parents, I made appointments to meet with the eight teen mothers. While five of the interviews took place according to schedule, three of the interviews had to be rescheduled for a week later. The reason was that on the day of the scheduled appointments with me, these teen mothers did not attend school as they had to collect the Child Support Grant from the Department of Social Welfare office in the district. It was difficult for me because in all the three cases I learnt about the teen mothers' absence from school only after I had arrived at the appointment venues.

Surprisingly, one of the teen mothers with whom I had rescheduled an interview withdrew from the study. She explained that she was not sure if she really wanted to participate. I had to honour her decision as it was her democratic right to withdraw if she chose

to do so. The interviews with the remaining of the teen mothers took place on the respective school premises as planned.

3.3.5 Methods of data generation

3.3.5.1 Individual interviews

The individual interviews were in two phases. In the first phase, my aim was to elicit background, demographic information on each of the participants. Cohen et al. (2007) explains that the interview is a social technique and an interpersonal encounter; not merely a data collection event. Therefore, I needed to conduct this initial interview carefully and sensitively. My aim in this initial interview was to gain their trust in me. At this interview, I explained the aim and importance of the study to the participants.

In order to meet the requirements of a narrative inquiry, in the second phase, I conducted open-ended interviews with participants to gain insight into their lives as teen mothers. The main question was: *Tell me the story about your life as a teen mother who has returned to school.* As the participants told their story, I probed on experiences recounted and encouraged them to elaborate on critical incidents that emerged in their stories. I did structure a few questions to guide me and to ensure that I did not miss out important issues of relevance to my study (refer to appendix D).

3.3.5.2 Focus group interviews

I held focus group interviews with participants over three sessions. Cohen et al (2007) highlights the importance of knowledge produced by a community of people in the context of social interaction and communication. In my focus group, I found that the teen mothers interacted with each other more often than with me. Cohen et al. (2007) further argue that focus groups are useful for gathering qualitative data, very quickly and at low cost. Focus

group interviews can also empower participants such as teen mothers to speak in their own words about issues in their lives with the support of peers in the social group.

I used a space (mobile classroom) on the school playground to make teen mothers feel comfortable and more relaxed. I used the same open-ended stimulus question to begin the discussion: *I am keen to listen to the stories of your life as teen mothers who have returned to school after the birth of their children.* I also raised issues that emerged in the individual interviews.

3.3.5.3 Photo-voice - a participatory technique

Photo voice, as Wang (1999) describes it, is a grass roots approach to research which places cameras in the hands of participants with the aim of giving them ‘voice’. The key assumption underlying the use of photo-voice is that people can best identify and represent their own realities (Wang, 1999). It is a visual method that is very useful in engaging research participants, including children, in expressing their experiences of spaces and places in their everyday lives (Wang, 1999). Jacobs and Harley (2008) explain that photo-voice gives power to research participants and is non-threatening to them. Mitchell, Moletsane, Stuart, Buthelezi (2005) suggest that photographs offer a challenging opportunity to bring out the different layers of reality.

In my study, teen mothers were invited to take photographs (with disposable cameras) that told the story of their lives as teen mothers attending school. Drawing from the work of Wang (1999), the following were the steps I had taken in the photo-voice process:

1. I had a meeting with the participants and explained the purpose of photo-voice and the process we were going to follow. My instruction was: I would like you to take photographs that tell the story of your

life as a teen mother who has returned to school? They seemed eager to participate and asked questions for clarification.

2. I briefed the participants on the use of the cameras. I explained to them ethical issues they had to bear in mind when taking photos in their community, homes and at school, and the importance of obtaining consent.
3. Participants were given 7 days during which to take photos.
4. The next stage involved the collection of cameras and the development of the film.
5. A workshop was held with participants. They were told to choose three photographs each to talk about. These photos were fixed onto different sections on a wall of a room.
6. Each participant had to talk about each photo selected for the discussion. They were told to explain: what is depicted in each photo, why they took it and what the photographs reflected about their lives.

In this way, teen mothers were able to record and reflect on what they saw as the most important information. Talking about their photographs led to a dialogue among participants. This dialogue enhanced my understandings of their lives as well as their own meaning making.

I printed two sets of photographs from each camera and gave one set to each teen mother who had taken them. As an incentive, I had told the mothers that they would receive a set of photographs at the end of the study.

Informed consent was sought from all teen mothers for participation in the photo-voice activity. I explained to them that consent had to be sought from anyone or any social

institution that they would be photographing. The mothers were eager to participate and clearly enjoyed the photo-voice activity.

3.3.6 Data analysis

All interviews in the study were conducted in English. Participants were told that they could use IsiZulu whenever they felt it would facilitate their story-telling. The individual and focus group interviews including the photo-voice workshops were audio-taped and later transcribed.

In order to familiarise myself with the data, I listened repeatedly to the audio-tapes during the transcription process. Data analysis involved reading and re-reading the data to identify key topics, themes and patterns in the data. The supervisor's input in this process ensured trustworthiness. My aim in the analysis of the data was to build a portrait of the participants from the stories they told, and to search below the surface, as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). I examined each story to ascertain what elements shaped the story, who were the actors in the lives of the participants, where and what is the context, and what meanings are embedded in the stories they told (Bleakley, 2005).

3.3.7 Ethical issues

My study is part of a larger project in the school of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, titled: The geographies of children's schooling in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries: Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers

Ethical considerations are an important aspect of any research project. It ensures the legitimacy and morality of the research (Neuman, 2011). Permission to conduct interviews for research purposes was sought from the Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal and from the principal of the school at which I conducted my study. Ethical Clearance was

approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (refer to Appendix F). The focus group appointments and individual interviews were undertaken in such a way that research activities did not interfere with teaching and learning at the school. The teen mothers, as my participants in this study, completed an informed consent form after the purpose of the study was explained to them (refer to appendix B). All teen mothers had consent forms completed by their parents or guardians (refer to appendix C). Teen mothers were advised to obtain informed consent from whoever they photographed, and if the person photographed was a minor, from the parent or guardian.

The participants were informed well in advance about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality concerns were given the deserved consideration (Cohen et al., 2007) as the participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. To maintain confidentiality, I used pseudonyms in my dissertation. The ethical issues related to photo-voice was discussed with participants. Verbal consent was obtained from all participants. The faces in the photographs, included in my dissertation, are blurred to protect the identity of the people depicted.

The informed consent document was written in the participant's mother tongue language (IsiZulu) to avoid any misunderstanding that might arise. I told my participants that participation in the research study was voluntarily and should they wish to withdraw from study at any stage, then they were free to do so.

3.3.8 Validity issues

I paid attention to key issues of validity at various stages of my research, for example, in the processes of data collection, data transcription and translation, data analysis, interpretation and theory generation. I also had to ensure that my findings were supported by the data that I had generated. In this regard, my supervisors, lecturers and my peers in the

Masters Education cohort programme in the School of Education played a valuable role in ensuring that the decisions I took, and the interpretations I made, were trustworthy and credible.

