

**Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to
Girls' Access and Success in Education in a
South African Township: A Qualitative Study**

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degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I, Sithembile Judith Mcambi declare that:

- a) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- b) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- c) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Researcher: Sithembile Judith Mcambi

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

This dissertation is submitted with my approval.



Professor Relebohile Moletsane

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aimed to examine the ways in which pregnancy and motherhood influenced a group of 16 purposely selected teenage girls living in a South African township to drop out from school. The study addressed the following research question: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' access and success in school?*

Located within the social constructivist paradigm, the study utilised a qualitative research design to address the research question. The data generation methods included in-depth individual interviews with the 16 participants, field notes and my reflective research journal. To understand the factors that influenced the girls' or their parents'/guardians' decision making regarding schooling, data analysis is informed by the gender socialisation theory (Elkin, 1968) and Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory. Data was analysed using the thematic analysis method and the themes were used to inform the findings from the study.

The key findings of this study suggest that most of the pregnancies were unplanned and/or unwanted. As such, they brought feelings of shame, regret and remorse to the participants as they felt that they had disappointed their parents and families. The findings suggest that a number of factors forced the girls to dropout of school. Some were suspended from school (despite the country's policies prohibiting their exclusion), while others were pulled out of schools by their parents or guardians as punishment or to look after their children. Further, the girls reported feeling overwhelmed by the competing demands of motherhood and schooling, and were therefore, forced to withdraw from school to take care of their children. Stigma and rejection, withdrawal of support, including childcare and financial support, also forced some of the teenage mothers to leave school. At the personal and social level, discrimination and bullying from peers, inability to balance mothering responsibilities with school work also led to school drop out. However, for some, they saw their dropout from school as a temporary setback, and were determined to go back to school and complete. Their

reasoning was that, with an education, they would be able to get out of poverty and to better take care of their children.

The thesis draws implications for policy makers, curriculum developers, teachers and others stakeholders regarding interventions that would ensure adequate policy implementation in schools, and provision of support for pregnant girls and young women in the community and schools to enable them to stay and complete their schooling.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late sister Nomthandazo “Thimama” Kubheka. Thank you for always believing in me.

Ngiyabonga Mbuyazi.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSG	Child Support Grant
DoE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EFA	Education for All
HEART	Health and Education Advice and Resources Team
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
SASA	South African Schools Act
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
SADC	South African Development Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNPFA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ULEPD	Umlazi Local Economic Development Plan
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

With an estimated 15 million women under the age of 20 giving birth every year in the world (Yates, 2011; Dev, Rabi, Poobalan, Van Teijlingen & Chapman, 2010), teenage pregnancy and early motherhood continue to be serious concerns internationally. Furthermore, the sub-Saharan Africa region is one of the regions with the highest proportion of teenage births in the world (The Population Reference Bureau, 2017). In the South African context, despite the slight decline of teenage births from 13.2% in 1998 to 12.4% in 2016 (National Department of Health, 2016, p. 40), teenage pregnancy and early motherhood continues to have a detrimental effect on the lives of girls and young women. In particular, disrupts their schooling, sometimes temporarily, but often leading to dropping out of school prior to successful completion (Makgalabone, 1999; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Ngabaza (2010) poignantly states that no matter how we interpret the figures regarding teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, there is some link between pregnancy and drop out. Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood do not only impact the lives of the individuals concerned, but those of their families and communities as well. In Sierra Leone, the report, *Reducing Teenage Pregnancy* (Stark, MacFarlane, King, Lamin, Lilley et al, 2014), suggests that all teenage pregnancies irrespective of their outcome, have adverse consequences for the individual girls, their parents and the community at large. This has implications for policy makers and services providers, including education and other social services (Gyan, 2013).

In South Africa, recent media reports indicate an upsurge in teenage pregnancy in many schools. For example, among the various news headlines in recent years have been: ‘SA school pregnancy reaches early primary school levels’ (Bolwana, 2013); ‘SA pupils had more than 200 000 babies in 3 years’ (Masondo, 2014a); ‘Teen pregnancies hit 99 000 a year’ (Masondo, 2014b); ‘Schoolgirl births ‘unacceptably high’ in South Africa’ (O’Regan, 2021) and ‘Teen pregnancies in SouthAfrica jump 60% during COVID-19 pandemic’ (Save the Children, 2021). Yet, as indicated above, research reports suggest that there has been a decline in the rates of pregnancy among teenagers in the country. For example, the United Nations World Fertility Patterns report (2015, p. 18) shows that the birth rate for teenagers (births per 1 000 women aged between 15 to 19 years) in South Africa has been on the decline over the past two decades dropping from 91 per 1 000 between 1990 and 1995 to 51 between 2010 and 2015. Similarly, local literature (Mkhwanazi, 2013; Statistics South Africa, 2010a; Department of Basic Education, 2010) concludes that there is a decline in the fertility rate in South Africa and that the country has and the majority of the teenage mothers that carry on with their schooling after childbirth (Ardington, Branson, Lam, Leibrandt, Martelelo et al, 2012). A Health Systems Trust (2015, p. 281) report also suggests that the number of girls under 18 years of age who give birth in South African public health facilities has been slowly declining: from 9.3% in 2005 to 7.4% in 2014.

The documented decline in the rates of teenage pregnancy in South Africa notwithstanding, an unacceptably high number of teenagers still experience early, unwanted and unplanned pregnancies. As Willan (2013, p. 7) warns:

Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are critical issues that need attention in South Africa not because teenage pregnancy should be a taboo, nor because teenage girls

cannot and should not be mothers, but rather because a significant majority of these pregnancies are unplanned.

These unplanned and unwanted pregnancies result in negative consequences for the affected individuals. For example, the transition to parenthood is a major event in the lifespan of any individual, and takes on a special significance when it precedes the education that offers the competences, means and social investment required to thrive as a parent (Chigona & Chetty, 2007).

The right to education is one of the fundamental human rights that is recognised in almost every international declaration (Runhare, 2010, p. 32). International policy frameworks such as Education for All (EFA) of 1990 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000 placed the right to education on the international agenda and mandated member states of the South African Development Group (SADC) to recognize this fundamental right for all, including girls (Runhare, 2010; Department of Basic Education, 2010). For example, Goal 3 of the eight Millennium Development Goals mandated “member countries to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as an effective way of combating poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is sustainable” (World Bank Gender and Development Group, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, one of the targets for this goal was to focus on eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education. Similarly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replaced the MDGs in 2015, with their Agenda 2030, also focuses on education. For example, SDG 4 aims to: *Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. This goal has 10 targets which incorporate different aspects of education, seven of which are expected outcomes and three refer to the means of achieving the outcomes (<http://en.unesco.org>). Specifically, Target 4.1: *Universal*

primary and secondary education, aims to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. Target 4.5: *Gender equality and inclusion* seeks to eliminate gender disparities in education by ensuring that there is equal access to all levels of education for all, including adolescent girls who are often subjected to gender-based violence, forced and early marriage and early pregnancy (<http://en.unesco.org>).

At the national level, informed by a rights-based framework, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) guarantees the right to basic education for all. In particular, Section 9 of the Constitution advocates for equality and prohibits unfair favouritism as a result of one's race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. Informed by this framework, the South African Schools Act (No 84) of 1996 (SASA) clearly states that:

Schools must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way (p. 5).

Premised on the principle that no learner should be eliminated from school due to pregnancy or motherhood, the Act aims to ensure that pregnant teenage girls continue with their schooling and that after childbirth, they are permitted to re-enter the schooling system. In response to the backlash from teachers and parent groups against this policy, the then Department of Education created a guideline document: *Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy* (2007). Instead of clarifying the policy, this document “created a lot of confusion about government’s policy on teenage pregnancy” (Moletsane, 2014, p.13). Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) suggest that this policy document has as it has created some confusion about government’s policy on teenage pregnancy which may further contribute to the gender

¹ The Department of Education was separated into the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education in 2009.

discrimination and exclusion of girls from schools. For instance, the document explicitly states that a pregnant learner may be advised to withdraw from the schooling system for a duration of up to two years in order to take care of the pre- and post-natal issues, as well as taking care of the new motherhood responsibilities. It also states that due to the unavailability of the trained medical personnel to deal with births that may occur at school, as well as the possible health risks and trauma to the mother if childbirth occurs at school, the learner may appeal or be guided to take leave of absence from school. Furthermore, the document stipulates that no learner should be allowed to enter the schooling system in the same year that they left school due to pregnancy. These guidelines have meant that the progressive national policies aimed at ensuring that pregnancy is not a barrier to girls' education are open to interpretation and can be successfully challenged in a court of law, and that girls' access to education is jeopardised.

At provincial level, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education affirmed its stance on learner pregnancy by issuing Circular No: 10 of 2010: *Reiteration of Policy Position of the Department of Basic Education on Learner pregnancy* (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2010). The circular states that while the Department of Basic Education does not condone learner pregnancy, it advocates for the continued access to education for both boys and girls. It further states that the pregnant learner should be allowed access to education for as long as it is medically possible and in instances where it is no longer possible for them to attend school, there must be provision for academic support and encouragement to return to school as soon as they can after giving birth. The Department also developed a guideline document for the managers of schools and the support teams that are based in schools: *Management and Support of Learners experiencing Psycho-social Barriers* (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2015). This strives to provide guidance and support to learners who might be facing challenges at school as well as to ensure that all learners are assisted in making informed life choices about

their health and have access to equal educational opportunities. While there has been remarkable progress towards providing universal access to basic education, girls' access to education is often curtailed by, among other factors, pregnancy and motherhood. For example, according to Zondo (2006), pregnancy and motherhood have been found to pose insurmountable challenges to teenage girls and young mothers as they tend to shorten their academic careers. As Grant and Hallman (2008) note, after giving birth, only about a third of teenage mothers KwaZulu-Natal return to school. Like other women in society, pregnant and mothering teenagers are faced with multiple challenges in their efforts to balance their new roles as mothers and learners in school. These challenges, including parenting demands, lack of child care support from the girls' parents and fathers of their children, may lead to their inability to juggle to go to school responsibilities and maintaining academic excellence and the childcare demands (Mcambi, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Jewnarain, 2008; Zondo, 2006). This may deter them from continuing with their studies and lead to the termination of schooling. Therefore, more needs to be done in order to ensure that children not only access schooling, but that they are retained until they successfully complete (Dunne, John & Ronald, 2013).

Thus, the purpose of this thesis was to examine the ways in which pregnancy and motherhood influenced teenage girls' dropout from school. The study examined the lived experiences of a group of girls in a South African township whose pregnancy and motherhood contributed to the termination of their schooling.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

As an educator in a single sex school for girls for the past 14 years. This school is one of the schools that were designated for white children in the apartheid era, but which currently enrol learners from multi-racial backgrounds. As a teacher, I have witnessed girls dropping out from school as a result of being pregnant or being mothers. My observations suggest that in spite of South Africa's progressive policy framework, barriers to schooling persist for girls who are pregnant or mothers. Further, my observation is demonstrated in schools. In 2011, the High Court in Bloemfontein passed judgement in favour of two schools whose policies restricted two young mothers' ability to re-enter school after becoming pregnant (SAPA, 2011a). The schools' Learner Pregnancy Policies were informed by the DBE's guideline document referred to above.

In my Master's thesis, the focus was on the schooling experiences of pregnant and mothering teenage girls at the school where I teach. The study aimed to explore the ways in which the girls from this single sex state school negotiated the demands of schooling and parenting (Mcambi, 2010). First, the findings suggested that in this racially mixed school, teenage pregnancy tended to be influenced by race. Specifically, more Black African girls got pregnant than those from other racial groups. The table below illustrate the trends from 2014 to 2018:

Table 1: School Pregnancy Trends (2014-2018)

Year	Total Number of Pregnancies	Grades					Total Number of Pregnancies by Race			
		8	9	10	11	12	Black	White	Coloured	Indian
2014	12	0	3	4	2	3	12	0	0	0
2015	10	0	3	2	2	3	10	0	0	0
2016	12	1	1	3	3	4	12	0	0	0
2017	15	0	3	5	4	3	15	0	0	0
2018	13	0	3	1	2	7	13	0	0	0

Second, a few of the participants reported positive outcomes in that they received various forms of support from their friends, teachers and support groups they belonged to, and that this assisted them to cope with motherhood and schooling. However, others experienced negative outcomes related to the major responsibilities for the affected girls themselves, who often faced a number of barriers to their continued schooling. The findings suggested that pregnant girls experienced fear (of responses from parents, the child’s father and teachers), with most reporting being concerned that the fathers of their children would deny paternity and not assume the financial and social obligations associated with their roles as fathers (see also Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001; Swarts & Bhana, 2009). In addition, the girls experienced rejection and ridicule, stating that they felt rejected by their peers who no longer associated with them because of their motherhood. Some experienced ridicule and judgmental attitudes from teachers (see also Bhana, Morrell, Shefer & Ngabaza, 2012; Bhana, Clowes, Morrell & Shefer, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). According to Bhana, Morrell, Shefer and Ngabaza (2010), many teachers believe that the presence of pregnant and young mothers in their classrooms might negatively affect the class’s overall academic performance and these teachers question the pregnant learners’ and young mothers’ ability to keep up with the academic demands. In their study, Dlamini, van der Merwe and Ehlers (2003) found a participant who

stated that teachers scold and despise pregnant girls and expel them for good. Further, the girls identified lack of support and inability to participate in school activities as some of the challenges they faced during pregnancy and or motherhood. Due to the pressure and responsibilities associated with their roles as mothers, some participants experienced a decline in their academic performance, with some even dropping out of school completely.

Based on the above findings, in this thesis, I wanted to develop an understanding of the factors that contribute towards pregnant and mothering girls' decisions to drop out of school. While the focus of my Master's thesis was on the ways in which teenage mothers negotiated the demands of schooling and parenting, this study focused specifically on the experiences of those who dropped out and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

There exists a large body of literature focusing on the experiences of pregnant and mothering teenage girls and how they negotiate their way through the schooling system (see for example, Nkani, 2012; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Rolfe, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2007). As argued above, while some still manage to persist and complete their schooling, many teenage girls face a variety of challenges and barriers to education because of pregnancy and motherhood. We live in a highly gendered society and teenage pregnancy and motherhood are largely influenced by unequal gender relations between boys and girls and women and men (Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012). While school dropout is a problem for both male and female students, the reasons for dropping out tend to be gendered (Moletsane, 2014). Therefore, the reasons why some pregnant and mothering teenagers find it difficult to persist in their schooling can be found in an examination of gender and gender relations in the families and communities the

girls live in. As some scholars have concluded, immediate responsibilities brought about by pregnancy and parenting tend to affect teenage parents (mothers and fathers) differently. For example, girls tend to suffer more of the brunt of the consequences of early pregnancies than their male counterparts, where they carry the pregnancy, give birth and tend to be predominantly responsible for the subsequent childcare demands (see Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012). This often leads to the interruption of the girl's school life or permanent dropout while that of the boy or the father of the child remains largely unaffected. The ways in which pregnant girls and boys are treated is different and is indicative of the gendered identity ascribed to girls which is sometimes associated with powerlessness (Molapo, 2011).

This suggests that teenage pregnancy and motherhood must be understood within the context of power, particularly the unequal and gendered power relations between boys and girls and men and women. Through the gender lens, this study sought to examine the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave. In particular, the study focused on the influence of gender on the girls' decisions to drop out and/or their families' decisions to pull them out of school. The study focused on a group of pregnant and mothering teenagers (N=16) in one township near Durban, South Africa and the influence of gender on their decision-making. The overarching question in this study was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* To address the question, the following sub-questions were explored:

1. *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?*
2. *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?*

1.4 Overview of the Theoretical Framework

Analysis in this study is informed by Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological system theoretical view. This theory argues that "human development is influenced by the environment in which they live and the behavior and life course of each individual is determined by the various components of the environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 28). In this study which aimed to examine the gendered barriers that upend the pregnant teenage girls' and young mothers' access to education and hinder their successful completion of school, the ecological systems theory advanced by Bronfenbrenner enables me to explore the issues that led these girls to drop out of school.

Bronfenbrenner aptly states that "the broader approach to research in human development should not only focus on the individual without considering the changing environments in which they live and grow" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 513). Bronfenbrenner proposes that "the individual's environment does not only include the immediate settings, but is also inclusive of both the formal and informal social contexts within which they live" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 513). Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that every person is born into a multifaceted cultural environment which is located within an ecological system with interacting people, situations, social attitudes, values, religious, political, economic systems as well as varied legalistic practices. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory advocates that in order "to understand human development, it is of paramount importance to examine multi-personal systems of interaction of the individual" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514). Thus, using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the study examined how the 16 girls understood their own experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, and how socio-cultural factors, and particularly gender, influenced their experiences and ultimate dropping out of school.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory has been widely used in education (Asomani, 2017; Kotzé, 2014; Matlala, 2011; Paquette & Ryan, 2001). For example, a study conducted by Asomani (2017) used the ecological theory to understand the influential factors that led to teenage mothers dropping out of school in Ghana. In the study, the scholar found that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers tend to drop out of school due to stigma attached to their pregnancy and lack of support from teachers and peers.

In another study, Kotzé (2014) used Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model to investigate the influence of social factors on the experiences of early motherhood amongst adolescent girls in Swaziland. The author suggests that in exploring the experience of early motherhood amongst adolescent girls, it is vital to consider how motherhood has influenced their relationships with their families, the school as well as peers (Kotzé, 2014). According to her, these relationships influence whether the adolescent mother continues with her schooling or not. In terms of the influence of social class, the author concludes that because "adolescents tend to be mainly dependent on their parents for financial support, the latter's financial status has an influence on adolescent mothers' ability or decision to stay or withdraw from school" (Kotzé, 2014, p. 48). In my study I used Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model to examine the factors that influenced pregnant and mothering girls to drop out of school. This was done by examining the various facets of their environments such as the family, school and peer relationships.

1.5 Overview of Research Design and Methodology

This study was located in Umlazi township, south of Durban, South Africa. This site was chosen because it is where I was born and raised, and I could meander through it with ease as I was familiar with its environment. In addition to familiarity with the site, I had observed a steady growth in number of young girls in the township who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy and/or early motherhood. This therefore triggered my interest in wanting to explore what contributory factors act as deterrents to their completing their secondary education.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009) argue that the quality of a piece of research is not only dependent on the appropriate methodological view and instrumentation, but it is also dependent on the adoption of the suitable sampling strategy. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select participants. Ball (1990, p. 23) argues that purposive sampling enables the researcher to access relevant participants who are “knowledgeable about particular issues based on the variety of factors such as power and experiences”. Purposive sampling enabled me as a researcher to identify 16 teenage girls from Umlazi township who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and motherhood prior to completion of their secondary school education. All of these girls were recruited to participate in the study.

The study was located within the social constructivist paradigm. Research in the social constructivist paradigm is aimed at allowing individuals to understand their own world and to develop their own particular meanings that correspond with their experiences (Burr, 1995). These meanings are not etched within each individual, but are formed through human interactions (Creswell, 2013) and it is through these daily interactions between people that our

versions of knowledge about life are shaped (Burr, 1995; 2003). In light of that, some pregnant and mothering young girls become ashamed of their pregnancies and becoming mothers at a young age due to the negative manner in which teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are perceived by the general society. Thus, the study sought to examine the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school and the factors that influence their decisions to leave.

Informed by the social constructivist paradigmatic view, a qualitative approach was employed. Holloway and Wheeler (1996) suggest that a qualitative approach involves researching people and systems in their natural setting by focusing on their meanings and interpretations. This assertion is also affirmed by Banister, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) who state that a qualitative researcher takes the responsibility of collecting and analysing data in natural settings. By researching the participants (who have dropped out of school) in their natural setting (going to the areas where they reside) to some extent enabled me to get a better understanding of their daily interactions. Triggered by my observation of the growing number of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in Umlazi, I decided to be the to conduct a study that would allow me to explore the gendered experiences that led them to drop out of school. Jewnarain (2008) argues that being familiar with the surroundings enables the researcher to navigate the way around the research site. Being familiar with Umlazi township not only enabled me to navigate my way around the area, but it also allowed me to choose sites which were going to be conducive for conducting interviews.

To respond to the two research questions posed in this study, I used in-depth individual interviews as a method of generating data. Due to the focus of my study on the gendered

barriers that led to the interruption of the young girls' secondary schooling career, I opted for the approaches that recognised the value and importance of the voices of the participants and how they make sense of their own experiences (Nkani, 2012). In this study, the interviews I had with the 16 participants helped me to explore the ways in which they experienced and understood their world (Kvale, 2009). Each participant was interviewed at least twice for between approximately 45 and 60 minutes. The interviews were an ideal research method as they enabled me to solicit in-depth data from the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Knox & Burkard, 2009). The initial interviews were informal and conversational and were intended to build rapport between myself and the participants. Furthermore, they were used to explain the study in detail as well as to acquire biographical details about each participant. The participants were also encouraged and afforded the opportunity to ask questions about the study where needed. The second interview entailed the use of an open-ended interview schedule (see Appendix 6) in order to address the two research questions posed in this study. The open-endedness of the questions was meant to allow the participants to express themselves freely. The interviews were not too far apart (based on the availability of the participants) to avoid a delay in the process of data gathering and to avoid the loss of the momentum and the rapport that was built in the initial interview. Both interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were analysed to address the research questions. Thematic analysis of the data was used to analyse themes (Braun & Clark, 2006).

First, after collecting data and transcribing it in isiZulu, I then had to translate it into English. In instances where there were no English words to replace some isiZulu words and expressions that were used by the participants, the words were left in the original language. This was to avoid the loss and distortion of meaning. However, it is still possible some of meanings may have been 'lost in translation' from isiZulu to English. As a first language isiZulu speaker, I

read and re-read the transcripts in the original language and English to ensure that I addressed any misinterpretations I might have made. Further, the transcripts were taken back to the participants where I wanted to clarify issues that I may have misunderstood. Data was then coded into various themes. Similar and related themes were then sought.

1.6 Ethical Issues

Due to the sensitivity and critical nature of my study, which involved the participation of young girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and early motherhood, it was vital that necessary ethical guidelines were taken into consideration and adhered to. Before I could commence with my study, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Since my study was not going to involve the participants who were currently attending school, but pregnant teenage girls and young mothers that have dropped out of schools, I did not need to seek permission from any of the schools the participants had attended before dropping out. Furthermore, I obtained informed consent from the participants and permission from the parents or guardians of the potential participants under the age of 18. Both the participants and parents or guardians signed informed consent letters.

Sixteen teenage girls and mothers between the ages of 16 and 19 who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy or childbearing from Umlazi township were recruited into the study. To ensure privacy and safety of the participants, each participant was informed about the venue where interviews were going to be held. The venue for all the interviews was in a Municipal library in Umlazi township. However, some interviews were conducted in the participants' homes as the participants requested. There were a number of reasons for choosing this venue. The first was that it was private and had lockable doors and was only available for use by the

person/people who booked it. A second reason was that external factors such as noise and interference from the outside were limited. A third was its location: the Municipal library in B section was easy to access using public transport as it was not far from the main road. In order to ensure that the confidentiality of the participants was maintained, each participant was allocated a specific day and time for the interviews such that they never got to know who else was part of the study. The participants were also urged not to discuss any details of the study with any other person other than the researcher as this could compromise the integrity of the study.

To ensure confidentiality, the participants were informed and assured that the information that they had provided during the course of the study was only going to be used for the purpose of the study and their identity was going to be protected by using pseudonyms.

Finally, at the first interview discussed above, I informed the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without facing any penalty. Further, I assured them of the confidentiality of the interviews and the information they were giving me. For this reason, I have assigned them pseudonyms.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

This study examined the ways in which pregnancy and motherhood influenced teenage girls' dropout from school. This was done by examining the lived experiences of a group of girls in a South African township whose pregnancy and motherhood contributed to the termination of their schooling. It examined their experiences in relation to the barriers they faced to their

schooling. This thesis is organised into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the thesis. The chapter presents the rationale for the study, as well as its purpose. It then also identifies the overarching question of this study, and two critical questions that informed data collection. Further, the chapter presents an overview of the theoretical framework which informed data analysis in the study. An overview of the research design and methodology is also outlined. The chapter concludes by highlighting the ethical considerations that were adhered to in this study. The second chapter reviews both local and international literature which sheds light on teenage pregnancy and early motherhood in relation to gender. The literature review focuses on reviewing and critiquing relevant literature on teenage pregnancy and early motherhood in relation to schooling. The chapter commences by zooming in to the global statistics in relation to teenage pregnancy and then it outlines a number of topics that are related to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. Firstly, individual factors such as inability to cope with stigma and bullying from family, friends and teachers and the difficulty to cope with the dual student-mother roles contribute towards pregnant and mothering teenage girls dropping out of school. Secondly, socio-cultural factors in relation to stigma from the family, peers, media, religion and culture. Thirdly, I look at socio-economic factors such as the education and income status of the family as one of the factors which were identified as key in determining whether pregnant girls and young mothers would be able to recommence with schooling after becoming mothers. Fourthly, environmental factors such as geographical location, access to the health services and access to technology as they are also identified as important factors in ensuring that early and unwanted pregnancies are curbed. Fifthly, school-related factors are examined such as school policies and teacher attitudes and how they contribute in the exclusion of pregnant teenage and young mothers in schools. The latter part of the chapter provides a synopsis of the chapter and the conceptual framework of the study. Finally, the chapter presents the synthesis of the literature reviewed in the study. Chapter Three discusses the social

constructivist paradigm that was employed in this study. It further discusses Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) that was utilized as the theoretical framework in this study. Chapter Four provides an overview of the research design used in this study, including the methodology, sampling, methods of generating data, and data analysis. I also discuss the ethical considerations used in this study. Chapters Five and Six present and discuss the findings from the study and addresses the critical research questions posed in this study. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis where a summary of the research approach and process is presented. The chapter then highlights and discusses the major findings. The chapter concludes the thesis by highlighting the implications of the findings for policy and practice for schools and the education system if they are to address the gendered barriers that keep pregnant and mothering adolescents out of school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study examined the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave. In particular, the study focused on the influence of gender on the girls' decisions to drop out and/or their families' decisions to pull them out of school. The study focused on a group of pregnant and mothering teenagers (N=16) in one township near Durban, South Africa and the influence of gender on their decision-making. The overarching question in the study was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* To address the question, the following sub-questions were explored:

1. *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?*
2. *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?*

The previous chapter introduced the study and the thesis, starting with the acknowledgement that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood continue to be a matter of great concern not only in South Africa and the Sub-Saharan region, but around the world. This is partly because of the detrimental effects it has on young girls' lives and the possibility of it resulting in dropping out of school (Acharya et al, 2010; Yates, 2011; National Department of Health, 2016; The Population Reference Bureau, 2017). The chapter further discussed the national and international policy frameworks that inform how schools and education systems address teenage pregnancy and motherhood. These include *Education for All* (EFA) of 1990, the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) of 2000, and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) of 2015 at the international level, and in South Africa, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the South African Schools Act (No 84) of 1996. These policies are

aimed at ensuring that no learner is excluded from education due to gender, race, sexual orientation and religion, also due to pregnancy and motherhood. The chapter then outlined the rationale and the purpose of the study, as well as the research questions posed in the study.

In this chapter, literature related teenage pregnancy and motherhood and their influence on school dropout, are reviewed. The literature review is organised into five broad sections:

- Understanding teenage pregnancy and early motherhood;
- The influence of gender, race and class;
- Lack of quality sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents;
- Teenage pregnancy and school dropout among girls
- Factors influencing school dropout among pregnant and mothering teenagers

The chapter will conclude by discussing the main findings from the literature that was reviewed. From the findings, I will then discuss the conceptual framework around the question: What influences pregnant and mothering teenagers to drop out of school?

2.2 Understanding Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood

Available literature suggests that teenage pregnancy is a widespread phenomenon and a universal drawback in both the advanced and emerging countries (Marteletto, Lam & Ranchod, 2008; Briwe, Masingila, Huang & Ayot, 2011). The World Health Organisation (2012, p. 1) reports that approximately 16 million girls between the ages of 16 and 19 become pregnant on a yearly basis, globally. Developed countries such as the US, the UK and Australia reportedly lead in the number of women under the age of 20 who give birth (Raj, Rabi, Amudha, Van Teijlingen & Chapman, 2010; Marteletto, Lam & Ranchod, 2008). This is despite the fact that between 1990 and 2008 in the United States there was a 42% decline in the national teenage

pregnancy rate from 116.9 to 67.8 pregnancies per 1000 women between the ages of 15 and 19 (Kost, Henshaw & Carlin, 2012, p. 6). Furthermore, according to the report by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2013), in 2011 the teenage birth rate in the United States dropped significantly to the lowest level ever recorded in 40 years. However, despite this decline in teenage pregnancy rates, largely due to intervention programmes such as sex and relationship education, available research suggests at least three in ten teenagers in America still become pregnant. Similarly, the rates of pregnancy among teenage girls in the UK are among the highest in Europe (Mezey, Robinson, Gillard et al, 2017; World Health Organisation, 2011). According to Mezey, et al (2017), in England and Wales, for example, there was an estimated 27 834 pregnancies among women under the age of 20 in 2012. The United Nations Population Fund (2013) suggests that although countries in Eastern Europe have access to modern contraceptive methods. However, there is still a high number of unintended pregnancies among teenagers. Among Asian countries, India has a high teenage birth rate, with a third of teenage mothers globally, while South Korea and Japan are the least affected countries (Achoka & Njeru, 2012; Lowen; 2012).

African countries constitute the highest proportions of teenage pregnancies in the world (Odejimi and Bellingham-Young, 2016). It is estimated that approximately 5.5 million girls between 15 and 19 years of age become mothers, 62% of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa (Porta, 2010). The World Atlas (2017) study aimed to explore the determinants of teenage pregnancy in sub-Saharan countries. In the study, Angola, Chad, Mozambique, Niger, Guinea, Malawi, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire were found to have some of the highest proportions of teenage pregnancies in the region. Chandra-Mouli, Lane and Wong (2015, p. 3) found that almost 10% of young women give birth in East Africa, with Uganda reporting the highest proportion of

about 63% of teenage pregnancies in the region (see also Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Similarly, Wado, Sully and Mumah's (2019) study on pregnancy and early motherhood among teenagers in five East African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi), found that early motherhood is common in these five countries, with rates ranging from 18% in Kenya in 2014, 29% in Zambia to 29% in Malawi in 2016 in each of the respective countries. According to this study, in Tanzania and Uganda nearly 25% and 27% teenage girls respectively between the ages of 15 and 19 were either pregnant or already had their first child at the time of this study. There was a fluctuation in trends in Tanzania from 29% in 1989 to 23% in 2010 and was recently reversed to 26.7% in 2015. Malawi and Kenya both experienced a decline in the teenage pregnancy rate. In Malawi, the rate decreased from 34.7% in 1991 to 29% in 2015 and in Kenya, it decreased from 25% in 1989 to 18% in 2014 (Wado, Sully & Mumah, 2019, p. 7).

In the context of South Africa, research findings are mixed. On one hand, a number of scholars note a decline in the country's teenage pregnancy rates. According to Willan (2013), on the African continent, South Africa has one of the lowest teenage pregnancy rates. Similarly, Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009, p. 678) note that teenage pregnancy in the country declined from 30% in 1984 to 23% in 2008. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009, p. 11) reported a 10% decline in teenage fertility between 1996 and 2007 (see also Holt & Lince, 2012; Flanagan, Lince, Durao de Menezes & Mdlopane, 2013). According to Lince (2011), the decline could be a result of the availability and easy accessibility to healthcare services.

On the other hand, in the same study which noted a decline in pregnancy rates among teenagers, Panday et al (2009) cite a Department of Basic Education report which observed an increase in numbers, with approximately 68 000 learners stated to have given birth to a child in 2013, compared with 50 000 in 2009. A newspaper article reported that about 206 891 babies were born to school-going teenage girls in South Africa between 2009 and 2012 (Masondo, 2014a). More recently, Odimegwu, Amoo and De Wet (2018, p. 1) note that despite the reported decline in teenage pregnancy, teenagers still contributed to 13.6% of the overall registered births in the country in 2016.

In relation to provinces, Panday et al (2009) found that while the Free State, Gauteng and North West provinces had lower rates of teenage pregnancy, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal registered high numbers of teenage pregnancies. The escalated rate of teen pregnancy in KwaZulu-Natal was also reported by Mngoma (2010) who stated that teenage pregnancy rates increase from 21.8% to 25.8% between 2001 and 2008. Odimegwu, Amoo and De Wet (2018) show that the highest number of teenage pregnancies are in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, with more than 17 000 in KwaZulu-Natal in 2010 alone.

More recently, the South African Press Association (SAPA) (2011b) noted high numbers of teenage pregnancies in KwaZulu-Natal, where 17 260 pregnancies were reported in schools in 2010 alone. Further, Statistics South Africa (STATS SA) (2017, p. 33) reported that with 346 teenagers in the 10-14 age group, and 264 among those aged 15-19 became pregnant in KwaZulu-Natal, making it one of the leading provinces in South Africa in terms of teenage pregnancy.

Despite evidence suggesting both a decline and an increase in teenage pregnancy rates in South Africa, it cannot be denied that a substantial number of young girls become pregnant and become mothers while still at school. This is particularly concerning given that there is a reported connection between pregnancy and motherhood and school dropout. Available studies suggest that teenage pregnancy and motherhood tend to curtail the educational access and success of girls in South Africa (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Human Sciences Research Council, 2009; Ngabaza, 2010). After giving birth, approximately only a third of the teenage mothers reportedly return to school (Panday et al, 2009, p. 16). Shuger (2012) reports that approximately one third of teenage girls who have terminated their high school education mention becoming pregnant or parents as a major reason for dropping out of school. Drawing from the above, teenage pregnancy and early childbearing have negative consequences on girls' schooling and can also lead to drop out.

2.3 The Influence of Gender, Race and Social Class

It is critical that the factors that contribute to school dropout among pregnant teenage girls and young mothers are understood and addressed. Research suggests that it becomes harder for mothering teenagers to return to school with each passing year of being away (Willan, 2013), and effort should be made to ensure that such dropout is addressed and prevented. This section reviews literature which explores how gender, race and class influence pregnancy among teenagers and its impact on girls' schooling.

2.3.1 The Influence of Gender on Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood

We live in an unequally gendered society, and teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are located within this socio-cultural context. As Willan (2013, p. 14) argues:

Teenage pregnancy and being a teenage mother is not simply about teenagers having unprotected sex, it is wrapped up in gendered norms, sexual taboos and gender inequalities within our societies which influence how, when, and why teenagers have sex.

Within this context, Hanson, McMahon, Griese and Kenyon (2014) note that socially constructed gender ideologies stipulate how men and women should behave. Most societies do not have similar expectations of men and women when it comes to sexual behavior (WHO, 2011a). For instance, scholars have argued that social constructions of femininity encourage young women to maintain their virginity, while views about masculinity often support the opposite, where men's sexual prowess is revelled, and having several partners is accepted (Pleck & Sonenstein, 1993; Gage, 1998; Kerrigan, Andrinopoulos & Johnson, 2007; Ngabaza, 2010). Men are expected to be sexually active, and this is perceived to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood (World Health Organisation, 2011). Consequently, such gender norms and power imbalances relegate girls to a submissive and subordinate role in the social hierarchy.

Furthermore, gender roles and power inequalities are significant in the negotiation of safe sex. Within this context, girls and young women find it difficult to negotiate condom use (Mkhwanazi, 2010; Ngabaza, 2010; Flanagan et al, 2013). Sexual encounters for girls and young women involve coercion, abuse or rape due to unequal power relations between boys and girls, men and women. In the context of poverty, exploitative sexual relationships with older men, including those in authority, such as teachers in schools and lecturers in universities, are not uncommon (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013; Alabi & Oluwafemi, 2017). Within such relationships, due to the fear of being rejected by their male partners, girls often subject themselves to having sex which is initiated by their male partners (Macleod, 1999). Therefore,

these sexual relationships with older men put young girls in a compromising situation as they are unable to negotiate or even voice their opinions about whether, when and how to have sex, possibly resulting in unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Dlamini, 2016).

In many communities, gender also intersects with cultural values and traditional practices in influencing or policing women's sexuality, particularly girls and young women. For example, citing an earlier study by Varga (2003), Ngabaza (2010, p. 55) noted that, informed by cultural norms and values of respect, young girls were expected to “demonstrate shyness, fidelity and make sure that they [do] not fall pregnant” on the one hand, but were also supposed to be sexually available and allow their partners to make all decisions pertaining to sex.

2.3.2 The Racialisation of Teenage Pregnancy

This study is grounded on the understanding that the experiences of teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are socially embedded and cannot be viewed in isolation without considering factors such as race. For example, teenage pregnancy and early motherhood do not affect different racial groups in the same way. This section aims to reflect on the ways in which the rates of teenage pregnancy are racially skewed in the South African context.

Scholars have argued that the racial incongruences in pregnancy are a source of poverty and are created by poverty and many other factors. (Wiltz, 2015). For instance, in the United States, Jimenez (2012) argues that Latina and black girls are mostly members of the low-income groups and are at high risk of becoming mothers in their teenage years. In the United States, between the years of 1990 and 2000, birth rates per 1 000 among girls aged 15-19 were highest among African American girls (1 088.6), followed by Hispanics (1 056.8), and the lowest number was noted among white girls (423.6) (Livingstone & Thomas, 2019, p. 2). In a study

that aimed to understand the racial and ethnic incongruences that are persistent in the rates of pregnancy among teenage girls in some states in the United States, Wiltz (2015) noted a significant decline to 67% among African American girls, 60% among Latinas, and a decline of 63% and 68% among American Indians and Pacific Islanders respectively in the rate of teenage pregnancy since 1991. However, the author argues that in spite of the decline, the reality suggests that girls of colour are much more likely to become pregnant than their white counterparts.

In South Africa, Winters and Winters' (2012) study aimed to examine the relative significance of race and socioeconomic status in deciding whether black and white teenage girls report having ever becoming pregnant. The study found that Black African teenage girls were about twice as likely as their white counterparts to ever report to be pregnant. Similarly, the Community Survey conducted by Stats SA (2017) suggests that the percentage of teenage girls who became mothers according to population group was Black African (12.5%), Coloured (11.1%), Indian (2.4%) and White (1.8%) (Stats SA, 2018). Linked to the racialised pregnancy rates, as Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009) suggest, dropout rates are also racialised, with the highest rates noted among Coloureds, followed by Black Africans and the lowest rate noted among white South African girls.

The literature reviewed above clearly suggests that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood tend to be racially skewed, with Black African girls and young women having the highest rates of pregnancy. Similarly, dropout rates also tend to be high for this population. It is for this reasons that the study reported in this thesis examined the factors that influence pregnant and mothering Black African girls' dropout from school. Understanding and addressing such

factors will go a long way towards developing effective interventions that will keep such girls in school.

2.3.3 The Influence of Social Class

Social class plays a significant role in teenage pregnancy, and its effects are complex and dynamic (Winters & Winters, 2012; Wiltz, 2015). Furthermore, the family's socio-economic standing plays a crucial role in the teenage mothers' schooling experiences. Therefore, this section seeks to elucidate the ways in which teenage pregnancy and early motherhood trends tend to be affected by social class.

Poverty and socio-economic deprivation have played a role in exposing teenage girls to early sexual debut and intergenerational sex (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008; Kearney & Levine, 2012), which in turn result in early and unwanted pregnancies and STIs. Grant and Hallman (2003) argue that both teenage pregnancy and school dropout are strongly associated with low economic status.

In the developed country contexts, researchers in the United States note that considerable incongruences exist in the rates of teenage pregnancy within the country (Akella & Jordan, 2015). They argue that even though African American and Hispanic youth represent 35% of the total population of 15-19 year olds females, they contribute 57% of teenage births. This can be credited to the fact that these groups come from families with low incomes, and environments of poverty (Akella & Jordan, 2015, p. 42). Likewise, in the United Kingdom, the government has identified risk factors such as poverty, economic disadvantage and negative attitude towards school among others as key determinants of teenage pregnancy (Bonell, Strange, Stephenson, Oakley et al, 2003). More international literature highlights the

connection between social class, the level of education and teenage pregnancy, and further suggest that teenage pregnancy in the US and UK mostly occur among young women who come from socio-economically disadvantaged environments (Morehead & Soriano, 2005; Coleman & Cater, 2006; Harden, Brunton, Fletcher, Oakley et al, 2006). This indicates that there is a high correlation between living in poverty and early pregnancies and motherhood.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, studies often link early pregnancies to transactional sex, which in turn, is connected to poverty. For example, Gyesaw and Ankomah (2013) studied the experiences of pregnancy and motherhood among teenage mothers in a suburb of Accra, Ghana. They found that half of the 54 young mothers who participated had had transactional sex that resulted in their pregnancy. The participants reported that they had transactional sex due to the financial challenges they faced and hence they felt that they could exchange sex for material gains as many of their parents and relatives were unable to take care of their needs.

In South Africa, Panday, et al (2009) suggest that one of the critical drivers that place teenage girls at a heightened risk of early pregnancy are economic barriers and being exposed to entrenched poverty. In some instances, poverty leads to transactional sex, which in turn might lead to pregnancy. For example, Wood, Maepa and Jewkes (1997) argue that some girls have a strong belief that pregnancy might lead to security and financial stability. Other scholars have also noted that poverty can often lead to intergenerational as well as transactional sexual relationships, which are not ideal, but offer economic benefits to young girls from poor families (Willan, 2013; Dlamini, 2016). For example, in Dlamini's (2016) study, teenagers argued that having babies with their partners guaranteed financial support. One participant in particular stated that if a man gives you money in exchange for sexual favours, you feel obligated to give

him a baby in order to ensure continued financial support. From this perspective, childbearing seems to be used in exchange for financial support.

Similarly, Nkani (2012) conducted an ethnographic study which explored teenage girls' choices of boyfriends and circumstances which led to their pregnancy. The findings from the study suggest that teenage pregnancy is often closely linked to the broader social class. As evidence, Nkani (2012) argued that teenage pregnancy was more prevalent among teenagers who are African, who belong to the poorest communities and poorly resourced schools in the country. In their various studies, Chuenyane (2010), Ngabaza (2010), Sowden, (2013) also found that teenage pregnancy was mostly experienced by young mothers from poverty-stricken backgrounds, particularly in rural communities. These findings point to social class as a significant influence on teenage pregnancy.