Triangulation of data generation techniques improved the validity of my research findings. As I have explained, I had used a range of data production techniques.

Although research methods such semi-structured individual and focus group interviews might have been more practical, I argue that teen mothers might not have been as willing to talk about their experiences to a one-off researcher rather than to somebody they saw and interacted with over a longer period of time.

Data collection through photo-voice proved to be challenging as out of the eight disposable cameras distributed amongst teen mothers, only seven were returned. One teen mother reported that she tried to take a picture of her baby during bath-time and the camera accidentally fell into a basin of water.

The first focus group meeting that was scheduled with participants had to be postponed. Two of the participants failed to honour the appointment as they had to return home to attend to their babies' needs. I had to reschedule meetings which proved difficult as many of the participants had other urgent responsibilities. I had to be very mindful that I was not compounding their burdens.

I realised that, as a researcher, it is impossible for one to be completely neutral and objective. As I listened to teen mothers narrating their life stories, I experienced difficult emotions such as sadness, hopelessness and anger. I was often stirred by the realities they experienced. At times I was moved to tears. However, I was humbled by the fact that the

participants appeared to be emotionally strong and reflected a sense of agency and control over their situations.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my research methodology and the design choices I made. I provided an explicit account of the entire research process and some of the complexities that were inherent in the study. The next chapter focuses on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of teen mothers who return to school after giving birth to their babies. The research methodology was a narrative inquiry. Photo voice is an innovative data generation tool and proved very valuable in this study. Teen mothers narrated their stories of their everyday lives as learners at a secondary school; and as mothers.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. In order to provide a rich account of the qualitative data generated, the findings and discussion sections have been combined in such a way that the findings will be presented in conjunction with the existing literature on teen mothers' life experiences. This literature will act as a means of providing the reader with greater insight into the findings. The discussion will be informed by the critical research questions of this study: What are teen mothers' everyday life experiences? How does school culture position teen mothers? How do teen mothers navigate their school life?

The narratives show how teen mothers experience and make sense of their world. Due to the large amount of data the study produced, I selected sections of the data that I believed to be the most fitting to provide evidence of an issue and that contributed most effectively to illuminating the research questions of the study. Direct quotes from the transcribed data have been included in order to substantiate the findings that emerged from the analysis of the data. The following themes emerged from the analysis of the data.

Table 4.1: Data analysis – themes and categories

1.	The pathologization of teenage mothers	Disappointment, embarrassment, immoral, violation of social norms, disgrace, oppression, moral stigma, marginalisation; burden to family.
2	Negotiating schooling spaces: dominant discourses	Exclusionary attitudes from peer and teachers Commitment to educational access Aspirations for the future Supportive teachers and peers
3	The complexities of accessing support	Lack of support, networks of support, health issues and accessing support in context of poverty.
4	Emotional geographies of motherhood and schooling	Fears, Sadness, Trauma, Humiliation and regret

4.2 Profiles of the participants

In this sub-section, I provide a brief portrait of each of the participants in the study. All of the participants live in a deep rural area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, characterised by poverty and under-development. The ethnic group is largely Zulus and their lives are governed by traditional norms and values. This community is engulfed by unemployment and HIV/AIDS, and as a result of this, some of the homes are headed by single parents and child headed families. This community is still embedded in cultural and traditional practices such as virginity testing for teenage girls. There are different religious affiliations in the community (Christianity, African traditional religion (Shembe) and Islam). There is a hospital which is surrounded by a few clinics and the town is not far away from this community.

*Nosipho*¹

She became a teen mother at the age of 16 in grade 11. She reported that her pregnancy was a 'mistake'. She was aware that if she engaged with unsafe sexual activity, the outcome could be pregnancy. She lives with her mother who is a domestic worker, grandmother, two sisters and her baby boy. She indicates that she feels she is a burden to her mother. Her mother was very disappointed and embarrassed about her pregnancy and motherhood but has since come to terms with it and accepted the situation. She expressed that her mother encouraged her to return to school soon after giving birth as she acknowledged the importance of education for a better future.

Nosipho reported that she broke up the relationship with her boyfriend and father to her baby son after she gave birth. He was her classmate at the time. Nosipho blames her boyfriend for her pregnancy and is still angry with him. However, she stated that her boyfriend's parents were supporting her baby financially. Her mother also provides financial support. Nosipho's grandmother cares for her baby while she is in school. She stated that being a teen mother had just changed her life in many ways. She says that her mother constantly reminds her of the shame she has brought to the family.

She revealed a sense of responsibility when she spoke about her daily routine. She begins her day very early in the morning by engaging in her duties as a mother, for example, bathing and feeding her baby and washing the baby's clothing. After school, she hurries back home to relieve her grandmother from care-giving duties as per agreement. She then completes regular household chores.

She is thrilled that she will finally write her grade 12 examination at the end of the year and hopes to go to a tertiary institution to further her studies.

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of participants

Fikile*

She became a teen mother at the age of 16 when in grade 9. She reported that she did not know who the father to her baby was because she had three boyfriends at the time. Thus, she receives no financial support from the father of her child.

Life is a struggle for Fikile. Her day begins very early in the morning as she has to see to the baby's needs before she takes him to the mother of a friend who cares for the baby when Fikile is in school.

Immediately after school she picks up the baby. She cares for him solely and often cannot find the time to complete her school work. She returned to school three months after giving birth. She had to repeat grade 9. She is very grateful that she has a second chance to go back to school. Her wish is to see herself graduating with a grade 12 certificate, and have a good job one day so that she can give her child a better life.

Jabulile*

She became a teen mother of twin babies at the age of 17 while studying for her grade 11. She reported that she had little exposure to sex education and had been participating in the community virginity testing ritual every year. At this ritual, she was told that if she attended the virginity testing ritual, she would not fall pregnant. She lives with her single mother who is the breadwinner in the family. The father had abandoned the family. She has two brothers and they all live in a four roomed home. Her grandmother taught her how to care for the babies.

Jabulile returned to school six months after the twins were born as one of the babies was in poor health after birth. She is deeply saddened that she has now added to her mother's burden by 'giving her two extra mouths to feed'. Her children's father is still at school and

cannot support her. She stated that being a mother of two children and a learner was extremely demanding.

She is grateful that her mother has encouraged her to return to school and that she has been given a second chance. She is very happy that she will write her final grade 12 examination at the end of the year. She dreams of obtaining employment after obtaining her grade 12 certificate. She wants to give her babies a bright future.

Zanele*

Zanele became a teen mother when she was 15 years old in grade 9. She and her three sisters live with her grandmother who supports them and Zanele's baby with her government grant for the aged. Zanele conceded that being a teen mother came with many problems and sacrifices. She is unable to socialise with her friends as the caring for her baby and her studies are her main priority. She is grateful to her boyfriend's family for financially supporting her baby.

She returned to school a year after her baby was born. She is grateful to a life orientation teacher who had encouraged her to focus on her education and to aim for the best in life.

Thoko*

She became pregnant at 16 and now she is 19 years old and in grade 12. She lives with her parents in a homestead. She acknowledged that she regrets the 'shame and disgrace' she brought to her family. Her father was so furious that he told her to pack all her belongings and leave his home. She had mixed feelings on whether to give her baby out for adoption but eventually decided that she needed to be with her baby. She was grateful to her aunt who took her and the baby into her family.

She is in need of financial support for her baby since her boyfriend deserted her and her aunt is not working. Life was very difficult. Then she met and fell in love with an older man. She decided to take her baby and went to live with him and he has supported her financially. This move has changed her life in many ways. However, she is grateful to her partner for hiring a person to care for the baby and encouraging her to return to school.

Noxolo*

She became a teen mother at the age of 16 in grade 9. She narrated her story of how she moved to KwaZulu-Natal from the Eastern Cape after her parent's death four years ago. She lives with her two young siblings in a shack. She explained that they lived in dire poverty, often going for days without food. She fell in love with a taxi driver and unfortunately she became pregnant. She gave birth to a baby boy. Soon after she gave birth, this man abandoned her. She narrated the trauma, humiliation and pain of being a teen mother and raising her baby alone. Out of desperation, she found herself drawn to the world of prostitution because she needed money to feed her baby and siblings and to return to school.

When she returned to school after four months, she found that school work was too difficult for her and she failed her exams in the second term. She had missed lessons but her classmates helped her to get on track and she passed her grade 9.

She expressed that her dream was to complete grade 12 and go to university and eventually find employment. She stated that she believes that prostitution is morally wrong but she has no alternate source of income for her family.

Nokuzola*

She became a teen mother in grade 9 at the age of 16. She lives with her unemployed mother who does some casual work for the neighbours.

She narrated that her mother was very angry when she discovered that she was pregnant, but eventually accepted the situation. She acknowledged that being a teen mother was difficult, more so because her baby had serious health problems. Nokuzola had to devote all her time to the baby and had no time for social interactions with her peers. She returned to school after a year of staying at home. She noted that she was anxious and afraid to return to school because all of her friends had moved to the grade ahead. She was the oldest learner in her grade 9 class and a mother. When she got home after school her mother handed the baby over to her.

She is indebted to her teachers and classmates who have supported and encouraged her. She is struggling financially but was grateful to the government Child Support Grant even though it was not enough. She has found it easy to juggle the responsibilities of being a teen mother and a learner simultaneously. She looks forward to completing grade 12. She hopes to obtain training and gain employment one day.



Figure 1: Me and my baby

I took this picture to show me and my baby after school. It is hard to be a learner and a mother. As soon as I come from school my mother hands over my baby to me. She wants to have a rest from taking care of him. You can see I did not even have a chance to take off my school uniform.

4.3 The pathologisation of the teen mother

Social constructionist theory of knowledge examines how cultural and social meanings develop within social contexts. Meanings are created in context by particular social groups (Patterson, 2004). In my study, the pathologised discourse is evident across the narratives and impacts the social reality of the teen mothers. Analysis of the narratives shows that teen mothers are seen as deviant and as people who have violated social norms and values. The teen mothers are seen as a social and moral problem and as objects of shame. These kinds of constructions have been documented in other studies in South Africa (Chigona & Chetty, 2008) and internationally (Nieterman, 2012). My study further reveals that the pathologised discourse leads to stigmatisation, oppression and marginalisation.

The following excerpt is illustrative of the above patterns that emerged in the analysis.

Being a teen mother made me afraid of my parents as they had invested their money in me and I dropped out of school. I was afraid even to breastfeed my baby in front of my mother because she kept on reminding me about the shame I had brought to the family. (Nosipho, individual interview)

The study revealed that constructions of teen mothers are, in a sense, paradoxical. On the one hand, they are constructed as deviant because they have disrupted and defied the

developmental norms of childhood and of being a child, and yet on the other hand, they are expected to navigate motherhood as an adult.

I did not have a proper shelter to stay with my baby since my father told me to pack my things and go from his house. My father scolded me that I had brought a shame in the family. I had mixed feeling whether to give my baby out for adoption or not but it was too late for that and I just told myself that this is my baby I must be with him through thick and thin.

(Thoko, individual interview)

From the above excerpt, it is clear that some parents go to the extent of banishing their daughters from the family home when they discover that their daughters are pregnant. In some cases, support to the teen mothers is withdrawn, leaving them totally alone and helpless in the huge responsibility before them – that of caring for a new born baby. Usually, such decisions and actions by parents are underpinned by anger and shame.

These stories emerged in the focus group interviews:

Sometimes my mother refused to help me with my child and reminded me about the shame I had brought to the family and also that I chose to be a teen mother, so I must suffer the consequences. (Nosipho)

My mother was very angry with me that I became a teen mother while at school, however, she eventually became into terms with it and accepted me but she was not willing to provide support of any kind. (Nokuzola)

In the excerpts above, one can also see a punitive narrative emerging. Nokuzola's mother chose not to help with the baby as a punitive measure for falling pregnant. The teen mother was left to bear all responsibilities of caring for the child on her own – that is, take on the

adult role of a mother with no support whatsoever. Parents distance themselves from these girls as a punitive measure.

Thoko's father requested her to leave the family home and fend for herself and her baby as an adult. In a somewhat contradiction, she is censured for bringing shame on the family because she is a child and had engaged in sexual activity which resulted in pregnancy and the birth of a child. Chigona and Chetty (2008), in their study, also found that some parents of teen mothers distanced themselves from their daughters and were reluctant to provide support. The data in this study also suggests that distancing was a strategy used by parents to show the community that the family does not sanction the deviant behaviour. The aim is to restore the repute of the family in the community.

The power of the dominant discourse is also revealed in how teachers respond to and construct teen mothers. For example, a participant alluded to the fact that there are teachers who seem to care about their welfare and well-being but do not want to be open about it given the strong negative attitudes and beliefs of their colleagues towards teenage pregnancy and early sexual activity amongst learners. Teachers may also be caught in the dilemma of supporting the teen mother on the one hand and being seen as sanctioning and affirming the behaviour deemed deviant.

Some teachers appear as if they care but they did not want to show it.

(Nosipho, focus group interview)

The excerpt above shows that Nosipho felt that some teachers showed a bit of concern about her situation but others lacked empathy with the teen mother's situation.