2.4 Lack of Quality Sexual and Reproductive Health Education for Teenagers

The high levels of pregnancy among teenage girls often suggest poor or lack of understanding about sexual and reproductive health and rights, and in particular, inadequate programming around these issues in the schooling system (Moletsane, 2014). It is for this reason that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, Egypt affirmed sexual and reproductive health as an essential human right and emphasised that empowering women and girls plays a fundamental role in ensuring the well-being of individuals, families, nations and our world (UNFPA, 2013b) and the conference was organised under the auspices of the Population Division which was formerly known as the UN Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (now the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Delegates representing 179 governments at the conference adopted a Programme of Action which

identified a set of objectives and goals, including, “sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development; education, especially for girls; gender equity and equality; infant, child and maternal mortality reduction; and the provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health” (UNFPA, 2013b, p. 22). Yet available evidence suggests that accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services, including education, remains elusive for many women and girls. This is indicated by limited knowledge among teenagers about sex and family planning, and lack of skills to put that knowledge into practice due to the deficiency of knowledge in relation to sexuality education in many countries (WHO, 2012).

Schools have also been found to provide inadequate or poor quality sexual and reproductive health education. For example, in the sub-Saharan context, a study by Yakubu and Salisu (2018) which explored the determinants of teenage pregnancy in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya, found that some teenage girls become pregnant due to lack of knowledge and the lack of guidance in sexual and reproductive matters in schools. Lack of knowledge makes adolescents vulnerable to unsafe sexual practices, leading to poor sexual and reproductive health, including unwanted or unplanned pregnancies (Kyilleh, Tabong & Konlaan, 2018). A 2011 UNESCO review of sexuality education in 10ten East and Southern African countries suggests that even though there is standardised curricular on sexuality education, pertinent topics such as puberty, pregnancy prevention, reproductive development and contraceptive use are dealt with at secondary school level after most students have already gone through puberty (UNESCO, 2012a). The report also noted that there are considerable gaps in the syllabus coverage in most of these countries due to inadequate teacher training, lack of resources and cultural barriers and religious beliefs around sex and sexuality (UNESCO, 2012a).

For example, in his 2015 book, *Too hot to handle: A global history of sex education*, which presents the history of sex education in schools international in contexts, Zimmerman (2015, p. 5) concludes that “Only in the area of sex education would modern school systems fail so dramatically—and so universally—to impose themselves upon individuals”. According to him, this is because of the ways in which the voices of stakeholders with power tend to silence the less powerful (learners and teachers) regarding what can be taught. In effect, the content of the curriculum as it pertains to sexuality education is often decided by the people “whose values are right for children and adolescents, who would decide, and why?” (Zimmerman, 2015, p. 143). Often, it is the most powerful lobbies outside school who assert a huge influence on curriculum decision-making regarding value-laden content such as sexuality education in schools. These groups render the sexuality curriculum taboo and as unsuitable to teach in schools (Zimmerman, 2015).

While opponents of sexuality education in schools often suggest that parents or guardians are best placed to provide sexuality education to children, evidence from literature suggests that this is often not practicable in most families and communities. Research has shown that many parents, particularly in African contexts, do not and are unable to provide such education. Informed by their cultural beliefs, parents often provide very little sexuality education, as they as they feel embarrassed to discuss sex-related matters with their children (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012). The situation is made worse by the fact that the majority of the parents were never exposed to adequate sexuality and reproduction-related information themselves, and are thus unable to teach their children. Therefore, many teenagers end up relying on rumours and myths spread through peer networks, and become misinformed about sexual and reproductive health related matters (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012). According to the same study, in Iran, Nigeria and Ethiopia teenagers ranked their parents and families in last place as a source of sexual

information. There is evidence that girls are particularly unlikely to turn to their parents for information on sexuality. In the Amhara region of Ethiopia, while few teenagers reported that their parents gave them information, girls were significantly less likely than boys to turn to their parents (1.3% versus 4.4%), which is reflective of cultural taboos in relation to the discussion of sexuality cross-generationally (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012, p. 32). This taboo is deepened by the misconception that exposing children and youth to information about sexuality will heighten their urge to experiment at a young age, thus encouraging parents to focus on stigmatising themes that create “an atmosphere of fear, shame, and embarrassment among young people, thereby inhibiting their attempts to obtain the information and services they need” (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012, p. 40). It is for these reasons that many parents look to teachers and schools to provide sexuality education for their children (Masinga, 2013).

In South African context, Masemola-Yende and Mataboge (2015) state that the high level of teenage pregnancy may be attributed to the lack of knowledge as sexuality education does not form part of the curriculum that is mandatory in some faith-based schools. In public schools, teachers are often unwilling or unable to teach such content. For instance, a study by Masinga (2013), suggested that teachers find it to be an enormous responsibility to teach sexuality education, a subject which requires them to teach taboo content they are not sufficiently trained to teach. Similarly, findings from a study by Motalingoane-Khau (2010, p. 3) which explored female teachers’ experiences of teaching sexuality education in Lesotho confirmed that teachers faced challenges. These emanated from the patriarchal gender order as well as from the cultural practices in Lesotho and their “own fears about contravening the social construction of good womanhood”. An earlier study by Lewis and Salo (1996) about contraception and the rights of women in Cape Town revealed that only 25% of the respondents reported that sex education formed part of the curriculum while at school, and of the rest of these, women heard

about sex education for the first time during their antenatal clinic visits. Arguably, such lack of quality sexual and reproductive health education puts adolescents at risk of unsafe sexual practices, and results in negative health outcomes, including unwanted or unplanned pregnancy. This in turn, may result in school dropout, particularly for the pregnant or mothering girl.

Linked to poor sexuality education in schools is lack of information on and negative beliefs and attitudes around family planning and contraceptives in families and communities. Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) argue that one of the main aims of introducing life orientation as one of the learning areas of the curriculum in South Africa was to promote and disseminate messages that advocate for the delay in sexual debut and for the use of contraceptives. However, negative conceptions about contraceptives among the youth mean that their uptake is low, resulting in poor sexual and reproductive health, including early pregnancies and STIs. For instance, citing findings from an earlier study by Troskie and Raliphada-Mulaudzi (1999), Baro (2019) notes that among the beliefs that led to the rejection of contraceptives was that they made women weak, destroyed men's libido and were unsafe and caused infertility. Similarly, a participant in Morrell, Bhana and Shefer's (2012) study stated who stated that even though she knew about contraceptives, she opted not to use them as there was a popular belief that they led to infertility.

2.5 Teenage Pregnancy and School Dropout Among Girls

“When a girl becomes pregnant, her present and future change radically, and rarely for the better. Her education may end, her job prospects evaporate, and her vulnerabilities to poverty, exclusion and dependency multiply” (United Nations Population Fund, 2015, p.1).

As this thesis argues, internationally, teenage pregnancy and early motherhood have been found to have negative effects on schooling and in some instances, can be linked to school dropout among girls and young mothers. Specifically, Crouch (2005) argues that early motherhood leads to interruption of schooling, dropouts, and limits young women's progress and emancipation. A study which looked at the link between teenage pregnancy and school dropout in 49 countries found that girls were dropping out at far higher rates than boys (Shahidul, Karim & Zehadul, 2015). Teenage pregnancy is one of the key causes of school-dropout among female students globally (Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Grant, 2012).

To illustrate, at the international level, Erdman (2012) reports that in the US, the dropout rate for young mothers is three to four times higher than the national average. More than a decade ago, Mollborn (2010) suggested that in the US, early motherhood reduces the chances of completing high school and compromises educational outcomes, and therefore has a negative impact on school attainment. More recently, Shuger (2012) found that nearly one-third of teenage girls who had dropped out of high school in the United States identified pregnancy and parenthood as key reasons. This strongly indicates that pregnancy among teenagers and early motherhood have a negative impact on young girls' schooling. Similarly, in Brazil, a study conducted by Almeida and Aquilo (2009) found that while 46% of the girls remained in school during pregnancy, 37% dropped out after becoming pregnant.

As discussed above, Sub-Saharan African countries have the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the world. Linked to this, the region also has among the highest rates of school dropout among pregnant and mothering teenagers, often due to the education policies in each of the countries. For example, Tanzania holds harmful policies against teenage pregnancy in that

school officials are allowed to conduct pregnancy tests and expel pregnant girls. The Tanzanian 2015-2016 Demographic Health Survey (2016, p.22) suggests that only 2.8 % of the girls aged between 15 and 19 that were pregnant with their first child completed secondary school education while 7.2% of the girls who were teen mothers had completed their primary school education respectively (see also Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In Uganda, 59% of school dropouts among girls before completion of secondary education was due to teenage pregnancy and that figure is 27% in Malawi (Muhanguzi, Bantebya-Kyomuhendo & Watson, 2018, p. 122). In Cameroon, although teenage pregnancy is not the main cause of school dropout among girls, it was found to be the biggest contributory factor to the gender gap in educational attainment, especially at secondary school level (Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004). In Seychelles, a 2011 Ministry of Social Development and Culture reported that there was an increase in the dropout rates of girls, with a high number linked to teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is also the leading cause of girls terminating their schooling particularly in Mozambique (25.8%), South Africa (36.1%), the Central African Republic (37%), and the second leading cause in another six countries which include Cameroon (22%), Chad (20%), Gabon (29.8%), Kenya (30.8%), Uganda (28%), and Zambia (25.9%) (Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004, p. 511), and in Mozambique (Yakubu & Salisu, 2018). Similarly, according to a Republic of Botswana (2007, p. 26) report, in Botswana, about 3 375 girls were reported to have dropped out of school, and among these, 1 057 girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy between 2004 and 2007. Thus, teenage pregnancy remains a cause for concern for the government of Botswana as it is identified as one of the key factors contributing to school dropout among girls (Molosiwa & Moswela, 2012).

In South Africa, recent evidence has suggested that teenage pregnancy results in school dropout (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Mngoma, 2010; Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana & Seutlwadi, 2012; Ramulumo & Pitsoe, 2013). A UNICEF (2007, p. 49) study found that 74% of the girls between the ages of 14 and 19 years that dropped out of secondary school, cited pregnancy as a reason. Similarly, De Wet and Mkhwanazi (2014) cite results of the Survey of Activities of Young People (2010) which found that 22% of the girls dropped out of school in KwaZulu-Natal, 20% in the Eastern Cape, 13% in both Limpopo and the North West, 10% in Mpumalanga province, 7% in Gauteng and 3% in both Western Cape and Northern Cape. The majority of girls who dropped out of school were in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, citing pregnancy as the common reason for dropping out (De Wet & Mkhwanazi, 2014, p. 5942). Furthermore, in KwaZulu-Natal, teenagers as young as 13 years of age become pregnant, and some of these drop out of school and never return (KZN Department of Health (2018)).

2.6 Factors Influencing School Dropout among Pregnant and Mothering Teenagers

As the evidence above suggests, not all girls who become pregnant and give birth drop out of school. Therefore, one of the key questions addressed in my study is: *What are the factors that influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?* Available literature suggests that there are multiple factors globally (Shahidul, Karim & Zehadul, 2015). This section reviews studies that have examined some of the factors that push pregnant or mothering teenagers to drop out of school. These include individual, socio-cultural, socio-economic, environmental as well as school-related factors.

2.6.1 Individual Factors

Whether pregnant and mothering teenagers persist and complete schooling or drop out is dependent on a number of factors, some of which operate at the level of the individual herself. These include inability to handle stigma and rejection, and the ability to handle the dual roles of motherhood and student.

2.6.1.1 Inability to Cope with Stigma and Rejection

Stigmatisation of pregnant girls and young mothers remains prevalent in many communities around the world. According to Chambers and Erausquin (2015), this is due to the fact that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are often connected to other factors which include single motherhood, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Chambers and Erausquin (2015) further assert that stigma is experienced at various social institutions such as schools, healthcare as well as in social services centres, and through the media as well as in public at large, resulting in guilt and shame for the pregnant or mothering teenager. Stigma emanates from the negative stereotypes that continue to dominate the understanding of teenage pregnancy and its links to sexuality (SmithBattle, 2000; 2005). For example, in a United States study, Wiemann, Rickert, Berenson and Volk (2005, p. 352.e1) explored substance use and exposure to violence in relation to young mothers and stigma. They reported that 39.1% (in a sample of 925 mothers), felt stigmatised for their pregnancy. This was associated with increased fear of abuse and assault from peers as well as their family members.

In sub-Saharan Africa, teenage mothers are also significantly disadvantaged and face tremendous challenges such as stigmatisation during pregnancy and early motherhood (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). For example, Birungi, Undie, Mackenzie, Katahoire, Obare and Machawira (2015) reviewed the education sector's responses to early and unintended pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa, and found that stigma and discrimination of pregnant girls

and young mothers is a pervasive barrier to them resuming their education after childbirth in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Similarly, in a study conducted in Kenya, the findings suggested that girls drop out of school annually due to pregnancy and stigmatisation by peers, teachers, parents and the society (Achoka & Njeru, 2012). In a study by Gwido and Fekadu (2016) in Sudan, 60% of the participants indicated that they felt stigmatised and isolated due to pregnancy. In Nigeria, Mgbokwere, Esienumoh and Uyana (2015) found that 93% of the parents in the study considered teenage pregnancy and pregnancy outside of wedlock a social deviance, suggesting that such teenagers would be stigmatised and sanctioned in communities and institutions. This means that within families, pregnant girls and young mothers face stigmatisation, finding themselves alienated and subject to prejudice from their family members. To illustrate, a study by Agunbiade, Titilayo and Opatola (2009) sheds light on the stigmatisation and the coping strategies of young mothers among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. They found that parents and family members forced pregnant teenagers to stay with the person responsible for the pregnancy or even forced them into marriage to cover shame that teenage pregnancy brings into the family.

In contrast, a study by Ohorlu, Pfeiffer and Obtrist (2015) which explored the socio-cultural as well as economic factors influencing teenagers' resilience in their pregnancy in Ghana paints a positive picture of the support offered to the pregnant girls and young mothers in Ghana. According to the researchers, parents, especially mothers and other relatives such as aunts and grandparents, were identified as sources of information in relation to sexuality education to teenagers and a support system to pregnant girls and young mothers (Ohorlu, Pfeiffer & Obtrist, 2015).

In South Africa, scholars have argued that within the school environment, pregnant teenage girls face multiple challenges regarding stereotyping (Nkani, 2012) and prejudice from both learners and teachers (Nkani, 2012). Some teachers perceive pregnant learners as a disturbance to the learning and teaching environment (Bhana, Morrell, Shefer & Ngabaza, 2010), and stigmatise them due to their belief that they should leave school as schools are no longer spaces for them (Mpanza, 2012). Stigmatisation from teachers takes various forms such as teasing, ridicule, isolation and lack of empathy towards pregnant teenage girls and young mothers. Mpanza and Nzima (2010) found that some teachers were not willing to allow pregnant learners to continue attending school, due to beliefs that schools were not meant for pregnant learners, and were not adequately equipped to meet their health needs.

The stigmatisation that South African teenage mothers face is even perpetuated by people in the positions of power. For instance, the Former President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, while speaking to the National House of Traditional Leaders in March 10, 2009, stated that teenage mothers should be separated from their babies until they finish their schooling (SAPA, 2015). Findings from a study by Dlamini about teenage mothers' experiences of motherhood, schooling, stigma and learned responsibility in a peri-urban area in KwaZulu-Natal suggest that some young girls were beaten up by their parents upon finding out about their pregnancies, while others were chased away from their homes because of pregnancy (Dlamini, 2016).

Pregnant teenage girls and young mothers tend to internalise the stigmatising remarks, leading to their alienation and poor engagement in school Ngabaza & Shefer (2013). This leads to feelings of fear, shame, resentment and anger among these teenagers, and ultimately, to school dropout (Whitehead, 2001; Yardley, 2008; Ellis-Sloan, 2013). Further, Jones, Whitfield, Seymour and Hayter (2019) reviewed a number of studies that have explored the effects of

stigma on young parents. They cite the findings from a study by Wiemann, Rickert, Berenson and Volk (2005) in the United States which indicate that 40% of the 925 teenage mothers sampled felt humiliated and alienated because of their pregnancy. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, research by Whitehead (2001) highlighted isolation and exclusion experienced by pregnant teenagers, with many suggesting that they were isolated and stigmatised throughout their pregnancy. Furthermore, a United Kingdom study by Yardley (2008) that explored the effects of stigma on 20 teenage mothers, found that apart from feeling less valued, pregnant girls identified a general feeling of stigmatisation and discrimination in the form of deleterious remarks from the wider society (Jones, Whitfield, Seymor & Hayter, 2019).

Thus, without various kinds of support which include emotional support from peers, teachers and family members, pregnant and mothering young girls who are stigmatised and marginalised may resort to dropping out of school. Further, without support from family and the community, pregnant girls and young mothers cannot manage on their own, with negative implications for their schooling.

2.6.1.2 Coping with the Dual Student-Mother Roles

Juggling schooling demands and the responsibilities of motherhood can be a daunting task for many young girls, possibly leading to them dropping out of school. For example, literature in the context of the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland has long suggested that parental support is key to enabling young mothers to cope with the stresses associated with new parenthood and to be able to continue with their schooling (see for example, Phoenix, 1991; Social Exclusion Unit, 1999; Riordan, 2002). Without appropriate and adequate support from family in relation to childcare, such pressures may lead to school dropout. In Ireland specifically, McCashin, (1997) concluded that child care responsibilities had a direct impact on young mothers' schooling, and that lack of childcare might force them out of school.

Recently, Adelman and Szekely's (2016) study found teenage mothers struggle to continue with their schooling due to the inavailability of childcare support.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Maluli and Bali's (2014) study explored the experiences of pregnant and mothering secondary school students in Tanzania, and found that some young mothering girls found it difficult to continue with their schooling despite the availability of re-entry policies. Some reasons for that include missing school due to babies becoming sick, being unable to afford services of child-minders during school hours, inability to concentrate during lessons due to lack of sleep caused by motherhood demands (Maluli & Bali, 2014). Similarly, a study by Ntambo and Malvin (2017) which focused on the challenges faced by girls who became pregnant and were re-entered into the schooling system in Mpongwe district in Zambia, highlighted the difficulties they face due to lack of childcare support for their babies.

In the South African context, Panday et al (2009) found that only a third of teenage mothers are able to resume their studies after childbirth. The termination of schooling can be associated to the difficulty of maintaining the dual student-mother role. For instance, Dlamini (2016) conducted a study in peri-urban KwaZulu-Natal which focused on understanding participants' experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, the factors leading up to the pregnancy, the attitudes of others towards them as pregnant teenagers as well as family reactions to the pregnancy. The findings suggest that teenage mothers who decided to terminate their schooling did so because of limitations such as lack of childcare support as well as the difficulty of handling schoolwork and the mothering demands. These findings suggest that becoming a mother while at school is associated with challenges which subsequently have a detrimental effect on the girls' schooling.

2.6.2 Socio-Cultural Factors

A second set of factors that drive pregnant and young mothering girls to terminate their schooling is linked to the socio-cultural context in which they live and study. These socio-cultural factors include, among others, rejection and bullying by peers and the influence of religion and culture.

2.6.2.1 Rejection and Bullying from Peers

Pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers experience stigma, bullying and violence from friends and peers, which can lead them to drop out of school (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Grant & Hallman, 2008; Panday et al, 2009; Mcambi, 2010; Nkani, 2012; Shefer, Bhana & Morrell, 2013). Yardley (2008) explored the effects of stigma on teenage mothers in the United Kingdom, and a significant finding indicated that teenage mothers were stigmatised and blamed by their peers. In another study by the Neely, Baldwin & Beckwith (2016) which focused on teenage parents and their educational attainment in Texas, the findings suggest that teenage mothers drop out of school due to the motherhood responsibilities as well as because of stigmatisation and isolation from peers.

In sub-Saharan countries, in a study which explored stigma surrounding teenage sexual and reproductive health and young Ghanaian women's family planning outcomes (Hall, Manu, Morhe, Dalton et al, 2018), some of the participants stated that gossip was the most common form of enacted stigma from their peers. One of the highlighted challenges in a recent study that focussed on the experiences of young girls who became pregnant while schooling in in Zambia, was that when they return to school after childbirth they experience hostile attitudes from teachers and peers (Ntambo & Malvin, 2017). Another study aimed to evaluate the attitudes of secondary school students in Port Harcourt in Nigeria towards teenage pregnancy. The findings suggest that due to the prevailing social stigma against teenage pregnancy in most

Nigerian communities, pregnant and mothering teenagers were often bullied and marginalised by peers (Tabansi, Opara & Eke, 2012).

In South Africa, more than two decades ago, Masuku (1998) found that young mothers were largely marginalised by other learners, especially boys. Beesham (2000) conducted a study in KwaDukuza in KwaZulu-Natal which aimed to understand the young mothers' perspectives on schooling. The findings of that study suggested that being called *whores* and other humiliating names and isolation from group activities such as birthday parties were some of the challenges facing pregnant and mothering teenagers (Beesham, 2000). A more recent study explored the ways in which teenage girls from a single-sex, predominantly middle-class state school in Durban negotiate the demands of schooling and parenting (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013). The authors found that pregnant girls and young mothers were often stigmatised by their peers at school, who did not want to associate with them upon discovering their pregnancies and after they became mothers.