It is interesting to note that the participants seem to have internalised the ways in which their families and communities have socially constructed the teen mother. This is

reflected in the narratives below. They seem to have adopted the view that they are objects of shame, a burden and disappointment to their families and responsible for the wasted economic investment in their education by their parents. The narratives starkly reveal the emotionality associated with how they see themselves. The narratives reveal feelings of fear, shame, regret, hopelessness and helplessness. The issue of emotionality will be dealt with in more depth in a sub-section below.

Being a teen mother came with many hardships and I felt that I am really a burden to my mother. (Jabulile, focus group interview)

I became pregnant while doing grade 11 last year and I really felt that I had brought shame and disgrace to my family. At some stage I thought of giving out my baby for adoption but it was too late to consider it.

(Thoko, focus group interview)

As in the excerpts above, a few of the participants saw themselves as a financial burden to their families and were very remorseful about engaging in sexual activity at a young age and falling pregnant. The participants are keenly aware that the Child Support Grant from the government is totally inadequate to meet their financial needs as teen mothers. The study provides some support for recent research that has debunked the myth that girl's fall pregnant deliberately to access the Child Support Grant, or that they abandon their babies to the care of grandmothers while spending the social grant on their personal needs such as clothing etc. (Makiwane & Udjo, 2006; Richter, 2009). My study seems to suggest that there is no relationship between teen sexuality, pregnancy and the Child Support Grant. Another myth that my study challenges is that girls fall pregnant to prove their fertility and that pregnancy at a young age is accepted in the family and community. In respect of all participants, teen pregnancy was frowned upon and constructed as shameful in families and the community.

The narratives of the participants suggest that their pregnancy was associated with the lack of sexuality education and informed sexual decision making.

Further, they are aware that they have steered away from the norms and values of their families and the community. It is also clear from the data that parents are symbols of discipline, power, order and authority and perceive themselves to be providers in the family whose role it is to protect the reputation and standing of the family in the community.

4.4 Navigating schooling spaces

Grant and Hallman (2006) and Kaufman, Wet and Stadler (2001) state that the trend in South Africa is that more and more teen mothers do return to school after the birth of their children. The South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) makes it illegal to exclude teen mothers from school. According to the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, everybody has the right to basic education and it is illegal to deny teen mothers from continuing their schooling if they wished to do so. However, despite the protection of social policy, teen mothers in this study have to contend with various exclusionary pressures and lack of emotional and curriculum support in their goal to complete their education.

It is not easy to be a teen mother and a learner simultaneously I must tell you. The challenge I face now is poor marks, before I became a teen mother I was a top learner in Maths and Physics but now my marks had dropped because of stress. Even though I got some support but this life of being a teen mother and a learner is very stressful. (Nosipho, focus group interview)

My challenge was that I was not a clever person so I had to work harder to make up lost time but I am very grateful to my classmates. (Nokuzola, focus group interview)

There is no monitoring of the academic progress of the mothers. Participants reported that their grades had dropped markedly. However, Chigona and Chetty (2008) argue that in many schools it is virtually impossible for teachers to help teen mothers to make up for missed lessons. They draw attention to the complexities of the public school with over-crowded classrooms and lack of material and human resources. However, my study points to the urgent need for creative and innovative strategies on the part of schools to assist teen mothers to access quality education.

All seven teen mothers in the study voiced their fervent desire to complete their schooling, gain employment and escape the trap of poverty, as evident in the narratives below.

Anyway, my wish is to finish grade 12 and go to the university and have a good job for my baby and I wish my child does not do what I did and get pregnant while still at school because it comes with lot of problems.

(Zanele, individual interview)

Being a teen mother means that I have the responsibility to take care of my baby and also I must get my school work right because education is very important to get me wherever I want to be. And I have a baby to live for.

(Thoko, individual interview)

Teen mothers deserve to be given a second chance to complete their schooling. As a teen mother I need a job that will help me to fulfil the role

of being a parent. Yeah Ma'am, I am very happy that I will write my final examination this year and I think I have fulfilled my wish of completing my schooling. (Jabulile, focus group interview)

The excerpts above reveal that teen mothers have dreams that they wish to realize in the future. They are deeply indebted to the fact that they have had a second chance to complete their schooling. Grant and Hallman (2006) and Bhana et al. (2010) argue that despite various problems that teen mothers face, they strive to return to school and are determined to complete their schooling to improve the quality of life for their babies. The above narratives reflect their agency and resilience but they need sustained support.

Sadly, the study showed that the seven teen mothers experience oppression in various ways in the schooling context. Some teen mothers felt teachers did not understand their situation and they were expected to perform and behave just like any other learner in their respective classes. It is a contradiction that education policy imperatives enables their re-entry into the school system after the birth of the child but the school as an institution and its culture can be exclusionary and oppressive. There are no social support structures that monitor the well-being of the mothers, for example, in assisting the mother with lessons missed or providing counselling and emotional support. The narratives below provide some insight into this issue.

When I went back to school after a year, I encountered problems because there was no support I got from the teachers; I was mocked and ridiculed by the classmates. This was what one of the teachers had to say to me, "So you have decided to engage yourself with sexual activities at your age. Mind you! My girl, I do not want any teen mother in my class because you... teen mothers...you have got bad attitude when you come back to

school, you think you are above us teachers". I was very scared of this teacher and I sometimes I dodge her class. (Zanele, individual interview)

The narratives show that the teen mothers are constantly reminded by certain teachers that they are deviants who have violated social norms. The stories told by Zanele suggest that the teacher constructs all teen mothers as the aberrant, deviant 'other' who is not worthy of being in her class, and as having arrogant attitudes. Chigona and Chetty (2008) in their study found that teachers often perceive teen mothers as irresponsible individuals. Teachers embarrassed teen mothers because they had stereotyped them and held prejudice against them. The study by Bhana et al. (2010) revealed that many teachers regard the presence of teen mothers in their classrooms as a threat to the collective academic performance of the class and classroom harmony. In particular, teachers question teen mothers' ability to cope with the school's demands, implying that any kind of educational endeavour from the school is a waste of time.

Zanele navigated this experience of oppression and stigmatisation by missing the particular teacher's class – a strategy that would negatively impact her access to education. However, it does seem that the teen mothers in the study need to be equipped with alternate strategies to cope or to build self-efficacy, for example, accessing support from caring peers and their own network. Self-efficacy can be described as the teen mother's belief in her capability to organise and execute a course of action required to successfully accomplish her goals of completing her schooling. Teen mothers with high sense of self-efficacy are generally more open to change and more willing to return to school and complete their schooling.

The narratives of learners also indicate that they do at times experience exclusionary attitudes from certain peers at school.

Some learners, especially the boys laugh and mock at me and say somebody smells of breast milk here. During life orientation lessons especially, if the lesson is about teenage pregnancy, they would look at me and pretend to cry like baby, and try to give my baby names. (Zanele, focus group interview)

Zanele found this oppression from her peers particularly hurtful and painful. From the excerpts above, it is clear that teen mothers are stigmatized and prejudiced by both teachers and peers at school. They have difficulty in dealing with mockery, scorn and ridicule they experience in their everyday schooling lives. Kelly (2000), in his research, argues that alienation and stigmatization experienced by teen mothers in schools is not only from fellow learners and teachers but also from society. Thus, negative messages result in stigmatization are filtered both in schools and in the society, causing teen mothers to feel excluded wherever they are.