As argued in this section, the rejection and bullying of pregnant teenagers and mothers has a negative effect on their schooling as it makes them to feel excluded, unwelcome and isolated by their peers, thus contributing negatively towards their schooling experiences, access and success.

2.6.2.2 The Influence of the Media

The media plays a significant part in shaping public perceptions about teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, as well as about sexual and reproductive health and rights (Purcell, Hilton & McDaid, 2014). The difficulties of parenting for teenage mothers are further intensified by stigma from media reports which contribute to their social sequestration, distress, and loss of confidence (Lewis, Scarborough, Rose, & Quirin, 2007; SmithBattle, 2013). For example, in

an online study by British Pregnancy Advisory Service (2017) that explored teenage lifestyles and behaviours, more than 81% of the participants felt there was a lot or some stigma attached to becoming a teenage parent. This was because the media portrays teenage pregnancy and early motherhood in a negative light such as being irresponsible, selfish and immature (British Pregnancy Advisory Service, 2017).

In sub-Saharan Africa, Ackoka and Njeru (2012) focused on de-stigmatisation of teenage motherhood in Kenya. Their findings suggest that the media are active participants in the stigmatisation of teenage mothers. Citing Lucker (2010), the researchers observe that teenage motherhood is highly complex, and media images or discourses of their socially unwanted children further complicates their lives. Dealing with these complex issues relegates schooling to the margins, leading them to drop out. In South Africa, the media continues to present alarmist messages about teenage pregnancy and young mothers by reflecting statistics on teenage pregnancy that entrench moral panic among the population (Nkani, 2012). Media reports often portray young people as morally loose (Laldas, 2018; Mlambo, 2018a; Mkhize, 2018). Linked to this, media reports of the Child Support Grant (CSG²) as an incentive for teenagers to become mothers also contributes to the stigmatisation and marginalisation of pregnant and mothering girls (Majangaza, 2011). This is in spite of several studies which have refuted this as a myth and stereotypical, suggesting that there was no correlation between young girls becoming pregnant with the intention of accessing CSG as an incentive (Makiwane & Udjo, 2006; Makiwane, 2010; Eyal & Woolard, 2011; Kubheka, 2013). That the myth persists, means that pregnant and mothering teenagers will continue to face stigma and marginalization

² In South Africa, introduced in 1998, the Child Support Grant (CSG) aims to promote nutritional, educational as well as health outcomes (<http://www.dsd.gov.za>). The value of the Child Support Grant is R420 per month from April 2019 (<http://www.groundup.org.za>, <http://www.dsd.gov.za>).

in communities and schools, resulting in negative health and education outcomes, including school dropout.

2.6.2.3 Religious and Cultural Influences

Religion is a major cultural force because of its use to regulate people's views and behaviour, including how people view sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy in particular (Assimeng 2010; Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne & Ahiedeke, 2013). Family members, peers, teachers and community members use their religious beliefs to discriminate against and exclude pregnant teenagers and young mothers. To illustrate, in the context of the United States, programmes such as the Abstinence-only education (AOE) or abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) have religious origins that advocate for complete refraining from sex outside of wedlock (Leung, Shek, Leung & Shek, 2019). Abstinence is perceived as a moral imperative, where notions of virginity and chastity are highlighted. Furthermore, as Leung et al (2019, p. 97) observe, the programmes teach "that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity". Under this approach, students' morality is a key concern and any content that includes contraception in sex education is prohibited or limited (Leung et al, 2019). Advocates of these programmes believe that providing students with information on access and contraception use will weaken the abstinence-only narrative and promote immoral and health-compromising sexual behaviours which will, in turn, escalate the rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unwanted pregnancy (Kirby, 2007). Teenagers who become pregnant are therefore regarded as non-believers, and sinners, and are accordingly stigmatized and rejected. For teenagers who are still in school, the shame and pain of being stigmatized may lead them to temporarily or even permanently withdraw from school.

In African countries, religion also contributes to teenage girls' lack of access to sexual and reproductive health information. For instance, Mwalabi, Evans and Redsell (2017) state that as a religious and socially conservative society country, Malawi's programming on sexual and reproductive health education and care for girls is shaped by these norms. The authors state that in terms of sexual health, service providers and caregivers were often ambivalent about offering advice and service to young women, tending to focus on principles and morals instead of focusing on teenagers' sexual and reproductive health needs. Similarly, Osafo, Asampong, Langmagne and Ahiedeke (2013) and Anarfi and Owusu (2011) state that religious teachings in Ghana from all the three major religious groups - Christianity, Islam and Traditional religions - prohibit sex outside the context of marriage and view it as being immoral.

In South Africa, while youth comprise about 30% of the total population, responses to their sexual and reproductive health and rights have ranged from denialism (young people are not having sex) to condemnation (young people are having sex) (Magezi, 2016). To address their unwillingness and reluctance to deal with the sexual and reproductive health-related concerns of the youth, most favour the abstinence stance and superficial youth sexuality discussions that rarely tackle young people's needs (Magezi, 2016). Similar observations are also noted in a study by Moletsane (2014) who concluded that silence around sexual and reproductive health-related matters in homes and schools, as well as surveillance and punishment for those who were either dating, pregnant or were already mothers characterized responses to the teenage sexuality in South Africa. In recent months, the outcry against the proposed Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum from Grade 4-12, ostensibly by concerned parents and religious leaders, illustrates this religion-informed morality on teenage sexuality. To illustrate, the members of the African Christian Democratic Party staged a march to the Department of Basic Education offices to oppose a planned introduction of the Comprehensive Sexuality

Education (Matshili, 2019). The outcry about the proposed Comprehensive Sexuality Education was also voiced by Johan Kruger who is the operational director of the South Africa Teachers Union, who stated that the implementation of this proposed curriculum will not only be inappropriate for the pupils, as they will not be emotionally ready, but also that teachers will be too uncomfortable to teach it (Matshili, 2019).

Therefore, the moral lens through which religion views teenage pregnancy and early motherhood contributes to girls' stigmatisation. Moreover, ideas such as sex-as-sin, as well as associating sexual activities with shame and guilt, further perpetuate the stigmatisation of pregnant and mothering teenagers. Often, in the name of religion, parents deliberately avoid talking to their children about means of avoiding teenage pregnancy and sexuality (Durojaye, 2009). These negative societal values and norms cause unnecessary harm on the health of young girls which in turn might lead to pregnancies that could have been avoided if the young girls were offered sexual and reproductive health-related information (Durojaye, 2009; Levin-Epstein & Schwartz, 2005).

Linked to religion is the influence of culture in their families, communities and schools and how that reinforces stigmatisation of pregnant or mothering teenagers. In this context, teenage pregnancy and childbearing are "pre-dominantly viewed as a social problem" (Macleod, 2003, p. 23). According to McDermott and Graham (2005) and Ellis-Sloan (2013, negative constructions of early motherhood and stereotypes are common in relation to teenage pregnancy, leading to its 'demonisation'. According to McDermott and Graham (2005), early motherhood weakens the traditional social order and promotes the perpetual cycle of poverty in the society (see also Roseniel & Mann, 1996; Wallbank, 2001).

In South Africa, Nkani's (2012) study examined how teenage girls balance their motherhood roles and being learners, and the effects that pregnancy and parenting had on their schooling. The author found that pregnancy among teenagers and early motherhood were still viewed as deviant and as a bad influence on other 'innocent' girls. Bhana and Mcambi (2013) also found that young mothers felt rejected and lost friends due to pregnancy and the feelings of shame associated with it. According to participants in this study, parents discouraged their daughters from associating with pregnant girls and young mothers because they feared that they would influence their daughters negatively.

2.6.3 Socio-Economic Status

The income of the family is critical in determining whether a pregnant or mothering teenage girl will remain in school or drop out. According to Briggs, Bronwell and Roos (2007, p. 7), "[i]t is evident that background and socioeconomic factors play a role in both teenage pregnancy and teenage childbearing... early childbearing jeopardies the trajectory to adulthood by either interrupting the mother's education, or by making it difficult for a high school dropout to return to school". Studies have suggested that young mothers are likely to experience interrupted schooling, and some drop out of school permanently due to inability to afford childcare support, and that those who stay, are frequently absent from school and struggle with school work compared to their peers, and may disengage from school disengagement (Briggs, Bronwell & Roos, 2007).

In South Africa, factors like the costs of school uniforms and fees and baby-sitting, for example, have been found to deter parents from sending girls to school (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Chigona and Chetty (2008, p. 13) argue that teenage mothers who come from families with limited financial resources and whose parents are unable to afford the babysitting services for

the child are likely to have their schooling interrupted. In their study, for example, one of the parents stated:

I look after the baby when she has to go to school ... but sometimes when I have to go out to work then she has to take care of the baby herself ... she has to stay home looking after her child. I don't have money to send the baby to a crèche or to hire a babysitter ... actually she is ... burdening me because I have three children to look after plus her baby ... but I don't have a husband, and her boyfriend denied being responsible for her pregnancy so he does not provide any support for the baby.

Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamira (1998) and Pillow (2004) also found that teenagers that are mostly affected by pregnancy are young women who are already living in impoverished conditions prior to becoming pregnant, most of whom come from working class households. Such households are too poor to provide for the baby's needs and the indirect costs of sending the teenage mother to school.

The difficulty of juggling schooling demands and raising a child in a low socio-economic environment was also noted in the findings of the study by Ngabaza (2010) that was conducted in Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town, South Africa which explored the experiences of parenting among a group of teenagers. Most of the participants in this study reported that due to the lack of finances, their own families struggled to cope and some of them even contemplated dropping out of school to seek employment. These findings suggest that the socio-economic status of the family is one of the main factors in deciding whether the pregnant girls will be able to continue with their schooling after giving birth.

Parents' education levels are also linked to family income and its influence on teenage mothers' schooling. Frostad, Pijl and Mjaavatn (2015) explored the reasons for students dropping out of school in Norway, and their findings suggest that among the factors which contributed to pregnant girls dropping out of school was due to the parents' education low education. In another study by Humberstone (2018) which explored the use of social networks and educational attainment among pregnant teenagers, findings identified parents' education as one of the reasons for pregnant girls dropping out of school. In a study by Samano, Martinez, Robichaux, Rodriguez-Ventura, Jimenez-Sanchez et al, (2017) which investigated the context of the family and individual condition of teenagers before, during and after pregnancy in Mexico City, findings confirmed that the parents' level of education of parents was a contributory factor in some teenagers' dropping out of school. For instance, one of the participants in the study observed, "My mom and my dad studied until high school, but I did not even finish it. School was not for me." (Samano et al, 2017, p. 5).

In Kenya, despite the introduction of the favourable re-entry policy for pregnant school girls, available literature suggests that the majority of pregnant teenage school girls, both in primary and secondary schools, do not continue with their schooling after delivery due to the parents' lack of information and awareness about the re-entry policy and its guidelines (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2008; Bhuyan, Jorgensen & Sharma, 2010; Walgwe, Termini, Birungi & Undie 2016). Likewise, in Zambia, despite the existence of a favourable re-entry policy, many pregnant teenage girls do not resume studies after delivery. Most parents prefer marrying off their pregnant daughters and get bride price rather than allowing them to continue with school after delivery because they believe that educating an unmarried teenage mother would not benefit the family (Wedekind & Milingo, 2015).

In South Africa, a study by de Witte, Cabus, Thyssen, Groot, and van Brink, (2013) which reviews literature on school dropout also confirms that the educational levels of parents is linked to whether pregnant or mothering teenagers dropout of school or stay and complete. The authors suggest that the “marginalised communities in South Africa, with their multi-generation legacy of low quality Bantu Education³, low levels of education among older generations” (De Witte et al, 2013, p. 6) contribute to school dropout for pregnant teenagers and those who are mothers.

The above literature suggests that parents’ level of education has a negative impact on pregnant girls’ and young mothers’ educational attainment and in some instances even contributes towards them dropping out of school.

2.6.4 Geographic Location

Geographical location is one of the main factors that determine whether pregnant and mothering girls will carry on with their schooling during or after child birth. According to the study by Branson, Hofmeyr and Lam (2013, p. 5) which examined the determinants of dropout in South Africa, in instances where “families stay at some distance from the nearest school, and cannot afford transport, uniforms, stationary and other additional costs of schooling, dropout becomes a high risk”.

³ The Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953 was effected in 1954 as part of the apartheid government’s strategy that governed the education of black South African children and ensured that it remained inferior to that of their white counterparts (<https://www.britannica.com>).

Geographical location also contributes to poor accessibility to sexual and reproductive health services. Inability to reach services due to distance has detrimental effects of pregnant girls and young mothers. Presley-Marshall and Jones (2012) assert that inaccessibility of sexual and reproductive related services is critical as knowledge without access is ineffective. This was evidenced in a Hoggart, Phillips, Birsch and Koffman (2010) study that set out to explore strategies for reducing unintended and unwanted teenage pregnancies in London. Citing the work of Wellings and Kane (1999), the authors attributed the decline in the conception rates of the under 18s to access to and the proper use of reproductive health services, including contraception.

In sub-Saharan Africa, several studies have been conducted to explore the impact of geographic location on access to sexual and reproductive health services for teenagers. For example, in countries that are only just beginning to use modern contraceptive methods, such as Mali, contraceptives and other sexual and reproductive health services can be inaccessible in rural areas, which are often far from health facilities (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012). In Nigeria, access to contraceptives is limited for whole regions (the Islamic north in this case), although this could also be attributed to cultural and religious influences (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012). Another example is Ethiopia, where three-quarters of teenagers in the Amhara region reported that clinics were too far for them to conveniently use (Presley-Marshall & Jones, 2012). In the context of South Africa, Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides (2009) suggest that access to contraceptives is often difficult for teenagers, especially younger ones. Their study found that among the many barriers to access to contraceptives, were clinic location, costs, and clinic hours.

Drawing from the above, literature suggests that geographical location is one of the vital factors which determine whether pregnant girls and young mothers access the health service facilities. As argued previously, lack of access to the healthcare facilities might which might hinder young girls to access contraceptives thus leading to pregnancies which in turn compromises their schooling thus leading to drop out. As argued in this thesis, to prevent school dropout, it is critical that factors that contribute to school dropout among pregnant and mothering teenage girls are not only understood but are also addressed.

In addition to poor access to schools and clinics, geographic location also impacts negatively on young people's ability to access services and resources. Among these is access to technology, which, as researchers have argued, can be harnessed as a tool for improving teenage sexual and reproductive health knowledge and to curb unwanted/unplanned pregnancies (Boyar, Levin, & Zensius, 2011; Kachur, Mesnick & Liddon, 2013). To illustrate, in the US, a national survey found that the vast majority of teenagers frequently go online using a number of high quality and youth-friendly sexual health website such as Sex Etc., Scarleteen, Stay Teen, Go Ask Alice (Wartella, Rideout, Lauricella & Connell, 2015). These websites provide comprehensive information on a wide variety of topics such as relationships, contraception, violence, health services, and subject related to school work (Strasburger & Brown, 2014). According to Lenhart (2015), embracing media and technology offers many advantages for the promotion of teenage sexual health because anonymity is assured while seeking information about sexual health, but it enables like-minded youth to connect through information and potential interventions online and perhaps skirt the ideological battles of school-based sex education. Furthermore, sexual and reproductive health information can be accessed using mobile technology such as cellphones (Lenhart, 2015).

The importance of access to technology is also noted in the Sub-Saharan countries. Raftree and Bachan (2013) suggests that mobile learning might be one of the ways for Kenya to support young mothers when school interruptions occur due to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. Advantages of using technology such as mobile phones and eReaders to bring education to young mothers include giving the girls' access to education wherever they are without the fear of stigma from teachers and peers, as this contributes to dropout (Raftree & Bachan, 2013). Furthermore, through the use of mobile devices, subjects such as Maths, mother tongue languages, Science, sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention and Life skills can be taught through programmes like Dr Math, M4Girls, eTaleem, Motoli, Text2Teach, Education as a vaccine and Learning about Living (Raftree & Bachan, 2013).

In South Africa, a similar sentiment about the importance of embracing technology on sexual and reproductive health promotion was shared by Nganyulu, Mulaudzi, Peu, Khumisi, et al (2016). Their study explored the learners' needs in relation to sexual health in Makapastad, in Hammanskraal, South Africa. The participants stated that the use of technology is very beneficial in their daily lives. Many learners (although the actual number was not specified) requested the use of the Stepping Stones programme in order "to address the sexual and reproductive health problems which lead to teenage pregnancy and exposes learners to sexually transmitted infections including HIV infections" (Nyangulu, Mulaudzi, Peu, Khumisi, et al, 2016, p. 355). One of the participants stated:

I attended the Stepping Stones workshop, and we were trained about sexual behaviours and sexual relationships, so it empowered me to understand my sexuality...learned to say no...focusing on my school work... (Learner 12, female, aged 15 years) (Nyangulu, Mulaudzi, Peu, Khumisi, et al, 2016, p. 355).

Thus, poor or lack of access to technology in many families and communities in South Africa, might put teenagers, particularly those who are pregnant and mothering, at risk of dropout. As UNICEF (2017) suggests, incorporating the use of technology may ensure that pregnant girls and young mothers carry on with their learning. For example, by incorporating new technology platforms such as Vizool Eyes, the government can promote youth-friendly care and support to pregnant girls both during and after pregnancy and ensure that they carry on with their learning. This helps teenage mothers to take care of themselves and their babies while safeguarding their future in terms of education and future employment (UNICEF, 2017). Moreover, the incorporation of technology enables access to information about sexual and reproductive health as well as information about other subjects which would have been difficult for pregnant and mothering teenagers to access. Use of technology to access information also defies the limitations of distance to centres such as clinics and schools where such information is usually found.

2.6.5 School-Related Factors

A number of factors within the school have been found to force pregnant and mothering teenagers to drop out of school. Among these are: school policies and teacher attitudes towards pregnant and mothering teenagers.

2.6.5.1 School Policies

The availability of progressive policies that prohibit discrimination and expulsion on the basis of pregnancy are not a guarantee that young girls will remain in schools until successful completion. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2015) states that the UK Equality Act of 2010 not only allows pregnant girls to be in schools until they request maternity leave, it also ensures that girls return to school after no more than

18 months after giving birth (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015). Furthermore, in order to ensure that pregnant girls and young mothers are retained within the schooling system, they receive emotional and psychological support that targets the known schooling mothering challenges (Helpdesk, 2015).

In Namibia, Hubbard, Munyinyi, Eggerman, Schulze-Allen, Carew-Watts, Holt et al (2008) suggest that despite its availability, there is inconsistency in the way various school administrators interpret the learner pregnancy policy which grants pregnant learners permission to remain in schools. The Gender Research and Advocacy Project Legal Assistance Centre (2007) reports that the Code of Conduct for the Teaching Service in Namibia clearly states that a teacher “may not in any form humiliate or abuse a learner (i.e. physically, emotionally or psychologically)” and “must respect the dignity and constitutional rights of every learner without prejudice, including the right to education, equality of culture and the right to privacy” (p. 20). However, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (2002) conducted a study in the Rundu area of Namibia on the factors that push girls out of the education system. The study found that some teachers ignored the guidelines of the Code of Conduct for the Teaching Service. Young mothers were humiliated, mocked, and subjected to derogatory remarks by teachers and peers. This pushed them to change schools or drop out of school prior to successful completion (Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, 2002).

In South Africa, progressive policies around teenage pregnancy in schools abound. For example, the South African Schools Act of 1996 stipulates that no learner should be excluded from school regardless of their pregnancy or motherhood status (Act No. 84, 1996). However, available research suggests that this is not enough as these policies continue to be implemented unevenly throughout the schooling system (Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009; Nkani &

Bhana, 2011; Bhana and Mcambi, 2013; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013). For example, a study by Moletsane (2014) examined the necessity for quality sexual and reproductive health education to address hindrances to girls' educational outcomes in South Africa. The study found that the South African Schools Act of 1996 policy framework as well as the *Measures for the Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy* decisions (Department of Education, 2007) aim to provide an environment in which learners are fully informed about reproductive matters and have the information which would assist them in making informed decisions. Yet, their existence has not created changes for pregnant and mothering teenagers due to the contradictions and ambiguous messages about the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy, and to poor implementation (Moletsane, 2014). Furthermore, Shefer, Bhana and Morrell's (2013, p. 2) study examined the way in which schools interpret policy within a specific ideological framework and "how these discourses shape and, in some instances, undermine a more supportive interpretation and attitude towards pregnant and parenting learners". The study was conducted with a group of teachers and principals in 11 schools and with learners who were parents at school, in Cape Town and Durban. The findings suggest that even though the teachers and principals in the study were aware of the stipulation of the national policy, they showed ambivalence and discomfort in providing support to pregnant and mothering learners because they interpreted their presence as undermining the reputation of their schools and the broader society. This suggests that there are incongruities between policy frameworks and young women's experiences in school: there are policies that advocate for the retention of girls during pregnancy and after childbirth (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013). Similarly, Matlala, Nolte and Temane (2014) conducted a study on the experiences of teachers who teach pregnant learners in secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The findings indicate that some teachers identified a gap that existed in the policy. For example, according to the teachers in this study, even though they were expected to retain pregnant learners in schools, they lacked

the necessary skills to deal with them. Therefore, despite the availability of these progressive policies, due to poor implementation, not all learners benefit, leading to some dropping out of schools before completion.

2.6.5.2 Teacher Attitudes

Linked to the above, teachers play a crucial role in every student's life, and their support is also critical in determining whether pregnant learners and young mothers remain in school and complete their schooling successfully. Teachers are important enablers for pregnant learners to stay at school and return after childbirth (Chohan, 2010; Willan, 2013). However, not all teachers are at ease with pregnant girls and young mothers in schools and in fact, "there seems to be a universal lack of enthusiasm and a negative attitude among teachers for accommodating pregnant learners in school" (Runhare, 2010, p. 148).

In Sierra Leone, pregnant girls are forced to withdraw from school during pregnancy, but are allowed to re-join the schooling system after childbirth (Barry, 2010). The reason stated by one teacher for not allowing pregnant girls in schools is that their presence might be a distraction to other learners, while another stated that they do not allow pregnant girls in school as they are a bad example to others (Barry, 2010). In Kenya, the Health and Education Advice and Resources Team (HEART, 2015) conducted a study which evaluated the efforts of secondary schools in preventing unintended pregnancy among students and schools' reactions to pregnant students before and after delivery. The findings suggest that despite a favourable policy framework, there is still a lot hostility and anxiety among teachers when dealing with pregnant girls in schools. One teacher was quoted as suggesting that "Letting you be here is sort of contagious. It will cause other girls to get pregnant while they are here and it's not ok" (HEART, 2015, p. 6). This, for the teacher, was aimed at discouraging teenage mothers from being in school.

In Nigeria, a cross-sectional survey of 46 teachers in three public and two private schools was conducted (HEART, 2015). The findings show that 43% of the pregnant girls were expelled and 23% were suspended as the teachers were against having pregnant and mothering teenagers in their schools (HEART, 2015, p. 7). HEART (2015) suggests that views and commentaries of re-admission differ in Nigeria. For instance, while there are supportive policies and practices in the North West region which include separate classes for young mothers returning to school, and child care facilities at the school for young women's babies, there are cases of girls being expelled from school after showing signs or confirming their pregnancy. Most girls drop out of school after childbirth and counselling is not offered to the girls that re-enter the schooling system (HEART, 2015).

A study by Bhana et al (2010) focused on teachers' responses to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools. One of the teachers stated that none of them wanted pregnant girls at school and suggested a special school for pregnant girls where their babies could be looked after. In another study by Chigona and Chetty (2008), lack of support for pregnant girls was confirmed. For instance, when a mothering girl had missed lessons due to childcare demands, teachers were not willing to go through the lesson for them. Shefer, Bhana and Morrell's (2013, p. 2) study examined the way in which schools interpret policy within a specific ideological framework. The findings suggest that the relationship between teachers and pregnant learners in schools continues to be based on shame (for the learners). As discussed earlier, informed by religious and cultural beliefs, teachers are often concerned about the moral integrity of their school should pregnant teenagers be allowed to stay. This leaves pregnant teenage girls with feelings of exclusion, as the majority of teachers distance themselves from them.

However, there are teachers and principals who opt to accommodate pregnant and mothering girls in schools because of the policy obligations. They believe that accommodating pregnant girls in their school is not always favourable, even though they have no option but to accommodate them as it is policy (Bhana et al, 2010). In their study in which they examined the ways in which teachers in four different secondary schools in Durban understood and confronted the challenges of being a teacher in the context of HIV/AIDS, they found that there were teachers who were still concerned about the pastoral care of pregnant teenage girls and who were sympathetic to their needs for support. These teachers recognised the pregnant girls' right to education and where possible, gave them individual attention and support to assist them cope with schoolwork and pregnancy (see also Grant & Hallman, 2006). Such teachers "show their support towards pregnant girls by granting them extension of the due date of schoolwork or sending missed work home with a classmate" (Panday et al, 2009, p. 28).

The literature in this section suggests that not all teachers are supportive of pregnant girls and young mothers. This contributes to school dropout.

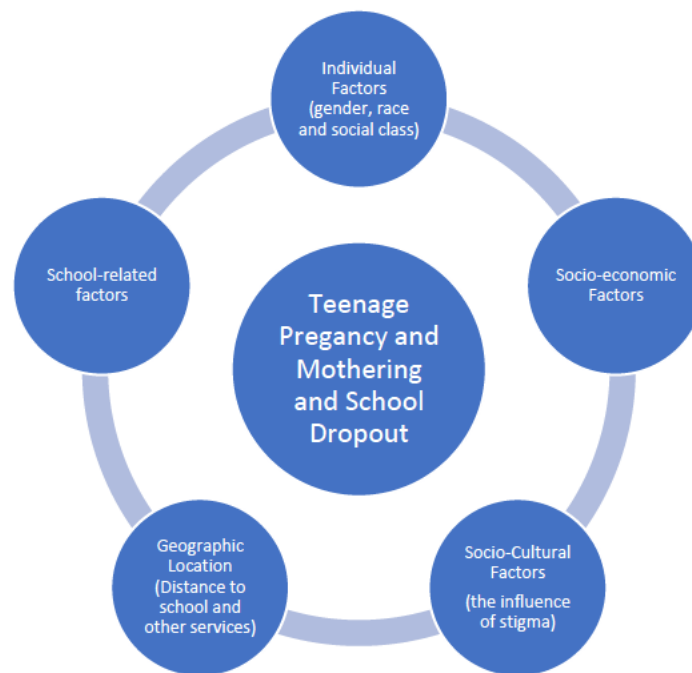
2.7 Discussion

The key question that the study sought to answer was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* In this chapter, literature related to this question is reviewed. Key findings suggest that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are mostly viewed behind the backdrop of gender, age, race and class which happens at different levels of the society. Linked to this, teenage pregnancy and early motherhood is usually frowned upon and stigmatised. This stigma renders pregnant girls and young mothers as helpless, ignorant, promiscuous, passive and a risk to the society.

The findings suggest that gender, race and social class intersect to influence the schooling experiences of pregnant and mothering teenagers, and whether a teenager completes or drops out of school. Specifically, the findings indicate that a number of factors influence pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to drop out of school. These include, first, individual factors, where individual girls' inability to cope with the stigma, bullying and rejection from family, friends and teachers often leads to their disengagement from school and for some, to school dropout. Further, having to cope with the dual student-mother role leads some teenagers to leave school. Without adequate support from family and others, pregnant and mothering girls have to choose between taking care of their babies and school. Second, socio-cultural factors include the influence of religion and culture, as well as the media, which all tend to stigmatise pregnant girls and young mothers, leading to their dropout from school. Finally, school-related factors, such as lack of appropriate policies as well as poor policy implementation have also been identified as negatively impacting on the schooling experiences of pregnant and mothering teenagers, and their dropout from school. While there are progressive policies which suggest that pregnant girls and young mothers have the right to attend school, due to poor or uneven implementation of these, such girls continue to encounter challenges, and in some cases, to be forced out of school. Linked to this, geographic location also impacts on young people's access to schools and health services, and in many cases, this influences whether a pregnant girl and young mother remains in school or drops out.

Figure 1 below presents an overview of the factors that intersect to impact on pregnant and mothering teenagers' schooling experiences and their dropout from school.

Figure 1: Towards a Conceptual Framework



This thesis is grounded on the understanding that appreciating how pregnant girls and mothers navigate their schooling and what factors push them to drop out, is key to developing appropriate interventions for retaining and supporting them to succeed in their education. This is particularly important in the South African context, given the concerning number of girls who become pregnant and who subsequently drop out every year. While the factors identified in this chapter are generally common for girls and young women internationally, this thesis is premised on the understanding that due to specific contextual factors, pregnant and mothering teenage girls in different cultural and geographic contexts will experience these differently. For example, whether or not pregnant and mothering teenagers persist or drop out of school, will depend on the particular contextual factors that impact on their lives in families, communities and school. Therefore, this study focused on the factors that contributed to pregnant and mothering teenagers in a South African township dropping out of school.

2.8 Synthesis

In this chapter, I reviewed literature related to the schooling experiences pregnant and mothering girls and the factors that influence them to drop out of school. First, I reviewed literature related to understandings of teenage pregnancy and early motherhood and the ways in which these are linked to views around teenage sexuality. Linked to this, the chapter reviewed scholarship on the influence of gender, race and class on teenage pregnancy and motherhood. This was followed by the influence of teenage pregnancy and mothering on school dropout among girls and young women. The literature concludes with an examination of the factors that influence school dropout among pregnant teenage girls and mothers.

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework that informed the study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to examine the factors that influence school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls in a South African township. In particular, while most available studies focus on the experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in schools (see for example, Chigona, 2007; Runhare, 2010; Ngabaza, 2010; Smith, 2013; Maphothi, 2014), I explored the ways in which gender and power interact in influencing pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to drop out of school prematurely. The overarching question in this study was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?*

The previous chapter sought to review literature that would enable me to respond to the research questions asked in this study. The findings from the chapter suggest that almost one-third of teenage girls who have dropped out of high school cite early pregnancy or parenthood as a key reason (Shuger, 2012). Panday et al (2009) argue that after giving birth, only about a third of teenage mothers return to school and this can be attributed to various factors. A number of factors were identified as influencing dropout among this population. These include lack of quality sexual and reproductive health education in schools; parents' inability to provide such information to their children because of their cultural and religious beliefs; stigma, bullying and rejection by peers and adults, including teachers and other adults in the community; challenges with the dual student-mother role; and lack of childcare support.

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter suggests that unequal gender norms in families, schools and the community are key to forcing girls to drop out of school due to pregnancy and mothering. Thus, central to this study is the concept of ‘gender’ which is understood, first, as learned rather than something that we are born with (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Greco (2013) concurs, adding that gender is salient from the moment of birth and becomes the beginning of the journey towards socialisation. Oakley (1972) argues that gender is a set of learned social attributes and is determined by culture through the use of verbal and non-verbal pointers which signify what is socially acceptable. Oakley (1972, p. 12) is responsible for coining the term *gender socialisation* which indicates that gender is socially constructed. The author believed that while parents contribute to gender socialisation, society has the largest influence in the construction of gender. This happens through three social mechanisms: manipulation; canalisation; and verbalisation (Oakley, 1981a; Oakley, 1981b). For Oakley, manipulation refers to the actions of parents and other family members in how they encourage behaviour that is perceived as normal and acceptable for a child and discourage behaviour that is contrary and not considered a norm (Oakley, 1981). According to Oakley (1981), canalisation is the channelling of things such as chores, sports according to the sex of the child in order to reinforce gender differences. Oakley (1981) further argues that through verbalisation, adults’ language use with children can implicitly suggest and reinforce certain ideas about gender correctness. For example, this can happen through using pet names, praising the child for exhibiting behaviour which is within the acceptable social norm. These mechanisms of socialisation are used to define what are socially acceptable gender norms for boys and girls (Oakley, 1981).

Linked to the above, available literature suggests that gender is embedded with behavioural characteristics and life experiences that are heavily influenced by the societal expectations,

norms and roles (Warnke, 2008). Linked to this, Connell (2009) has suggested that gender is discursively produced and performed through interactions with institutional, social and cultural contexts. Butler (1990; 2004; 2011) argues that gender is performative, which suggests that the repetitive manner in which we do things confirms an impression of being a man or a woman. In her book, *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) suggests that gender performativity is a lifelong process and constitutes masculine and feminine identities. According to her, gender is constructed through a set of acts which comply with the dominant societal norms.

This study is premised on the notion that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers themselves are not exempt from the genderedness of the societies from which they come. This means that they are influenced or affected by the societal gender norms and expectations that prescribe what it is to be a girl/boy and girl/woman. Therefore, the study examined the extent and ways in which these gender norms influenced pregnant girls' and teenage mothers' decisions to drop out of school.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Informed largely by the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, this chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings that inform data collection and analysis in this thesis. The literature indicates that various factors both within the schooling environment and in the greater society contribute to school dropout among pregnant and mothering teenage girls. The framework draws from two theories: gender socialisation theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory.

3.2.1 Gender Socialisation Theory

We are social beings who are born into already existing environments that contain a set of expectations and cultural norms that govern our relationships and behaviour at various levels (Šikić-Mićanović, 1997). From the time we are born, we are socialised into these norms by various sources - such as family, peers, school, community, media, legal systems and cultural beliefs - all of which have a common goal of transmitting and promoting the socialisation goals of a particular society (Ekin, 1968). Chartschlaa (2004) concurs, stating that from an early age, children in society learn that there are differences between boys and girls and these ideas permeate their daily lives by being enforced by various agencies such as parents, peers, schools and the media. Crespi (2003) rightfully states that from the moment we are born, we are being moulded into what the society wants us to be. She further states that the way we behave and think is the final product of how we have been socialised. Through the course of social interaction and exposure and reactions to diverse information around us, we are continually moulded to culturally appropriate images of femaleness and maleness (Šikić-Mićanović, 1997).

UNICEF (2007, p. 1) conceptualises gender socialisation as “the prescriptive process by which people learn to behave in certain ways which are predetermined and dictated by the societal beliefs, values, attitudes and examples”. A more recent conceptualisation sees gender socialisation as “a process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to ‘do’ gender through internalising gender norms and roles as they interact with the agents of socialisation such as their family, social networks and other social institutions” (UNICEF, 2016, p. 3).

According to UNICEF (2016) there are multi-level factors that influence gender socialisation during the teenage years. “(T)here are broader societal values and practices, political structures,

and socio-economic conditions, global media and other information tributaries that are influential at the broader societal level. It is through these structural factors where the gendered distribution of resources is determined and how relative status and power will impact each individual's personal circumstances" (UNICEF, 2016, p. 20). In the case of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers, it is at this level of gender socialisation that negative messages are communicated about how teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are contrary to the broader societal values and practices, which advocate pregnancy only after marriage.

Karam (n.d.) suggests that gender socialisation is identified as the root cause from which various aspects of gender identities and gender dynamics emerge. The author further states that it is through gender socialisation that discriminatory practices, laws, perceptions and stereotypes are emphasised. While there are multiple definitions of gender socialisation, what is common among them is that our gender identities are formed through the ways in which we have been socialised and the gender roles are learned through social agencies of socialisation such as family, peer groups, school and media (Crespi, 2003).

Embedded within gender socialisation is gender stereotyping, which promotes traditional gender roles (Crespi, 2003). Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood do not happen in a vacuum; rather, they happen within societies which already have an entrenched set of beliefs and expectations. Of particular relevance to this study is the expectation that the teenage mother will be largely responsible for the care of the baby, thus limiting her opportunity to carry on with her schooling after giving birth. As Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) argue, young mothers find themselves with a dual role of being a learner and parent. Over and above the responsibility of giving birth, the responsibility of taking care of the child also becomes the

burden of women which has negative implications on schooling for girls. This gender stereotyping circumscribes the young girls' prospects of completing their schooling which compromises their future endeavours of being successful in life. Therefore, these societal expectations contribute to disadvantaging the pregnant and young mothers.

To analyse data addressing the research question, "*1. How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?*", this thesis uses the gender socialisation theory. Employing this theory, I intended to understand how the ways in which pregnant girls and young mothers have been socialised in various spaces influence their decisions to stay in schools or dropout. I wanted to understand the extent and ways in which gender socialisation influenced participants' views of themselves in their roles as pregnant teenage girls and young mothers and how those views influenced their decisions to stay in school or drop out.

3.2.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

A second theory used in this study is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. In particular, this theory is used to analyse data addressing the research question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering girls to drop out of school.* Developed by Urie Brofennbrenner, an American psychologist, the ecological systems theory encompasses ideas from the ecological and systems frameworks (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory has been widely used in studies related to teenage pregnancy and sexuality, parenting and schooling, school persistence and dropout among teenage mothers (Rojas, 2011; Gonzalez, 2017; Asomani, 2017). The ecological perspective argues that the behaviour of an individual always occurs within a particular environment (see also Potjo, 2012). It explicates how the development of individuals is dependent on assistance, advice and

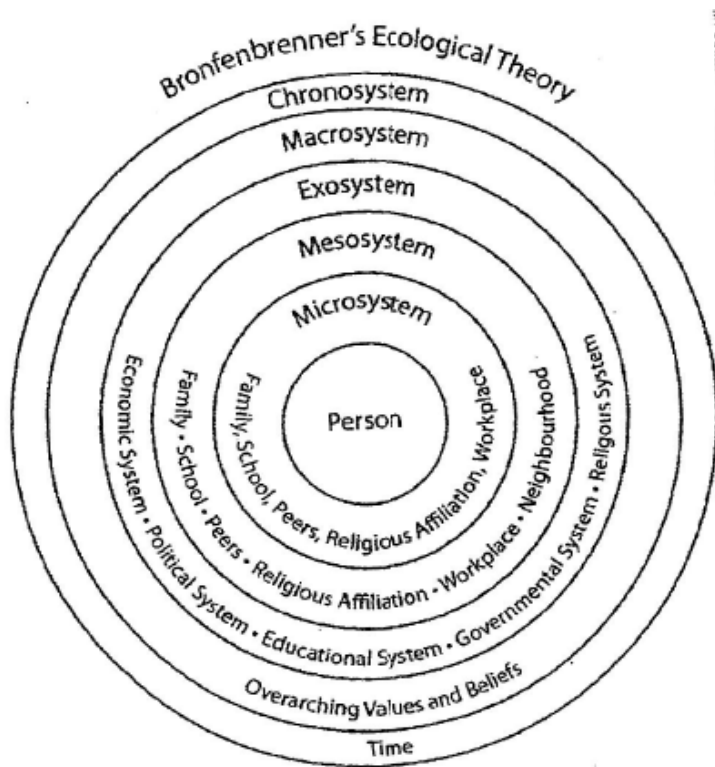
structure of the society in which they are located (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This ecological model was adapted from the physical sciences (Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000) and has at its core the proposition that the development of an individual is determined by his or her interaction with the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rojas, 2011).

This study is informed by the notion that, in relation to schooling, teen pregnancy and motherhood are a function of an individual's life, and her relationships in the environment. Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem model enables me to explore the various systems of influence that contributed to pregnant and mothering teens' experiences which led them to drop out of school before successful completion.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that every person is born into an intricate cultural ecological system of people, situations, social attitudes and values, religion, political, economic and legal practices. It is within this system that pregnant and mothering girls have to carefully negotiate their lives both socially and academically. Bronfenbrenner (2001; 2005) advocates for strengthening human relationships within supportive environments as it leads to the increase in development of the individuals which in return yields positive outcomes in learning. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to understand the influence of pregnancy and motherhood on the lives of teenage girls requires an analysis of the immediate family, community and the societal landscape as they play a vital role in fuelling the development of the child and have a direct influence on the decisions pregnant teenage girls and young mothers make about schooling.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model comprises of five interconnected systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Figure 2 below depicts a model showing these levels and their interactions and influence on the individual.

Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System



(Source: Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, in Asomani, 2017, p. 28).

3.2.2.1 *Microsystem*

The microsystem is the first system that the young person growing up comes into contact with (Potjo, 2012). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1987), the microsystem refers to the immediate setting of the developing person and includes components such as activity, role and relation. It is the level closest to the individual where they have direct interactions with their close surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It includes structures like family, school, neighbourhood and others (Amod & Seabi, 2013). Matlala (2011) posits that each family provides a distinctive set of circumstances for the advancement of social attitudes, values and

belief systems and it is these circumstances that determine how each individual perceives their world. Potjo (2012) states that this system includes the parents' level of education which is perceived to have a vital impact on teenage pregnancy, and other factors such as the educators' attitudes and their ability to manage teenage pregnancy. Hence at the microsystem, I examine the extent and ways in which structures like family, school and neighbourhood provide conducive conditions for pregnant and mothering teenagers to remain in schools. At family level, for example, this can be done by providing childcare support and any other support which might lighten the burden of young mothers thus enabling them to fulfil necessary requirements associated with schooling. At the school level, teachers and peers can also ease the load of pregnant girls and young mothers by improving the learning environment and eliminating the stigma associated with early pregnancy and motherhood. many pregnant girls drop out of school even after childbirth (Brundage, 2013). This is further mediated by gender norms which view pregnant young girls as a group of immature and irresponsible individuals that are to assume the role of parenthood as they deviated from the norms of motherhood (Asomani, 2017; Chigona and Chetty, 2008; Yardley, 2008).