All the teen mothers voiced that negotiating schooling and parenting was a challenge and struggle, particularly in the case of Jabulile who had twin babies. However, in spite of all these hardships, she showed eagerness to be a responsible mother to her children and dedicate herself to her school work.

It is important for one to note that teen mothers are often constructed as irresponsible individuals who lack maturity, knowledge and skills. However, in this study the participant's responses reflected a positive view of motherhood. They wanted to be good mothers. They accepted their responsibilities as parents and were concerned about the well-being and quality of health of their children. There was clear evidence of strength, resiliency and agency. They were driven and determined to complete their schooling, find employment and build a better

life for their children. Despite the grim picture above, some of the narratives reveal heartening and positive stories.

But my mathematics teacher appeared to be helpful and gave me courage and helped me catch up with missed lesson though I did not miss much of my schoolwork. I was just absent for four days only. Most of my classmates were so helpful too ... with other stuff. For example, they assisted me with notes that were written during my absent and it was to catch up because it was a day lessons. (Nosipho, individual interview)

Nosipho is doing well academically despite being a teen mother. Her subjects include Mathematics and Physical Science. Her reports show that she is a hard working individual. She said that she decided to break up her relationship with her boyfriend in order to focus on her studies. Nosipho expressed her appreciation that one of her teachers had been extremely supportive.

4.5 The complexities and tensions in accessing support

Of the seven teen mothers who participated in my study, only Thoko was ostracised by the family and ordered to leave home after the pregnancy was discovered. She was able to access support from kind members of the extended family, for example, the grandmother and aunt. The study found that most participants were of the opinion that they needed more support to negotiate motherhood and schooling and complete their schooling successfully.

Five teen mothers indicated that they had no help with the care of their child. At the young age at which they became pregnant, they had no knowledge of how to be a parent and see to the well-being of their children. There were times when they were in dire need of help in this regard. Below, a poignant narrative from Thoko illustrates this.

I became a teen mother at 16 and now I am 19 years old in grade 12. I felt ashamed of myself because I did not know how to bath my baby and I was afraid even to sleep with him. (Thoko, focus group interview)

As a teen mother I have to endure the pains of raising a baby alone and I was struggling financially. I have a challenge that both my parents are not working. Often, I do not know where to get money to buy baby formula and nappies and clothes for my twin babies since my boyfriend was also a learner at school...All this makes it hard for cope with responsibility of being a mom and a learner at the same time. (Jabulile, focus group interview)

From the excerpt above, Jabulile was struggling financially; however, she was very grateful that she was receiving a child grant for her twin babies. She acknowledged that the child grant was of great help to her although it was not adequate. She wishes that she had funds to pay for a caregiver for her twin babies and her school fees. It is interesting how Jabulile utilises part of the meagre Child Support Grant and the myth that the grant is abused by teen mothers is debunked.

I also use a small portion of the child grant to buy and sell some sweets at school in order to get a bus fare to travel to and from school. (Jabulile, individual interview)

Noxolo reported that she had no immediate family members to turn to for emotional and material support. The story below is alarming, from the perspective of the rights of the child.

I fell in love with an old and working man...out of poverty...I was in need of shelter and financial support and I got pregnant. Unfortunately the man

ran away soon after I gave birth to my baby and I had to raise my baby alone. Through this trauma I found myself hooked in prostitution because I needed money to feed my baby, to return to school and for shelter.

(Noxolo, individual interview)

Noxolo admits that she is a sex worker, out of sheer desperation. She reported that her siblings assisted her to care for baby on the nights she worked. She was fully aware of the risks of being a sex worker and admits that at times she fails to negotiate the use of safe sex. Her photo voice narrative is presented below.

I took this picture above because I wanted to show a part of my life as a teen mother and as sex worker. This is my friend Thenjiwe (pseudonym), we both work as sex workers after school. It is difficult for me to cope with the stress of being a teen mother, learner and sex worker at night. But Ma'am, there is nothing I could do because with this job I could feed so many mouths; pay my school and the person to look after baby while I was at school during the day and work at night. Having engaged myself with this kind of job had made me a stronger and more focus person. (Noxolo, photo voice)*



Figure 2: my life as a sex worker (Noxolo)

When Noxolo talked about her hopes and dreams:

The challenge was that I raised my baby on my own and I was struggling financially despite this I see teen mothers as strong group of people who need to be given a chance to go back to school and to succeed. My dream is to complete grade 12 and go to university and get a better job than being a sex worker. I am just doing it for the sake of my baby and my schooling. Even though I have to work at night, I do not forget my school work. Such kind of life had made me strive for better marks and was able to pass to the next grade. (Noxolo, individual interview)

It is interesting to acknowledge that despite her adversity, Noxolo is determined to sustain her commitment to her studies. She is very positive about her future and clear about her aspirations and goals.

Thoko narrated how she tried to navigate the barrier of poverty by having a relationship with a taxi driver in the area.

I was in great need of financial support to maintain my baby and also to return to school so I decided to date an older man who was working as a truck driver. You know... Ma'am... I ended up staying with this man in his rental room and it was tough because it meant that I should do washing and cooking for him, take care of my baby and do my schoolwork to.

(Thoko, individual interview)

In the photo-voice activity, Thoko related her story of how she had a relationship with a truck driver to access financial support. An interesting dynamic here is that the truck driver gave her a home to live in when her father ordered her out of the family home. She revealed that this man accepted her with her baby whole-heartedly. Further, the man encouraged her to return to school. These findings suggest that, as researchers, we could homogenise the experiences of teen mothers. In the case of Thoko, her relationship with an older man has proved to be a turning point in her life, for the better. He has had a positive impact on her life outcomes thus far.

The photograph Thoko took depicts the home she lives in.

I did not have money to support myself and the baby because my boyfriend was nowhere to be seen. I was just struggling on my own as a result, I fell in love with a man who was a truck driver living alone in the rental room and I ended up staying with him. Staying with this man changed my life in many ways because now I was a teen mother, acting as a wife to him and a learner too. I realized that it was very hard to cope with such

responsibilities but what I liked most about this man was that he encouraged me to go back to school.

I took this photograph because I wanted to show you where I lived together with my baby. I found it as new home as I and my baby were warmly welcome. It was not nice place to stay with a baby especially but I needed a financially support and shelter (Thoko, photo voice).