3.2.2.2 Mesosystem

The mesosystem encompasses the direct relationships with secondary systems outside of the immediate environment (such as family, friends, partners and those which directly affect the individual) (Fernandez & Nichols, 1996). It is also at the mesosystem level that there is an emphasis on the connectedness between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2000; Harkonen, 2007). What this means is that social support from school, teachers and in the greater society are important at this level. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that there exists a difference in microsystem and mesosystem factors such as social support and parenting by age. Teenage mothers are reported to have less support than non-teenage mothers, due to social scrutiny and

stigma associated with early pregnancy (Figueiredo, Bifulco, Pacheco, Costa & Magarinho, 2006; Wahn & Nissen, 2008; Baheiraei, Mirghafourvand, Nedjat, Mohammadi, Mohammad-Alizadeh, et al (2012). Smith (2013) posits that interactions at mesosystematic level may affect teenage mothers as it is at this level that family members and teachers work together in planning for such mothers. It is of utmost importance that caregivers or parents of pregnant teenage girls work collaboratively with the teachers in order to provide optimal support for the learners, as this may ultimately ensure that learners are able to continue with their schooling after childbirth (Smith, 2013). In instances where schools do not accommodate pregnant teenage girls and young mothers due to reasons such as uneven implementation of relevant policies, the implications may be dire as they may lead to school dropout. Thus, it is vital that the interactions and relationships between the individual and the social institutions such as the school, teachers, parents as well as peers are well maintained. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Juggling pregnancy or mothering and schooling is not easy and may be riddled with challenges such as the inability to cope with the schooling demands, absenteeism from school, responsibilities and childcare demands which are mainly assumed to be the sole responsibility of young mothers. (Wilan, 2013; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Panday et al, 2009; Bearinger, Seaving, Ferguson, & Sharma, 2007; Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001). Thus, in this study, I analysed the nature of support that the pregnant teenage girls and young mothering girls received from their families, teachers, peers and the society at large to enable them to stay in school.

3.2.2.3 Exosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1976, p. 516). believes that there are “connections between the formal and the informal social structures which do not themselves contain the developing person, but rather which encircle the immediate settings in which the person resides”. The exosystem refers to systems where “individuals are not directly involved but which could still have an influence

on the individual, such as the education system or the health system” (Inglis, 2009, p. 28). Bronfenbrenner (1990) defines exosystems as the formal and informal social systems in which the child functions daily and which directly or indirectly impact on the child’s development by interacting with the structures in the microsystem (see also Berk, 2000; Paquette & Ryan, 2001; Dunst, Trivette & Raab, 2011). Furthermore, the exosystem consists of a range of influences on an individual, such as their community, the health systems they interact with, educational policies that affect them, their national government, and even the distribution of goods and services. In this regard, Dunst, Trivette & Raab (2011) states that each of these factors has an impact on the decision that a teenage mother makes. These decisions are dependent on the implementation or non-implementation of policies.

As discussed in Chapter One and Two, in South Africa, there are available policies. These include the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (Section 29 subsection 1(a) and (b), which unreservedly grants every person the right to basic education and equal access to further education, and the South Africa’s Schools Act (1996) which legislates the constitutional rights of pregnant girls and young mothers to remain at school during pregnancy and to re-enter the schooling system after child birth. Informed by these laws, in 2007 the South Africa government developed further detailed measures for the management of learner pregnancy in schools which clearly explicated that pregnant girls have a right to education and cannot be expelled from school because of their pregnancy (DoE, 2007; Runhare, 2010). The framework stipulates that learners should remain at school as long as it is medically advisable and be provided with learning material when they are no longer able to attend school (DoE, 2007). However, the availability of such policies does not always guarantee their implementation at an institutional level. Some pregnant teenage girls or young mothers may be forced to drop out

of school by circumstances such as hostility and reluctance to implement school policies pertaining to pregnancy (Panday et al, 2009), negative attitudes of teachers towards pregnant and mothering learners (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Poor support systems both at home and school can also be a contributory factor in dropout. This can be attributed to the socially-constructed gender norms which “limit girls’ voice and opportunities to challenge decisions concerning them” (Overseas Development Institute, 2015, p. 17). Furthermore, there is an imbalance in the manner in which labour is allocated in various households and the majority of chores and childcare responsibilities are assigned to girls (Overseas Development Institute, 2015). This imbalance has a direct bearing on whether pregnant young girls can exercise their rights to return to school after childbirth (Molefe, 2016; Wekesa, Steyn & Otieno (2011).

Informed by this, my study examined how pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who have dropped out of school in a South African township construct narratives of the causes of dropping out.

3.2.2.4 Macrosystem

For Bronfenbrenner (1976, p. 30), the mesosystem does not refer to a specific setting that influences the life of a person, but refers to the “general prototypes” that exist in a particular culture or subculture. It is a societal model for a particular culture, subculture or other broader social context (Harkonen, 2007). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), these societal blueprints are interconnected social forces that define broad ideological and organisational patterns within institutions in order to ensure a common way of doing things. They define the “cultural contexts such as the socio-economic status, poverty and ethnicity” within which each individual live (Matlala, 2011, p. 88). The macrosystems are not static, but they evolve

depending on factors such as an economic recession, war and technological changes (Matlala, 2011).

According to Harkonen, (2007), the values of the macrosystem are generationally transferred by means of institutions such as families, schools, workplaces, congregations and administration. Turiel (1998) suggests that the surrounding culture determines the moral, social and personal rules which families and communities teach and expect from their children. For instance, according to gender socialisation theory, there are multiple sources of socialisation such as parents, siblings, peers and teachers (Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development, 2017). In addition, in a society where teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are shunned due to being perceived as immoral and degrading of cultural values, the pregnant or mothering teenage girl might experience segregation and stigmatisation that might lead to school drop out. In this study, I was interested to understand the influence of these cultural values, traditions and laws on my study participants' decision to stay in school or drop out.

3.2.2.5 Chronosystem

The fifth level of the ecological model is the chronosystem, which involves “developmental time which affects the interactions between systems as well as their influences on each individual’s development” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.91). It involves the influence of such factors as environmental events, transition in the environment over time, the socio-historical placement of the individual, changes in family size depending on the individual life circumstances and decisions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Smith, 2015). Matlala (2011) states that chronosystem enables individuals to identify the bearing of life events that have already occurred and experiences based on the historical and social changes. Therefore, these overall

dimensions of time may impact the schooling aspirations of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers. Houston (2015) argues that Bronfenbrenner's theory reminds us that human development does not happen in a vacuum as it is primarily a social affair, and that Bronfenbrenner's model enables us to reflect on the wider impacts of culture and political systems. In this regard, Asomani (2017) suggests that the chronosystem sheds light on the need to consider aspects of stability or change and instability within the family, school or neighbourhood. For me this means examining the influence of context on teenage mothers and whether and how changes or instability in the family or community have influenced their decisions to drop out of school. In this study, the existence of these changes and their influence on the schooling decisions of pregnant and mothering teenagers were analysed.

3.2.3 Application and Critique

The ecological systems theory has been used in various fields of study internationally. For instance, Matlala (2011) explored the role of social factors in influencing the moral development of black teenagers in Mamelodi township in Pretoria. The author used the theory to analyse people's needs in contextual environments such as family, school, peers, church, media and the internet. In this study, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model highlighted how the teenagers' moral development is influenced, suggesting that "the technological development and interventions are likely to influence the teenagers' moral development so profoundly that the accustomed systems and methods will no longer suffice" (Matlala, 2011, p.95). The author concludes that the "teenagers are influenced by ecological change, changes in the value orientation, the modern society, proactive strategies, language and cultural differences" (Matlala, 2011, p.95). In a study by Inglis (2009) which explored the dropout phenomenon in a secondary school in a high-risk community in the Western Cape, the author employed the ecological systems theory to understand the dropout phenomenon, "as a thorough

understanding of it would be beneficial for the intervention strategies” (Inglis, 2009, p. 48). Inglis (2009) concluded that risks such as individual learner characteristics, academic factors and behaviour, family system, peer group system, school system, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy all contribute towards understanding the dropout phenomenon.

However, this theoretical model is not entirely without criticism. Houston (2015) argues that Bronfenbrenner’s theory offered a limited theorisation of power. Even though Bronfenbrenner does mention power, he does not clearly articulate how individuals can use power as a transformative resource when dealing with matters emanating from class, race, religion, norms, roles and routines. In Bronfenbrenner’s work, it is unclear how power permeates social life at various levels, including the micro, meso, exo and macro levels, and how it circulates within social structures in enabling or restricting ways (Houston, 2015).

Miller’s (2008) criticism of Bronfenbrenner’s model is that it fails to acknowledge the importance of the concept of resilience which gives a better understanding of an individual’s capacity to overcome negative influences and situations in and around his or her environment. According to Miller (2008), resilience sheds more light in defining one’s sense of purpose regardless of the negative circumstances around him or her.

3.3 Discussion

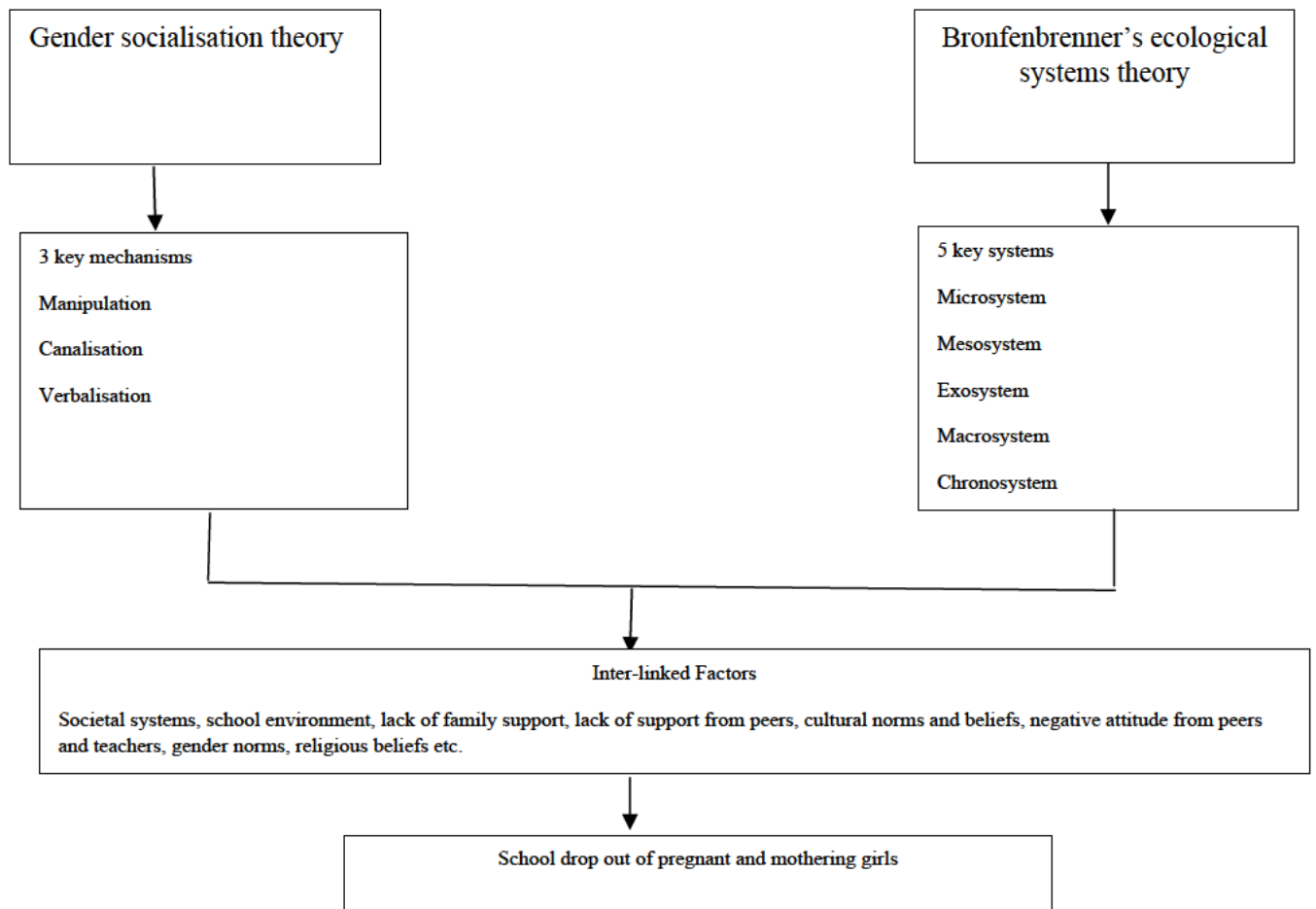
Any attempt to explain teenage mothers’ efforts to successfully juggle pregnancy or mothering with schooling would require an explanation of why the girls face these challenges (Chigona, 2007). Since this study was aimed at exploring the causal factors that led to pregnant teenage

girls and young mothering girls dropping out of school, I wanted a theoretical framework that would assist me to identify factors to be explored. First, the gender socialisation theory suggests that the environment in which one is raised and the way in which one is socialised play critical roles in determining the individual's life outcome. The gender socialisation theory acknowledges the role played by peers, family, school, media and the socio-cultural systems in promoting and mediating gender socialisation (Karam, n.d.; Šikić-Mićanović, 1997; Crespi, 2003; Chartschlaa, 2004; UNICEF, 2007). Informed by this theory, this study was grounded on the notion that gender socialisation played a major role in influencing how peers, teachers at school, the family and the media view pregnant teenage girls and young mothering girls. This in turn might contribute to girls dropping out of school. This is due to the number of negative experiences that teenage mothers go through both at school and in the greater society. At times they find themselves in awkward positions where they experience exclusion and stigmatisation by peers (Kelly, Stich, Haley, & Fessler, 2007; Yardley, 2008), family members and teachers (Bhana et al, 2010; Mpanza & Nzima, 2010; Mpanza, 2012; Nkani, 2012; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013), being perceived as immorally deviant (Bhana et al, 2010; Mpanza, 2012; Nkani, 2012), without sufficient support from teachers (Nkani, 2012; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013), being subjected to prejudice (Nkani, 2012; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013), and being perceived as the 'at risk' group in the society (Mitchell & Green, 2002). Thus, the study examined how the above-mentioned factors contribute towards dropout and non-completion of schooling by pregnant girls and young mothers. One of my assumptions was that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers drop out of school because of marginalisation and lack support from components of their ecological system (including teachers, administrators, peers, family and the larger community), which makes it virtually impossible to juggle the demands of parenting and childcare. The theory explains the influence of gender socialisation on pregnant and young mothers' decisions to terminate their schooling, and especially how social norms and

values inform these decisions and make their schooling difficult and almost impossible to complete successfully.

Second, in, the role of the ecological system in people's lives and decision-making was helpful in understanding how pregnant and mothering teenagers' decisions. The theory reminds us that human development is primarily a social affair, which can be used to map out the impact of culture and political systems and how they reflect inequalities (Jack, 2000; Houston, 2015). The ecological system principles acknowledge the influence of the wider environment and this helps to understand the learners in a more holistic manner by taking into consideration the interactions in the classroom, school and the wider society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Jozefowicz-Simbeni and Allen-Meares, 2002). Thus, the study examined the factors that influence pregnant girls and mothering girls to drop out of school. Therefore, my assumption regarding the gender socialisation theory is that it is the appropriate theory to employ in this study because it recognises the importance of the environment in which the pregnant girls and the mothering youth have been raised as well as the way in which they have been socialised in determining their life outcome.

Figure 3: Diagrammatic representation of the interaction between gender socialisation theory and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory



3.4 Synthesis

In this chapter, I outlined the theoretical framework that was used to conceptualise my study. The gender socialisation theory enabled me to gain insight on how socialisation plays a pivotal role through the multiple socialisation agencies in perpetuating gender stereotypes. This in turn enabled me to examine whether and how the manner in which these girls experienced schooling was dependent and determined by the ways in which they had been socialised. I also employed Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory to answer the critical question which sought to enable to answer the critical question 2): What factors influence pregnant and mothering girls

to drop out of school? The ecological systemic principles played a pivotal role in linking the psychological development of the individual to the social context and systems while acknowledging the influence of the wider environment (Lewis & Salo 2009).

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Fonda, Eni and Guimond (2013, p. 1) pose an interesting question, “Is teenage pregnancy an issue?” The response to the question depends on who you ask, where you are coming from, and where you are located in history and the world (Fonda, Eni & Guimon, 2013). What might be socially acceptable in one community might be contrary to what is recognised in another as each society has its own standards which it uses to evaluate what is acceptable and not acceptable within its context. Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are not neutral discourses in the society. These discourses are located within the parameters of judgement, ridicule and shame. I have been an educator for almost 15 years, 12 of which have been spent at a single sex school for girls, and I have had the privilege of being exposed to different life stories that affect girls. Some of these stories were shared with smiles on the narrators’ faces and others with tears in their eyes. However, stories which have always been close to my heart are those shared by teenage girls and young mothers about their own struggles with pregnancy and motherhood. Some of these stories were not personal but about the experiences of siblings and peers. The most intriguing factor about these stories is that they can be triggered by anything and everything that happens in the school setting, and spark a conversation about the teenage girls’ experiences of pregnancy, motherhood and schooling. It is the exposure to such stories, witnessing the impact that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood have on schooling and the fact that “[t]eenage pregnancy and young motherhood pose a great deal of challenges for the girls involved” (Chigona, 2007, p.1) that prompted the conception of this study.

The study focused on a group of pregnant and mothering teenagers (N=16) in one township near Durban, South Africa and the influence of gender on their decision-making. The overarching question in the study was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* To address the question, the following sub-questions were explored:

1. *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?*
2. *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?*

The previous chapter presented the theoretical underpinnings that informed data collection and analysis in this thesis. Informed by the gender socialisation theory and ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner, the framework is premised on the notion that there are various factors both within the schooling environment and in the greater society that contribute to school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls.

The study of this nature required methodological approaches that not only allowed inclusion of the “young women’s voices, but were also sensitive to the discursive spaces in which this meaning was constructed and mediated” (Nkani, 2012, p. 60). My responsibility as a researcher was to “ensure that this process was carried out within a non-judgmental and a supportive framework” (Ngabaza, 2010”, 76). The next section outlines the research design and methodology employed in this study.

4.2 Research Paradigm

The study analysed in this thesis is located within the social constructivist paradigm. A social constructivism research paradigm allows individuals to understand their own world and to develop their own particular meanings that correspond with their experiences (Burr, 1995). This implies that meanings are not engraved within each individual, but they are rather formed through interactions with others that versions of knowledge are created (Burr, 1995; 2003; Creswell, 2013). Andrews (2012) suggests that knowledge and truth are created through interactions between individuals within a society. Indeed, it is these interactive processes that take place between people that demonstrate how they develop their own particular meanings. The above assertions about the creation of knowledge and truth by the individuals was closely aligned to my study which intended to grant the opportunity to the participants to reflect on and give meaning to their experiences of either being pregnant pregnant or mothering while at school which had a negative outcome that led them to drop out of school prior to completion.

“Parallel to the positivist stance that views the world as based on objective and unbiased truths, the social constructionists’ offer a divergent view as they believe that the truth is historically and culturally variable” (Ngabaza, 2010, p. 20). Macleod (2001) argues that teenage motherhood is a social construct and therefore the definitions and meanings of motherhood are not rigid, but are rather aligned to specific societies and cultures, and the historically specific times within which motherhood and mothering takes place.

Furthermore, the guiding principles of social constructivism suggest that the researcher does not claim that the experiences of the participants are the ultimate truth, but rather as an

interpretation of their own experience (Creswell, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). Social constructionists acknowledge that people's gender practices are subject to processes of negotiation of identity and the social realities around them (Lorber, 2000) and through the historical and cultural experiences through which their identities are enforced (Burr, 1995). Exploring school dropout in the context of teen pregnancy and motherhood within a social constructionist research paradigm therefore requires an exploration of the social and cultural underpinnings that are specific to their contexts. This study explored occurred within a particular culture, context and historical phase, therefore its findings cannot be generalised and are not representative of all women in this context, but rather represent the subjective experiences of a group of young women in this particular social context (Ngabaza, 2010).

4.3 Research Design and Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design, which is concerned with how the participants experience, understand and interpret the social world of the phenomena (Mason, 2002). In other words, it focuses on the participants' perceptions and experiences as well as how they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 2003). In this study, I wanted to explore the girls' perspectives on how teenage pregnancy and early motherhood acted as barriers to their access to and success in education.

The qualitative approach allowed for the phenomena (teenage pregnancy and motherhood) to be studied in the participants' natural settings (Denzil, 1997; TerreBlanche & Durrheim, 1999; Henning, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For example, some of the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes or other spaces which they preferred (such as the local library). This enabled the participants to be in spaces that allowed them to mother and

participate in the interviews. This reduced the elements of apprehension and fear which might have been created by being in an unfamiliar setting and environment. The participants were also informed about the availability of a child-minder in case they wanted to use her services during the interviews. None of the participants did this as they indicated that they preferred leaving their children with people they are familiar with such as family members.

The qualitative methods enable the researcher to study the selected issues intensely as they attempt to understand the information that emerges from the participants (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 1999). It also uses a “naturalistic approach that seeks to understand the phenomena in context specific settings without manipulating the phenomena of interest” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The aim of this qualitative study was to elicit nuanced descriptions of the lives of the participants. Qualitative research seeks to understand the given research problem from the perspectives of the local population and is particularly effective in obtaining the culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of the particular population in which the study is conducted (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). The aim of this study was to acquire an in-depth understanding of the gendered factors that influenced 16 pregnant and mothering teenagers to drop out of school and a qualitative research approach was ideal for. Mason (2002, p. 1) states that qualitative research enables the researcher to “explore a broad array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of the research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate”.

The qualitative approach also has its limitations. According to Daher, Carré, Jarramero, Olivares and Tomicic (2017) and Seal, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004) the qualitative approach concentrates on meanings and experiences rather than giving attention to contextual sensitivities. The qualitative approach is further criticised for being heavily reliant on “the individual skills of the researcher, thus making it easily influenced by the researcher’s personal biases and idiosyncrasies” (Anderson, 2010, p. 2).