Figure 3: My new home

In a study by Mfono (2003), on teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood, it was found that teen mothers often have relationships with older men and are involved in unprotected sexual activities as a means to survive their circumstances. Chigona and Chetty (2008) concur with Mfono (2003), that in families with low-socio-economic status teen mothers are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Kanku and Mash (2010) warn that teen mothers in such situations are prone to sexually transmitted infections such STIs and HIV because they fail to use protective measures with older male partners – in particular those who hold economic power, as is the case with my study.

The study raises various issues, such as: the abuse and vulnerability of teen mothers in contexts of poverty; the power dynamics that play out in contexts of poverty; and the limited options for teen mothers living in poverty. South Africa's social development instruments,

such as the Child Support Grant, are totally inadequate to meet the needs of teen mothers and their children.

Of the seven teen mothers, only two teen mothers receive the Child Support Grant. The other five teen mothers reported that they did not have the required documents. Further, they do not have the time to go to the Social Welfare offices and negotiate the long queues of people. This finding is, again, contrary to the perception that girls become teen mothers because they want to receive child grants.

Deeper analysis of the narratives show that there are networks of support that include mothers, grandmothers, fathers of the children, families of the father of the children, friends, and teachers. This is reflected in the photo voice narrative below as a participant explains the photo she took,

I took this picture of my granny. She takes care of my baby and my sister's five year old son when I go to school. I am very grateful to my grandmother for the support she gives me. Through her support, I am able to cope with motherhood and my schooling life together.



Figure 4: My grandmother the care giver

The photo reveals the starkness of poverty. The home is bare with very few household resources. Fikile took the picture below of her physically disabled aunt who offered to look after her baby so that she could return to school.

This is my aunt. She cares for my child despite her disability; she can use her left hand and right leg. I have to wake up early in the morning and cook the porridge and prepare other stuff for my two year old baby to make my aunt's life easier. I wish to complete grade 12 and get a job so that I can pay back to my aunt for what she has done for me. (Fikile, photo voice)

Fikile lives with her aunt since her parents passed away a year ago. Her child was two years old when she returned to school. She reported that it was hard for her to find a caregiver for her baby till her aunt offered her help.



Figure 5: My disabled aunt helping with care of my baby

Many of the support networks are fragile and easily fractured. An over-riding intersecting factor in the lives of teen mothers and their families is poverty and under-development in the community. The challenges of a female headed household are narrated by Jabulile.

My mother is the breadwinner, since my father left us. She has to provide for my two brothers. Now my mother has an extra two mouths to feed because the father to my twins was still a learner at school. (Jabulile, focus group interview)

Six of them acknowledged the financial support they received from family members. However, the study showed that all the families live in poverty and experience pervasiveness of unemployment and under-development, suggesting that support is fragile.

I was grateful to my mother for giving me all support she could. Through my mother's support I was inspired to work harder in order to go to grade 12. I focused on my studies because I had my baby to take care of; I need to provide my child with a bright future. (Nosipho, individual interview)

Three of the seven teen mothers indicated that they did have support from mothers and grannies. However, outside schooling times they were expected to take on full responsibility for household chores and the care of the baby which does make it difficult to complete studies at home.

The issue of health and well-being of the teen mothers and their babies emerged in the study. The study raises questions about the quality of health care for teen mothers and their babies in this rural context. Health facilities such as clinics and hospitals are a long distance from where they live. Two of the teen mothers narrated that they had complications during labour and the birth of their babies.

Unfortunately I gave birth to a premature baby because I was very sick during pregnancy. (Nokuzola, focus group interview)

Nokuzola explained how she had given birth to a premature and underweight baby and was often very ill during her pregnancy. She reflected that her poor diet and lack of nutritious foods may have been a contributory factor. Kanku and Mash (2010), in their study, found that teen mothers are at high risk to give birth to premature babies, and through a Caesarean section. One of the reasons is that their bodies have not yet fully developed to give birth naturally.

The study showed that the teen mothers were resilient despite adversity and the personal vulnerability they experience. They do return to school. The enabling factors are varied, as indicated in the discussion above, and emerge from different and often complex sources, for example, the taxi driver, the truck driver, the aunt, the mother and the grannies. The taxi driver was not the father of her child, according to Thoko yet he supported her and encouraged her to return to school. The tensions between a relationship with an older man and the inherent power relations on the one hand, and the supportive nature of that

relationship on the other hand, are an interesting finding in this study. This is indeed a complex issue that needs further investigation.

4.6 The emotional geographies of motherhood and schooling

Hargreaves (2000; 2001), in his research on teachers and teacher identity, put forward the notion of ‘emotional geographies’. This concept refers to the closeness and/or distance in social interactions and relationships of human beings that create and produce the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, in interaction with other social actors and about our social realities. In this study, I have used the notion of emotional geographies to examine the emotionality of the teen mothers and what generated their diverse emotions as they navigated motherhood and schooling. My analysis of the data foregrounded complex emotions that the teen mothers experienced; ranging from fear, shame, trauma, humiliation and sadness, as reflected in the following narratives:

Being a teen mother made me feel ashamed of myself for shame and disgrace I had brought to my family. (Thoko, focus group interview)

Unfortunately for me the man ran away soon after I gave birth to my baby and I had to raise my baby alone or rather without a father figure.

Through this trauma and humiliation of being abandoned by the father to my baby, I found myself turning to prostitution. (Noxolo, focus group interview)

Drawing from the teen mothers’ narratives about their experiences, it is clear that these young mothers were vulnerable individuals whose experiences generated a range of emotions. In most instances these emotions emerge from pathologising discourses that circulate in the teen mothers’ lives. The data illuminated the experience of constant anxiety and fear about

whether they had adequate material resources for their children, resources to enable quality care and a caregiver to assist when they were in school. There was also the trauma of abandonment and stigmatisation.

Schwandt (2003) explains that such deficit discourses are socially created in particular situated contexts. Thus, as Berger and Luckman (1966) would argue, the emotional geographies of teen mothers in this study are socially defined; and have significance for how they experience their young lives. Hargreaves (2001) states that these emotional geographies are linked to the culture and context of individuals and are embedded in their life conditions and social interactions. Hargreaves (2001) also argues that emotional experiences of individuals influence their identities as well as their relationships with others.

The concern is that the teen mothers have no access to counselling facilities in any form; neither in their school nor community, to help them deal with the multiple emotionalities they experience. Such services can help build resiliencies in the face of often shattered identities.

4.7 Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the experiences of teen mothers who return to school after giving birth to their babies. Seven teen mothers from a secondary school participated in this study. It seems from the findings of this study above that dominant discourse in society play a pivotal role in the participants' experiences of being teen mothers.

Drawing from teen mothers' narratives, one can conclude that it is really hard for these emotional teen mothers to raise children on their own without their children's fathers. Swartz, Bhana, Richter and Versfeld (2013) argue that South Africa has a high rate of absent fathers due to gender-based violence and migrant labour, generally.

A study by Swartz and Bhana (2009) revealed that many young fathers want to be active parents and have a strong sense of responsibility towards their children. They are however, confronted by various barriers to fulfilling parenting roles. Of the seven teen mothers, two teen mothers acknowledged that fathers to their children were also learners in the same secondary school. In other words, these young fathers were still financially dependent on their parents. One teen mother expressed that she did not expect anything from her boyfriend's family because she knew that his parents were unemployed and in poor health.

The relationship with the father of the baby is paramount but sometimes the relationship will end when the pregnancy is discovered. The father of the baby might deny paternity, which usually adds to the emotional pain of the breakup. In many cases, whether the relationship is sustained depends on the circumstances of the father, particularly his financial status.

When teen mothers return to school, they are faced with a number of problems, for instance, school management and teachers do not see the importance of academic and emotional support to help them access education. The school does fulfil policy imperatives in allowing the teen mothers to return to school. However, there is little done to ensure curriculum access and an inclusive, caring schooling environment.

I believe that children and teen mothers are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). In the act of narrating their experiences the teen mothers, the study reveals how they try to negotiate their multiple identities and provides insight into various subject positions they take to survive and to access education.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief overview of the study presented in this dissertation. It will summarise key issues the study raises and discuss the limitations of the study. It also attempts to identify areas for further research. Finally, my personal reflections as a researcher are presented.

5.2 Background and Focus of the Study

The nature of teen motherhood is a concern internationally, and in South Africa (Mokgalobone, 1999; McGaha-Garnett et al., 2013) particularly in relation to their access to quality education, their social and emotional development, their quality of life and their mental health and well-being.

As a teacher I have worked directly with teen mothers over the years. For this reason, I decided to focus my research on the lives of teen mothers as they negotiate secondary school. More importantly, I wanted to give voice to this sector of the school population who are seldom heard. Holloway and Valentine (2000) have argued that children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live. I was influenced by these debates that emanated from the research field, new sociology of childhood (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 199a). In addition, drawing on insights from the research area known as children's geographies, I wanted to try to understand the teen mothers' deep contextual experiences.

I also came into the study with the assumption that children construct their social realities. My study shows that their realities are local and very specific to spaces and places of their lives. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of a small group of teen mothers who have returned to school to complete their schooling after the birth of babies. This study attempted to explore the following research questions: What are everyday experiences of teen mothers? How are they positioned within the school culture? And how do they navigate their schooling lives as teen mothers?

5.3 Theoretical and methodological issues

The study was a narrative inquiry and social constructionist theory informed my data analysis and interpretation. Through narrative inquiry I aimed to obtain insight into the subjective life experiences of teen mothers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Drawing on social constructionist theory (Burr, 2005; Gergen & Gergen, 2003) I sought to understand human lives in a particular social setting and to gain a nuanced, situated view of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2004).

Using photo voice as a visual method data generation tool was innovative method (Wang, 1999). I had deep concerns about whether I could build my competences in using this technique. But I knew that this was a creative way to attain my aim of giving ‘voice’ to my participants and to represent their realities. Looking back at my study, I firmly believe that photo voice was indeed a powerful tool through which I actively engaged my research participants as partners in my research. I was taken into their world – the complex places and spaces of their everyday lives. As Mitchell, de Lange, Moletsane, Stuart and Buthelezi (2005) indicated, the photographs bring out the multiple layers of reality.



Figure 6: Participants select the photographs to present at the photo voice focus group



Figure 7: The researcher and a teen mother

I also want to highlight the benefits of triangulation and data sources when using the narrative inquiry and photo voice. In this study it was particularly important to incorporate these methods in order to ensure rich and in-depth data.

5.4 Summary of key findings

The findings of this study reveal that a pervasive pathologising discourse circulated in the lives of the teen mothers within schooling, family and community contexts. The discourses results in exclusions, stigmatisation, humiliation and generates a range of negative emotions in the mothers and their families.

All teen mothers in the study were able to gain re-entry into a school after the birth of their children. However, there is limited support from the school to enable them to navigate the barriers to accessing quality education and the lack of curriculum access that they experience. Schools have no structures to monitor and provide academic, emotional and counselling support to these learners. There are networks of support within extended families and community members but these appear to be rather fragile in a context of dire poverty and under-development. The study also illuminates the emotional geographies of the teen mothers and the multiple contextual influences that shape their emotional lives. Poverty and its effects are over-riding barriers to the well-being and quality of the life of teen mothers and their babies. However, despite the adversities teen mothers face, there is evidence of resiliency and agency in the complex ways they negotiate their lives and commit to the goal of graduating from high school.

5.5 Strengths of the study

All research projects have strengths and weaknesses and constraints and opportunities which often cannot be anticipated at the outset. A strength of my study is the rich data that it generated through narrative inquiry and the participatory data production tools that I used, in particular photo-voice in which the participants visually documented their experiences. The triangulation of data generation tools and data sources was also a strength of the study.

5.6 Limitations of the study

In this study, I encountered a range of obstacles and constraints, and these limitations were important to acknowledge for the benefit of framing my findings as well as providing recommendations on how they could be avoided in future research. One limitation of the study was the relatively small sample size of teen mothers who agreed to participate in this study. As my study was a narrative inquiry and based on social constructionist theory, I was comfortable with using a small sample since the aim of this study was to cover a wide diversity of views and experiences rather than a large number of participants. I argued that the teen mothers' circumstances might have contributed to my difficulty in engaging them in the research.

The participatory method, photo-voice tool also proved to be challenging as I was a novice regarding the use of the tool. However, the study of other empirical studies and guidance from my supervisors provided me with the necessary knowledge and skills. There were difficulties that arose which I had not anticipated. Only seven out of the eight participants returned the disposable cameras. One teen mother reported that she tried to take a picture of her baby during bath-time and the camera accidentally fell into the basin of water. The quality of a few of the photos was not good, and hence, could not be included in the dissertation. However, the photo-narratives were rich.

Further, the first focus group meeting that was scheduled with participants had to be postponed. Two of the participants failed to honour the appointment as they had to return home to attend to their babies' needs. I had to re-schedule meetings which proved difficult as many of the participants had other urgent responsibilities. I had to be very mindful that I was not compounding their burdens through participation in my study.

5.7 Recommendations of the study

Burr (2005) argues that discourses are not reproduced in a vacuum or divorced from society but rather they are influenced and shaped by their social context and by the speakers who invoke them. Therefore, more research is needed at the level of government policy in terms of creating an awareness of these discourses that stigmatize these teen mothers. Furthermore, targeted intervention is required at the level of policy making within the Department of Basic Education, and at school level, to ensure that teen mothers can access quality education and an inclusive schooling environment once they re-enter the education system. Professional development of teachers and school management is crucial so that they understand and intervene to ensure that schools are more responsive to the needs of teen mothers.