4.4 Research Context

My study was located in Umlazi township, south of Durban. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the name Umlazi comes from “Umlaza” (which is a Zulu word for the sour acid produced from fermented or sour milk). It is believed that King Shaka (a Zulu king) was passing through the area and refused to drink from a local river claiming that the water tasted like “umlaza” (South African History Online, 2013). It is from that incident that the area has been called Umlazi. It was part of Vumengazi tribal area which was later developed into a township (United Nations Habitat, 2007). It was officially opened to black residents in 1965 and acquired town status in 1973.

It is the second largest township in South Africa and according to the 2011 national census. its population was estimated at 404 811 residents with more than 50% of the population being youth (StatsSA 2012; Umlazi Local Economic Development Plan, 2008). The area of Umlazi is 4 4812 hectares and forms part of the eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province. Like all other townships, Umlazi township is a product of the apartheid system. It is located approximately 17 kilometres south of Durban’s Central Business District and it is located to the west of the N2 freeway. The past few years have seen further increases in population as

well as a steady permeation of people from the neighbouring African countries such as Nigerians, Congolese, Ghanaians, Somali nationals and others.

Umlazi has 26 sections and nine precinct areas. It comprises of sections A-Z as well as AA, BB and CC. It is characterised as a densely populated area where an estimated 67% of households earn less than R2 000 per month in the formal economy. There is an informal sector from which some households glean additional income (ULEDP, 2008).

The Umlazi area is primarily a residential area, comprising of both formal and informal settlements with minimal economic activity within the area to accommodate the employment needs of the residing population. Therefore, many people live in Umlazi, but seek employment elsewhere in areas like Durban, Isipingo, Chatsworth and others. Umlazi has various housing types, which is indicative of the varying income levels of the people residing in this area (Umlazi Local Economic Development, 2008). The informally built households are usually constructed from mud, corrugated iron and wattle and roofed with asbestos or corrugated iron. Usually old tyres and stones are put on top of the roofs to protect them from being blown away in case of a heavy storm. It is also a common site to see that in almost every section that there are formal brick houses and in some instances double-story houses with well-maintained yards and informal settlements in the same vicinity. Some of these areas have limited basic service infrastructure. The residents living in the informal settlements do not pay for water as they get water from communal taps (Umlazi Local Economic Development, 2008). There is no sewage system and the community relies on the pit toilet system. Some households rely on paraffin and gas stoves to cook as there is no electricity. On cold days some families still use a makeshift heater known as imbawula to keep them warm.

There are also hostels which were initially built to cater to migrant workers who came to work in the industrial areas in and around Durban, and some of those have been converted into family hostels (Umlazi Local Economic Development Plan, 2008). More than 50% of the population is a ⁴youth with the average age of the population in being mid-20s.

Approximately 60% of the youth are enrolled in schools. 36% have completed grade 12 and 12% have some form of secondary schooling and 7% have attained higher education levels (Umlazi Local Economic Development Plan, 2008). A limited number of learners use public transport to commute to and from school as most walk to school. According to the Umlazi Local Economic Development Plan (2008) the high level of unemployment is highly visible, as young people walk around or gather on the street corners, at bus shelters or shops. The low level of employment is attributed in part to the fact that the majority of the population is semi-skilled or unskilled. It further states that approximately 28% of the working age population is employed in the formal economy (Umlazi Local Economic Plan, 2008)

4.5 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to recruit 16 participants from Umlazi township who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy or childbearing. All participants were teenage girls and young mothers between the ages of 16 and 19. My sampling method was dependent on the availability of the participants. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select the available participants according to the purpose of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; 2009), although purposive sampling decisions are not only restricted to the selection of participants

⁴ Youth in South Africa is defined as any persons between the ages of 14 and 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2000).

but also involve the settings, incidents, events and activities to be included for data collection (Maree, 2007). I targeted the participants who had dropped out of school not longer than three years earlier because I strongly believed that it would be easier for them to recall the causes of dropping out than those who had been out of school for longer. All the participants were selected from different sections of Umlazi township and were isiZulu first language speakers.

In this study, I chose to speak with a limited number of young women who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and motherhood and requested them to share their experiences individually. I did not need a large sample as it was not my intention to make generalisations about their experiences of dropping out. My intention was rather to focus on the complexity and richness of each participant's experiences of schooling, motherhood and dropping out of school.

One of the participants (Zandile) decided not to continue as part of the study and cited personal reasons. She informed me of this decision after we had had our initial meeting in which I gathered her biographical details. As an ethical researcher, I had to accept and respect her decision to decline to be part of the study. She later contacted me, saying that she was willing to be part of the study as she felt that she was ready to share her experiences with me as long, as I promised to maintain anonymity of all the people mentioned in her interview. After assuring her, she willingly participated in the study.

I approached all the participants personally and asked to meet with them so that I could introduce myself to them and tell them about my study. I had consent forms with me which I

read to participants in order to explicate the study and clarify issues related to ethical considerations. I took time to explain this in detail as I believed that the participants had a right to know what they were getting themselves into. We also exchanged contact numbers as the participants indicated that they found it easier to keep in touch and confirm appointments for interviews by phone.

The next section presents the profile of the participants that were part of the study. A brief background of each participant is documented so as to present an overview of their lives. Pseudonyms have been used so as to maintain anonymity.

1. Nomalungelo

Nomalungelo was 19 years old and had 10-month old daughter named Alwande. She was the eldest in her family and had three siblings aged 17, 15 and 12 respectively, and none of her siblings had children. She had both parents. Her mother was unemployed and her father worked as a technician in one of the steel manufacturing factories in town. The family solely depended on Nomalungelo's father to take care of their household. Upon discovering that she was pregnant, Nomalungelo tried to conceal her pregnancy until she was at least four months and the bulge started to show.

Sizwe who was the father of Nomalungelo's child was her second boyfriend. She has not been in a relationship with the father of the child since her pregnancy as he denied paternity. She dropped out of school when she became ill due to her pregnancy and was unable to write her grade 11 exams.

Nomalungelo lived in a four-roomed house which she shared with her family. They had electricity and running water in the house. The kitchen had old cabinets and the floor tiles had become worn out. The lounge contained a television, a sound system and a wall unit which had pictures of most family members, including those that had passed on. The yard was full of cars that were brought to Nomalungelo's father to fix as he fixed cars whenever he had time during weekends or was on leave

2. Sibusisiwe

Sibusisiwe was 18 years of age and had a six-month old baby boy named Nqoba. She was the youngest of five siblings all of whom were males except her. She terminated her schooling when she was in grade 11. She came from a middle-class family. Both parents were employed. Her mother worked as a nurse in one of the hospitals in Umzimkhulu and her father worked as a prison warden at Phongolo. Her parents came home only on month-ends or when they were on leave. Both her parents took the decision that she drop out of school in order for her to look after her child as they believed that if they hired a nanny to look after the child, they would be encouraging her to have another child in the near future.

She was still in a relationship with Themba, her 23-year old boyfriend and father of her child. Themba was in his second year of studying towards a National Diploma in Environmental Health at a University of Technology.

Sibusisiwe's home was one of the houses known as "ama-subsidy" (standard homes built in an area that was mainly occupied by the civil servants who bought with the assistance of the government subsidy allowance). In most of the households in area, both parents worked, there were one or two cars and most houses had a fence around them. Sibusisiwe's home had three

bedrooms, a kitchen with built-in cupboards, and a dining room separate from the lounge. There were two other standalone backrooms which were occupied by some of Sibusisiwe's brothers. The yard was well taken care of as it was the boys' responsibility to ensure that it was well maintained.

3. Nomali

Nomali was 14 years old and had a child when she was in grade 8. Nomali's mother worked for one of the cellular phone service provider companies in Johannesburg in order to support her household. She commuted home at least once in two months. Nomali's mother had given birth to Nomali when she was a teenager. Nomali stayed with her grandmother who also assisted financially whenever possible as Nomali's mother did not always have enough money to support her household. Nomali had never divulged any information regarding the father of her child. Her grandmother encouraged her to focus on her child Mfihlo and forget about having a relationship with any man. She dropped out of school due to pressure from the school principal and teachers after she could no longer conceal her pregnancy.

They lived in a four-roomed brick house which was well taken care of. The furniture inside the house was old but in a good condition. They had no car and there was no fence around the house. The house was near a local shop and people in the area used their yard as a thoroughfare to and from the shop which made it difficult for the family to control the noise levels around their house. From within the house you could also hear loud music that came from a pub which was next to the shop.

4. Nqobile

Nqobile was 15 years old and was in grade 10 when she dropped out of school. She was suspended by the school principal after he found out that she was pregnant. Nqobile stayed with her widowed mother and her younger sister. Her father passed away when she was eight years old and in grade 2 and at that time her mother was pregnant with her second child. Her mother worked as a cleaner in one of the schools in Umlazi township and was solely responsible for her family's welfare. They lived in a three roomed house comprising of a bedroom, a makeshift lounge which they also used as a bedroom, and a kitchen. They did have electricity even though it was illegally connected, like most of the households in the area: izinyoka - slang meaning illegally connected electricity. The family used a two plate stove and a paraffin stove for. For water supply, they used a communal tap that they shared with several families in the area. Nqobile's mother is also responsible for taking care of her own younger brother who is sick and unemployed.

The father of Nqobile's child denied paternity and lived in the neighbourhood. He also attended the same school as Nqobile.

5. Athandile

Athandile was 16 years old and stayed with her maternal grandparents after being chased away from home by her father when he discovered that that she was pregnant. She was in grade 10 when she dropped out of school. Her father refused to support her in any way and cited his disappointment in his only daughter getting pregnant before she got married as the reason. He went as far as deregistering Athandile from school as he said he did not have money to waste on teaching a mother. He insisted that he had no money to waste on a child who had mockery of him and his family in the eyes of the community. He worked as a police constable in one of

the local police stations. Athandile's mother did not have any formal employment, however she ran a tuck shop from her home. She sent money to her daughter from time to time without her husband's knowledge.

6. Lulu

Lulu was 19 years old and dropped out in grade 11 after she became pregnant. She lived in a four-roomed house which had two bedrooms, a lounge and a kitchen which she shared with her two siblings and a cousin. She lived in a child-headed household as both her parents died after long illnesses. Despite having an electricity connection in the house, they mainly used paraffin lamps and a paraffin stove to cook as they sometimes had no money to buy electricity. So upon entering the house, you were welcomed by the smell of paraffin. Lulu was the oldest of all siblings. She was forced to drop out of school because there was no one to take over the responsibility of looking after her baby and her siblings. The father of her child is married and has a family of his own. Even though he has a stable income, however he does not support his child financially.

7. Nokwanda

Nokwanda was 17 years old and stayed with her mother, her younger sister, her grandmother and her two uncles. Her mother was a dressmaker and took care of her family's needs by selling her products at a market in town. Nokwanda's grandmother also assisted financially with the money she earned as a caregiver at a retirement facility in town before she became ill. Nokwanda terminated her schooling after childbirth as there was no one to look after her sickly child. I had no access to her home as both of her interviews were held at the library and she was also reluctant to divulge any information about her family.

8. Zinhle

Zinhle was 19 years of age and was the youngest of four sisters who were all married except for Zinhle. The sisters stayed in Port Edward, Pretoria and Empangeni respectively. Her mother had died of cancer when Zinhle was in grade 10. She stayed with her father who was retired. When her mother was still alive, she would sometimes visit her older siblings in their homes. However, after her mother's passing, Zinhle was forced to take over household duties of taking care of the house, cooking and looking after her ailing father. She also had to make sure that her father collected his diabetes medication at a local clinic at the end of each month. She was also responsible for buying groceries with money from her father's state pension. Her life changed drastically after the death of her mother. She dropped out of school after her daughter Mvelo was born. She had no one to look after her daughter. The father of her child died after a long illness.

Both interviews were held at the library. In both instances she insisted on bringing her daughter with her as she said her daughter was as precious as her purse which she takes wherever she goes.

9. Zathaba

Zathaba's mother had her when she was very young and she later married Zathaba's stepfather. Her mother's new family was based in Mpumalanga province. Zathaba was left to stay with her sickly maternal grandmother, her two aunts and her two cousins. They shared a four-roomed brick home. There was also a one room structure made up of corrugated iron which belonged to an uncle who did not stay with them permanently. Zathaba mentioned that they were not allowed to occupy that outside room at any time and they would air it from time to time and check that it was still in order. She dropped out of school at the age of 16 and was

doing grade 10 at the time. Her grandmother helped her out financially as well as with the subsequent childcare responsibilities whenever she could. However, she was unable to look after the child due to ill-health.

Her mother did try to support her daughter financially as she would send a monthly allowance whenever she could.

10. Londiwe

Londiwe was 18 years old and she was raised by her uncle and aunt after her mother had passed away. She dropped out of school in grade 11 to stay with her boyfriend after she discovered that she was pregnant. Her aunt and uncle had told her that they would not be able to support her and her baby. The father her of her child was married and had a family in Mandawe near Umkhomazi. While he had a proper home in Mandawe which he visited at least twice a month, he also rented a backroom in Umlazi so that he could be close to work. Londiwe shared that rented backroom with her boyfriend and their child.

Both interviews were conducted at a local municipal library.

11. Phelisa

Phelisa had just turned 18 and was in grade 11. She lived with her mother who was originally from Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape, and had moved to Durban to join her sister in search of a better job. Phelisa and her mother shared a two-bedroom structure with her aunt and her cousins. This structure was built with corrugated iron and was situated in one of the informal settlements called Ezakhiweni. They used two communal taps that were shared by the dwellers

of Ezakhiweni. Phelisa's mother worked as a domestic worker at Hillary and travelled very early every morning and got back home very late almost every day including Saturdays.

Phelisa attended a nearby school with one of her cousins. Upon suspecting that she was pregnant, she left home to stay with her boyfriend who was a taxi driver.

12. Mafutha

She was 18 years old living with her mother, her aunt, her older cousin and her two nieces. Her cousin was training to be a nurse at King Lewis hospital. Mafutha was doing grade 11 when she became pregnant. The father of her child was her attended the same school as her and was in grade 12.

She dropped out of school when their relationship became known of at school and there was pressure from her peers as well as from the teachers to drop out. Both interviews were conducted at the local municipal library.

13. Sethabile

Sethabile was 16 years old. She lived with both her parents and older and younger siblings. Her mother was self-employed and her father worked as a car mechanic in town. Sethabile's older sister had just been recruited as a trainee-police officer and her younger sister was in grade 6 at a local primary school. Sethabile was in grade 9 when she became pregnant. Upon discovery of their daughters' pregnancy, Sethabile's parents' decided that she must be sent to her maternal grandparents' homestead in rural Ndwedwe until she delivered her baby. Complying with her

parents' instructions forced her to drop out of school. She was not in a relationship with the father of her child. Both interviews were held at the library.

14. Wenzi

Wenzi was 19 years old and in grade 11 when she became pregnant. She came from a child-headed household and lived with her four siblings after both their parents died within a space of three years. Since Wenzi was the second oldest sibling, she was forced to drop out of school when she became pregnant as there was no one to leave her child with while at school. Her older brother was doing his first year at a Vocational college. She was also responsible for taking care of her younger siblings using the social grant she received every month from the government. They also receive some kind of support from their aunt who worked as a teacher in one of the rural schools in the outskirts of Port Shepstone.

Wenzi was still in a relationship with the father of her daughter however, his financial support was erratic and irregular. Both interviews were held at the local municipal library.

15. Thuthu

Thuthu was 15 years old and repeating grade 8 when she became pregnant. At that time, she was living with her father and her stepmother and their two young children. Upon discovering that she was pregnant, she decided to run away from her father's home as he always threatened that he would never take care of her if she became pregnant.

She could not go to her mother as she had remarried and had a new family. Her mother stayed with her in-laws and they could not accommodate Thuthu. She was therefore forced to stay with her elderly grandparents. She was not in a relationship with the father of her child. Both interviews were held at the local municipal library.

16. Zandile

Zandile was 18 years old when she dropped out of school. She was doing grade 11. She was pressured by the father of her child to drop out of school because he was a teacher at the same school. He promised to take her to a finishing school where she could carry on with her studies once the baby was old enough to attend crèche. Zandile stayed with her mother, her two older sisters, a niece and a nephew. One of her sisters had completed her tertiary studies and was unemployed and the other sister was in grade 10 at the same school Zandile dropped out of. She was in an on-and-off relationship with the father of her child. She only availed herself for the initial interview and later informed me that she was unable to carry on being part of the study due to personal reasons. Her interview was conducted at the local municipal library.

The table below presents the profile of the participants' dropout records.

Table 2: Participants Dropout Record

Name	Age	Grade when they left	Stage when they dropped out	Status of the relationship with the father of the child
1. Nomalungelo	19	11	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship (denied paternity)
2. Sibusisiwe	18	11	Pregnancy	In a relationship
3. Nomali	14	8	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship
4. Nqobile	15	10	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship (denied paternity)
5. Athandile	16	10	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship (denied paternity)
6. Lulu	19	11	Motherhood	Not in a relationship
7. Nokwanda	17	11	Motherhood	Not in a relationship
8. Zinhle	19	12	Motherhood	Not in a relationship (died after a long illness)
9. Zathaba	16	10	Motherhood	Not in a relationship

10. Londiwe	18	11	Pregnancy	In a relationship
11. Phelisa	18	11	Pregnancy	In a relationship
12. Mafutha	18	11	Pregnancy	In a relationship
13. Setahbile	16	10	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship
14. Wenzi	19	11	Motherhood	In a relationship
15. Thuthu	15	8	Pregnancy	Not in a relationship
16. Zandile	18	11	Pregnancy	In a relationship (though unstable)

4.6 Data Generation

In order to best answer the research questions posed in my study, in-depth individual interviews as well as field notes were used to generate the data. I incorporated a research journal which I used to keep a detailed report of my observations, experiences and my own reflections during the course of my study and after interacting with the participants (Hebert & Beardsley, 2002). I documented my reflections prior, during and after the interviews. This allowed me to capture as much detail as I possibly could as I interacted with the participants. Seal, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004) suggest that field notes are useful in detailing the sequence of events, how people interact and the way in which they communicate. I collected field notes in this study especially where individual interviews were conducted in the participant's home. These methods worked concurrently in order to ensure that I captured as much information as I could during the research process. An interview guide with all the standard questions was also used during the research process.

Guided by the gender socialisation theoretical framework (Oakley, 1972; Oakley, 1981a; Oakley, 1981b) which suggests that while parents contribute to gender socialisation of their children, society has a larger influence in the construction of gender through manipulation,

canalisation and verbalisation. Therefore, this study was premised on the notion that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers themselves are not exempted from the genderedness of the societies from which they come. This study also employed the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theoretical framework which was discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

All interviews were conducted in IsiZulu and transcribed into English. I conducted all the interviews and also did all the transcription. The transcription process took longer than initially anticipated as it involved a lot of focus and listening in order to ensure that data were transcribed correctly and without omissions.

The participants had the right to choose spaces in which they felt comfortable. Initially, the interviews were scheduled to be conducted at a local library, and while eight participants still opted to have their interviews there, others opted to have their interviews at home. As communication between the participants and I continued, eight participants invited me to interview them at their homes. This enabled me to observe how the participants interacted with their babies as well as their family members. This also enabled the participants to be part of the study while still carrying out their roles as mothers. My observation during the interview process was that the participants who opted to have their interviews at their homes showed an element of being "free" as they could talk and move freely as they were in familiar environments. This was not the same for the participants who opted for the designated space. Even though I was cognisant of the time that was allocated for each interview, the interviews that were conducted at the participants' homes were generally leisurely as the participants themselves were at liberty to attend to any household calls that arose during the course of the interviews. My intention was to keep my participants anonymous from each other, and I was

able to do that as interviews were scheduled on different days and different times for the participants who had opted to have their interviews at the library. It was easy to maintain anonymity for the participants who had their interviews conducted at their homes as they lived far away from each other.

Before I commenced with the actual interviews, I informed the participants that all interviews were to be conducted in isiZulu (their mother tongue). This was to alleviate any fears which might have been associated with the interview process itself. The participants were also informed that the interviews were going to be audio-recorded and they were also informed that the data collected through the audio recorder was to be used solely for the purpose of the study and was not to be utilised for any other purpose or monetary gain. This information was shared with the participants in order to put them at ease about the process on which they were to embark.

Prior to the first interview, I had assured the participants that I was going to cover all their transport costs to and from the interview venue (for those who were going to use transport to the interview venue). I also provided them with cellphone airtime to use when they wanted to contact me regarding the logistical details of our meetings. I further provided light lunch for all the participants for both interviews including the participants who had opted to have their interviews conducted in their homes. This was to ensure that the participants did not worry about providing food for themselves out their own money. I provided a light lunch at all my interviews which was to ensure that the participants did not worry about providing me with food as it is common courtesy in most African households to provide guests with something to

eat or drink, even if it was a glass of water. I had emphasised to them that during our interview sessions I would provide food and drinks as they were my “guests”.