The emotional trauma that teen mothers undergo was illuminated in the study and points to the need for counselling and support mechanisms in schools and communities to improve their mental health and well-being. Partnerships between schools and community forums and structures are needed to assist in this regard, for example, faith based organisations such as churches. Finally, sexuality programmes need to be contextual in nature and needs to examine how teen sexuality intersects with other issues in communities such as deep poverty, fractured families etc.

5.8 Implications of the study

The study points to areas for further research so as to enhance current scholarship on teenage pregnancy:

- The emotional geographies of teen mothers.
- Sexuality programmes and to what extent current these programmes are located in situated contexts, for example, how do programmes include, and

deal with, the intersection of sexuality and poverty and under-development, fragile and fractured families; the issue of stigma in communities etc.

- Disrupting the myths embedded in constructions of teen mothers.
- Inclusion and exclusion experienced by teen mothers in school contexts.
- Agency and resiliency of teen mothers in school and community.
- Teen mothers who graduate from the education system: Where are they and what are their lived realities?

5.9 Researcher Reflections

I realise that as a researcher, it was impossible for one to be completely neutral and objective in researching teen mothers. As I listened to teen mothers narrating their life stories, I experienced difficult emotions such as sadness, hopelessness and anger. At times I could not contain myself emotionally. I found myself in tears after my research sessions with the participants. However, discussions with my peers in the Masters of Education: Social Justice Cohort group and supervisors served as a form of de-briefing for me. I tried not to merely focus on the teen mothers from a victim lens. I was humbled by the fact that all of them were emotionally strong, resilient despite the adversities and reflected a sense of agency and control over their situations. They clung to the goal of graduating from high school, accessing employment one day, and ensuring their children a better life in the future.

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Appendix A: Consent Letter for School

The Principal

_____ High School

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at your school

I am a Masters student in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I plan to undertake a study titled: *The Geographies of Schooling and Motherhood: Narratives of teen mothers in KwaZulu-Natal*

We hereby request your permission to conduct a study at the ---- School. The participants in the study will be learners from your school. They will be required to participate in individual interviews and focus group interviews that are expected to last between 90-120 minutes in two sessions.

Please note that

- The school and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The learners will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The school's or the participant's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All learner responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde (Mrs)

Cell: 0722960424

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Tel: 084 2459096 /031 2603499/2494

Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If permission is granted to conduct the research at your school, please fill in and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project at the_____ Primary School. I understand that learners are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix B: Consent from Learners

Dear learner

Re: Request your participation in a research project

It was good to meet you on _____. As I told to you in our meeting, I am a student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I would like do a study called, *The Geographies of Schooling and Motherhood: Narratives of teen mothers in KwaZulu-Natal* I would like to understand the life of a teen mother who has returned to school after having a baby. We are the project leaders for the research project.

We kindly ask your permission to participate in the project. The participants in the study will be learners from the various schools. We value what you think about your schooling and how you are experiencing schooling. You will be required to allow me to interview you individually and in focus groups. The interviews will be approximately. 90-120 minutes. I will meet in two sessions on two different days that is convenient for you. I will be requesting permission from your parents/caregivers to work with you on the project. .

Please note that

- The school and learners will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- You will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
- The schools or your identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All learner responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- You will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what you do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if you give us permission.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

I thank you.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde (Mrs)

Cell: 0722960424

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Tel: 084 2459096 /031 2603499/2494

Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If you agree to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby agree to take part in the project at my school. I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time I want to.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix C: Consent for Parent/caregiver

Dear parent/caregiver

Re: Request your child's participation in a research project

We kindly ask your permission for your child, _____, to participate in a research project *The Geographies of Schooling and Motherhood: Narratives of teen mothers in KwaZulu-Natal*. We value what your child thinks about his schooling and how he/she is experiencing schooling. You will be required to allow us to interview your child individually and in focus groups. The interviews will be approx... 90-120 minutes. I will meet them in two sessions on two different days that is convenient for the child. We will be requesting permission from your child to work with me in the project. .

Please note that

- The school and learners will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- Your child expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect his/her own personal opinion.
- The school's or your child's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All your child's responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your child's real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, your child will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to him/her.
- Your child will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what he/she do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if you and your child give us permission.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

I thank you.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde (Mrs)

Cell: 0722960424

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Tel: 084 2459096

031 2603499/2494

Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If you agree to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name), the parent /caregiver of ----- (Name of child) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby agree to my child taking part in the project. I understand that he/she can withdraw from the project at any time I want to...

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix D: Interview Guide

A. Biographical Information

Participants' age: _____

Grade: _____

B. What are everyday life experiences of teen mothers?

What does being a teen mother mean to you?

How do you cope with responsibilities of being a mother and a learner simultaneously?

How do you balance everything?

C. How are teen mothers positioned in the school culture?

How did school teachers and peer learners respond to you when they found out about your pregnancy?

What sort of response did you get from the school when you returned after birth of the baby?

How did your family respond when they found about your pregnancy?

D. How do teen mothers navigate their school life?

How do you feel about being a teen mother attending school?

What are the challenges for you as a teen mother and a learner simultaneously?

What are your views about teen mothers and schooling?

What are your aspirations for the future?

Appendix E: Turnitin Report

Turnitin Originality Report https://turnitin.com/newreport_printview.asp?eq=1&eb=1&esm=9

Turnitin Originality Report

Dissertation by Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde

From M ED Dissertations Jan and Feb 2014 (MED Cohort)

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Assignment:
Paper ID: [386416835](#)

Appendix F: Ethical Clearance Certificate – University of KwaZulu-Natal

 **UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

26 April 2013

Professor A Muthukrishna 845
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0250/013
Project title: The geographies of children's schooling in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries:
Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers

Dear Professor Muthukrishna

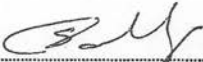
Expedited approval

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)


/px

cc Dr P Morojele
cc Academic leader researcher Dr MN Davids
cc School administrator Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Professor S Collings (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za /
snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



Appendix G: Department of Education, KZN Permission



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8

Prof. N Muthukrishna & Dr P Morojele
P O Box X03
ASHWOOD
3605

Dear Prof. Muthukrishna and Dr Morojele

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING IN KWAZULU-NATAL: NARRATIVES OF CHILDREN, PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 May 2013 to 31 March 2014.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

Umlazi District
Sisonke District
Zululand District

Othukela District
Pinetown District
Illembe District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 19 November 2013

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 Fax: 033 392 1203

Appendix H: Letter from Language Editor

D. G. Naidoo

84 Capricorn Crescent

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South Africa

3201

sirgay@mtloaded.co.za

C: 083 481 5747

H: 033 3915242

17 February 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have undertaken language editing on the dissertation:

The geographies of schooling and motherhood: Narratives of teen mothers in KwaZulu-Natal

by **Rosemary Nobuhle Nkabinde**



D.G.Naidoo

(Language Editor)