Repeated interviews enhance the bonds between the researcher and the participants (Reinharz, 1992). The purpose of the first interview was to introduce myself, explain the purpose of the study as well as to build a connection between myself and the participants. I did not delve deeply into the actual interview but I did touch on some of the questions related to the study. The number of interviews held with each participant was limited to two because I was cognizant of the fact that most participants had indicated that childcare was their sole responsibility. Therefore, taking them away from this responsibility would have put them and their children at a disadvantage.

I had two interviews with each of the participants with the exception of one participant Zandile, who opted to no longer be part of the study, citing personal reasons. Each of the interviews lasting between 45 minutes and an hour. Seven participants (ie. Nokwanda, Zinhle, Londiwe, Mafutha, Sethabile, Wenzu as well as Thuthu) had both of their interviews at the library, with an exception of Zandile who only had one interview at the library as she only availed herself for one interview. My observations of the place were that it was conducive for the interviews as we used a private room within the library that was secluded and there were no disruptions due to noise and people moving around. Thus, this enabled the participants to express themselves freely without being disturbed. However, at least 5 of the seven participants who were interviewed at the library, kept constant check of time as they had raised concerns about not being used to being away from their children for long periods of time.

Eight participants (ie. Nomalungelo, Sibusisiwe, Nomali, Nqobile, Athandile, Lulu, Zathaba as well as Phelisa) opted to have their interviews conducted at their homes. These participants had requested that they have their interviews conducted at home citing reasons like being able to take care of their children while the process of interviews took place. This enabled me to observe the interactions between their children and the family that were present in their homes during the time of the interviews. I further observed that the participants that opted for their homes as the interview sites were “freer” as compared to the participants who had their interviews conducted at the municipality library as they were able to be with their children and take care of their needs which included among others feeding and playing.

I had anticipated that there would be an atmosphere of reticence during the first interview, so to counteract that I had brought teen magazines to use as ice-breakers. I showed them pictures that I thought might be of interest to them and asked them about their favourite musicians, favourite genres and other topics which might be of interest to them. That short exercise helped tremendously as some participants ended up asking me questions and conversations were created.

The next section briefly outlines the importance of being dressed appropriately in relation to the Nguni culture of *ukuhlonipha* (respect). The township context provided a deeply entrenched cultural view through which the causes and consequences of pregnancy-related school dropout would be understood. In the rich cultural milieu of the township context, it is important to acknowledge the culture of *ukuhlonipha* (respect) by dressing in a manner which is considered appropriate.

The culture of *ukuhlonipha* exists particularly in the Nguni and the Sotho societies and it involves the avoidance of any kind of behaviour that might be perceived as disrespectful (Rudwick & Shange, 2009). They argue that *ukuhlonipha* can manifest itself in many different relations of super-ordination as well as subordination and these are monitored and regulated through the mechanisms like posture, movements and dress code.

Clothes are more than just mere coverings for our bodies, they are strong and visible artifacts of culture (Kemp-Gatterson & Steward 2009). They are a cultural phenomenon that is used to expose the societal beliefs, values, ideas as well as their experience (Barnard, 2008). Kwenaithe (2012) share the same sentiments and suggest that just like syntax would determine a set of rules in a language, so does dress functions as a kind of a rule in every culture. Clothing is believed to convey certain messages and the interpretation of those messages have social, cultural as well as political implications (Keenan, 2001). Rudwick and Shange (2009) state that being dressed inappropriately goes far beyond being a sign of disrespect for the household or even the society at large. It can be perceived as being displaced and having lost your place in the society. Maluleke (2012) suggests that there are even customary laws that support violence towards women as part of the cultural norms. For instance, there was an incident in Umlazi township in 2007 where a young black woman was physically and verbally assaulted by a group of men because she was wearing a pair of pants and for a Zulu woman to be seen in pants was perceived as a sign of disrespect (Ndikinda, 2019).

It was with this in mind that I made a conscious decision to avoid being dressed “inappropriately” as I was aware that in some households, it was “culturally wrong” for the ladies to wear pants. Therefore, in all instances where I conducted interviews in homes, I ensured that I was dressed in something casual and appropriate. I avoided wearing anything that might be perceived as offensive including pants, short and revealing clothing.

4.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within a qualitative study. Data analysis plays an integral part in determining the credibility of the qualitative research due to its ability to enable the researcher to understand, describe and interpret experiences of the participants which are key in uncovering meaning in particular circumstances and contexts” (MacGuire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3351).

In this study, all interviews were audio-recorded and data transcripts were made thereafter. It was advantageous that I speak isiZulu fluently as all interviews were conducted in isiZulu. Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) argue that audio-recording and transcribing are not always acknowledged as problematic in research reports, and this is particularly true when translation from one language to another is part of the process. I made a conscious decision to remain close to the data and be involved in the transcription and coding of data myself. This was possible as I am a first language speaker of isiZulu.

The transcription process was conducted in stages: firstly, I transcribed everything as it was and typed it on the computer. Secondly, I translated it to English and then type it out into the

computer. The whole process took more hours than expected and was extremely demanding as it required full concentration. Sometimes when I looked at the final English text I was fearful that I might have lost the character of the participants and that some of the colloquialisms and meaning might have been lost in translation.

Braun and Clarke (2006)'s thematic analysis was a framework through which the data about the causes of dropout among a group of pregnant or mothering teenage girls in Umlazi township were analysed. While there are multiple ways of approaching thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008; 2015; Alhojailan, 2012, this study employed Braun and Clarke (2006)'s six step framework because of clarity and usability when analysing data thematically. In the next section I will outline the thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006). The next section goes on to explicate the relevance of the thematic analysis method in this study.

Thematic analysis is a comprehensive method which is “ideal for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes)” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Alhojailan (2012, p. 40) offers a concurring view of thematic analysis by suggesting that it is a “type of a qualitative analysis that is used to analyse classifications, thus producing themes that relate to the data”. The thematic analysis method was appropriate for my study because of its flexibility as it is not tied to any particular epistemological theoretical perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013). The table below explains how thematic data analysis was adapted in my study.

Table 3: How I adapted thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Step	Method Used
1. Familiarising myself with the data.	I immersed myself in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012) by reading and rereading the transcripts multiple times in order to be familiar with the data in the transcripts. I also made notes as I read the transcripts, a technique recommended by Braun & Clarke (2012) as it allows the researcher to read the words actively, analytically and critically instead of just absorbing the surface meaning of the words.
2. Generated essential codes.	Braun & Clarke (2006; 2012) suggest that codes are the building blocks of the analysis. I therefore generated essential codes according to the data transcripts and manually coded them separately using different coloured highlighters.
3. Searched for themes.	I searched for themes and used descriptive themes which made it easy for me to group them accordingly after coding. I noted that there were instances where codes overlapped into various themes. I made note of such instances and coded them

	accordingly using appropriate colours in each to signify an overlap.
4. Reviewed and modified themes.	I reviewed and modified themes that emerged in step 3. This was done by grouping transcripts according to their colour coding.
5. Defining of themes.	According to Braun & Clarke (2006) this is the final stage where themes are refined in order to identify the core of each theme. At this stage I defined themes that had emerged from the transcripts.
6. Writing up.	Writing up the data analysis chapter was then guided by themes that had emerged from the data transcripts.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

In any qualitative research, ethical issues have to be considered in order to avoid obstacles that might arise (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2006; Nkani, 2012). I was also conscious of the sensitivity that surrounds the issues of pregnancy, motherhood, dropout and the causes thereof. Therefore, it was crucial that all ethical considerations were addressed. Ethical issues pertaining to qualitative research include informed consent, confidentiality, and emotional safety (Hisada, 2003).

Upon agreeing to be part of the study, the participants were given letters of consent to sign as confirmation that they were willing to be part of the study. Furthermore, in the case of potential participants who were under the age of 18, I sought permission from their guardians or parents for them to be able to participate in this study. Upon agreeing, the guardians or parents or guardians were also requested to sign confirmation that they had allowed their daughters or wards to be part of the study. The participants who were approached to be part of the study were made aware that participation was voluntary. They were also informed about the ethical considerations that prevailed before the commencement of the study. What follows are the ethical guidelines that were considered in this study.

The participants were informed that all the information collected during this study was not going to be disseminated to any individuals/ organisation and the participants were also encouraged not to divulge or share any information regarding the study with any other person as this would compromise the issue of confidentiality. Details of the study were explained to the participants prior to the commencement. The participants were informed that participation in the research was voluntary, and they were further informed that they were free to withdraw if they felt they no longer wanted to participate in the study. To ensure that the participants fully comprehended the research project, they were afforded the opportunity to ask questions about the study where more clarity was provided. To ensure that the participants' identities were protected, all participants were given pseudonyms.

To ensure privacy and safety of the participants, each participant was informed about the venue where interviews were going to be held. Although the initial plan was to conduct all interviews in a Municipality library at B section at Umlazi township, some participants suggested that they

preferred being interviewed in their homes to avoid travelling and to be in familiar environments where they could look after their children. One reason for choosing the library venue was that it was private and had lockable doors and was only available for use by the person/ people who booked it. A second reason there was limited noise from the outside which could interfere with the interviews. A third is that the library in B section was easy to access using public transport as it was not far from the main road. To ensure that the confidentiality of the participants who preferred to use this venue was maintained, each participant was allocated a specific day and time for the interviews to ensure that they never got to know who else was part of the study. The participants were also urged not to discuss any details of the study with any other person other than the researcher as this could compromise the integrity of the study.

To ensure confidentiality, the participants were informed and assured that the information that they had provided during the course of the study was only going to be used for the purpose of the study and their identity was going to be protected by using pseudonyms (Hisada, 2003; Bertram, 2004).

4.9 Reflection on the Rigour and Trustworthiness

Power relationships are part of any research project (Whiteford, 2006). I was aware of the existence of power inequalities between me and the participants because of the age differences between us. To ensure that the power disparity between me and the participants were minimised, I dressed casually and spoke as informally as I could. It was also of great help that the participants were not aware of my profession as an educator as that would have made them reluctant to answer certain questions related to their schooling experiences. Before I

commenced with the interviews, I had assured the participants that I was not there to judge them about being pregnant or becoming mothers at a young age.

Morrow (2005) recommends that a researcher keep a reflective journal in order to document his or her experiences, reactions, as well as any assumptions or biases that may come to the fore during the research process. I used this technique, and the observations and reflections were documented in my journal. Being an educator myself made me consider the ways in which I and my colleagues in the profession subject pregnant and mothering teenage girls to various challenges all in the name of demonising early childbearing. It made me realise the importance of support from all stakeholders involved in the raising of a child. The incorporation of observations and the use of the journal ensured that I constantly checked my reflections that I documented in order to eliminate any traces of being biased.

In order to ensure that the process of data analysis was rigorous, I employed thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) which enabled me to systematically identify and organise data which then offered insight into patterns of meaning which were then grouped into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012).

In terms of trustworthiness, “just as there is a need to look at the accuracy and trustworthiness of various kinds of quantitative data in different ways, there is also a need to look at qualitative methods for the different ways in which to ensure the quality of the findings” (Krefting, 1991, p. 2). Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings and de Eyto (2018) concur with the above assertion by suggesting that trustworthiness is one of the fundamental criteria for evaluating qualitative studies. In order to ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was employed in this study through

data from verbatim transcripts, notes from observations as well as from member checking where results were sent to participants to check for accuracy of their experiences. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Runhare, 2010).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that for qualitative research to be considered trustworthy it must have the following pillars: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to Maher et al., (2018, p. 3) the role of credibility in a study is to “ensure that the study measures what is intended and is a true reflection of the social reality of the participants”. In order to ensure credibility in my study, after the process of data transcription I allowed each and every participant to listen to the audio-recording of the interview and to have access to the data transcripts in order to confirm that the recordings truly reflected their experiences (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006; Runhare, 2010; Maher et al, 2018).

The second criterion of ascertaining trustworthiness as mentioned above is transferability which focuses on the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other situations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). However, in this study transferability was not employed because even though there might be other young girls who have dropped out due to pregnancy or early motherhood, their experiences might be similar or different to those of the participants in this study. That suggests that the findings of my study are specific to the participants and their environments cannot be generalised or even seen to represent others who had similar experiences of dropping out of school due to pregnancy and early motherhood (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, Shenton, 2004).

4.10 Synthesis

This study intended to examine the factors that influenced school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls in a South African township. This chapter focused on the research design as well as the methodology, which was informed by the theoretical frameworks that were discussed in the previous chapter. This qualitative study was located within the social constructivist view and it employed in-depth interviews, participant observation and reflective journaling to generate data about the experiences of these young girls. Thematic data analysis method was employed in this study. The ethical considerations that were used in this study were outlined. These ethical considerations included: letters of consent, voluntary participation, addressing the issues of privacy and safety, and maintaining confidentiality through giving the participants pseudonyms. The chapter concluded by reflecting on the rigour and trustworthiness in the study.

In this chapter I started by presenting the social constructivism as the research paradigm of this study. The section that followed focused on the research design and methodology. The study adopted the values and the principles of the qualitative approach. Under this broad umbrella I then focused on each of the following subheadings, the research context as well as the profile of the participants were outlined in detail. In this chapter, I also reflected data generation methods which included in-depth interviews as well as field notes where observations about the research process were documented. Thematic analysis was employed in the study as a method of analysing data from the participants that have dropped out of school due to pregnancy and motherhood. Ethical considerations employed in this study were discussed. Finally, this chapter outlined the issues of rigour and trustworthiness in this study.

The next chapter presents the summary of the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

TEENAGE GIRLS' EXPERIENCES OF PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

5.1 Introduction

The study reported in this thesis addressed the question: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage mothers' access to and success in school?* The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology used in addressing the research questions that this study set out to explore. The study is located within the social constructivist paradigm which allows individuals to understand their own world and to develop their own particular meanings that correspond with their experiences (Burr, 1995). The social constructivist paradigm acknowledges the fact that meanings are not etched within each individual, but they are rather formed through interactions with others (Burr, 1995; 2003; Creswell, 2013). In this study, I wanted to explore the girls' perspectives on how they experienced teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, and how these influenced their decisions to drop out of school.

To address the research questions, a qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Qualitative research seeks to examine how participants experience, understand and interpret their social world, in this case, as pregnant and mothering teenagers (Mason, 2002). It focuses on the participants' perceptions and experiences as well as how they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 2003). The use of the qualitative approach allowed me to collect in-depth and rich data as the participants shared their experiences of schooling while pregnant or after becoming mothers.

To respond to the research questions, as described in Chapter Four, data were generated using in-depth semi-structured individual interviews (Barclay, 2018), field notes as well as a research journal. The use of in-depth interviews provided me with first-hand information about the context of my study as well as detailed information about the participant's experiences (Brouneus, 2014; Patton, 2002). Even though there was an interview guide (see Appendices 4 and 6) with all the standard questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997), I asked probing questions throughout the interview to seek further clarity from the participants where necessary. Data from the in-depth individual interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and in particular, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. The first step involved familiarising myself with the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and making notes. The second step included generating essential codes according to the data transcripts and manually coding them using different coloured highlighters. The third involved searching for themes and grouping them into broad descriptive themes. The fourth step involved reviewing and modifying the themes, while the fifth entailed defining and identifying the core themes and the sixth involved using these themes to write up this (and the next) data analysis chapter.

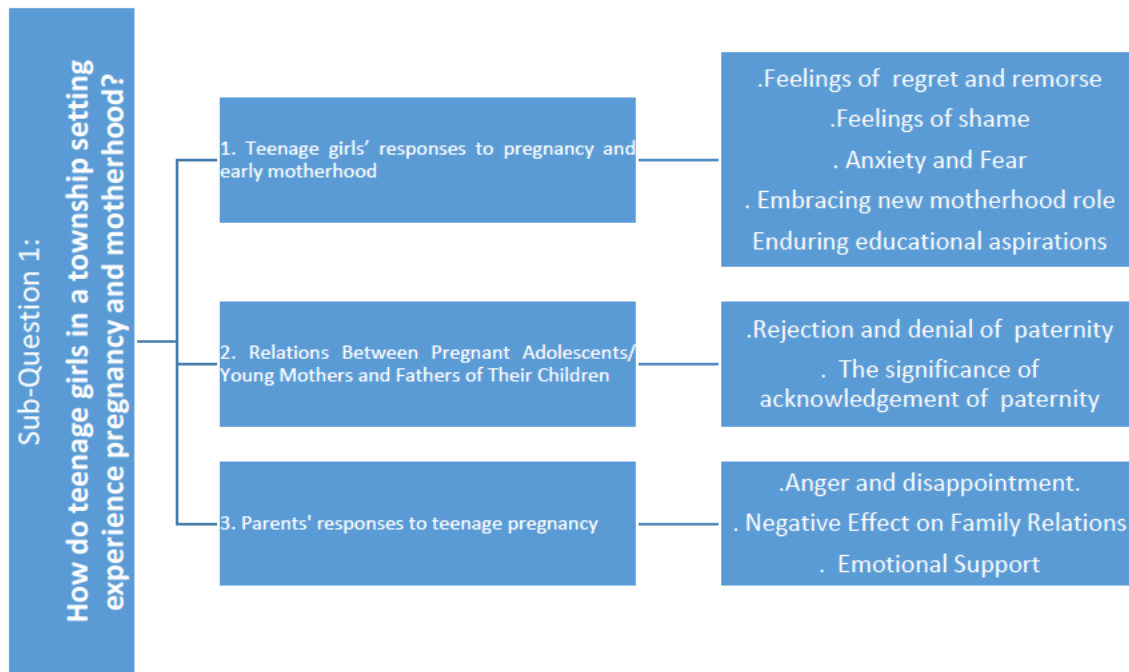
The study used gender socialisation theory (Oakley, 1972) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979) as theoretical lenses to examine the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave. Gender socialisation theory argues that from the time we are born, we are socialised into the already existing gender norms by various forces of socialisation such as family, peers, school, community, media, legal systems and cultural beliefs. All of these have a common goal of transmitting and promoting the socialisation goals of that particular society

(Oakley, 1972; Šikić-Mićanović 1997). This theory helped to understand how factors such as family, peers, school, community and cultural beliefs influenced the lives of these teenage girls and in particular, their decisions to leave school as a result of pregnancy or motherhood. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory argues that every person is born into a complex cultural ecological system of interacting people, situations, social attitudes and values, religion, political, economic and legalistic practices. It is critical to strengthen human relationships within supportive environments as that leads to the increase in development which in return yields positive outcomes in learning (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). In this study, I used this theory to understand the socio-cultural context (including the family, community and the societal landscape) in which the participants lived and its influence on their decisions to leave schools or their parents' or guardians' decisions to pull them out of school.

The study used two critical questions to generate data. This chapter presents findings that respond to the first research question: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* The chapter presents the experiences of the 16 participants who had to drop out of school due to pregnancy and becoming mothers. Chapter Six will respond to the second research question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?*

As shown in Figure 4 below, in response to the question *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood*, data analysis from the interviews yielded three broad themes: 1) Teenage girls' responses to pregnancy and early motherhood; 2) Relations between pregnant teens/ young mothers and fathers of their children; 3) Parents' responses to teenage pregnancy) Enduring future educational aspirations

Figure 4 Township girls’ experiences of pregnancy and motherhood: Overview of the findings



The sections that follow present these themes.

5.2. Teenage Girls’ Responses to Pregnancy and Early Motherhood

One of the first things the participants in this study spoke about in our interviews was how they felt and responded upon discovering their pregnancy. They reflected on how their pregnancy affected them individually and how it impacted on their families. The gender socialisation theory acknowledges the role played by peers, family, school, media and the socio-cultural systems in promoting and mediating gender socialisation (Oakley, 1972; Šikić-Mićanović, 1997; UNICEF, 2007; Chartschlaa, 2004; Crespi, 2003.; Karam, n.d.). Each of the categories that emerged from this study reflects the connectedness of each participant to the environment in which they live and the manner in which they have been socialised is reflected in the manner in which the pregnant and mothering girls in the study respond to pregnancy. These responses can be categorised into four sub-themes: 1) feelings of regret and remorse; 2) feelings of shame;

3) anxiety and fear; 4) embracing new motherhood role; and 5) enduring educational aspirations.

5.2.1 Feelings of Regret and Remorse

In the South African context, although some teenage pregnancies are desired, most are unplanned or unwanted (Vundule, Maforah, Jewkes & Jordaan, 2001; Moultrie & McGrath, 2007). Early and unintended pregnancies among teenagers are associated with several negative health, educational, social and economic outcomes (Wado, Sully & Mumah, 2019) and in some families and communities, teenagers who become pregnant are viewed as immoral and are therefore shunned. Consequently, some teenage girls hide their pregnancy for fear of being punished. Some even run away from home because of feelings of shame and the fear that they have disappointed their families (Hoga, Borges & Alvarez, 2009). Obviously, this has negative consequences for their health and that of the baby.

The participants in this study indicated that their pregnancies were not planned. They suggested that the pregnancies produced feelings of shame, regret and remorse as they felt that they had disappointed their parents and families. One participant, for example, considered her pregnancy a “mistake” and unplanned, and reported that she was willing to ask for forgiveness from her parents for having disappointed them:

Ngangingalindele nhlobo, ngangingalindele (*with emphasis*). Ingane nje angikaze ngicabange ngayo. (puts head down and closes her eyes so as to hide her face). Mina nengane nje angikaze ngicabange ukuthi kuyokwenzeka. Ngabaphoxa abazali bami.

(I did not expect this at all, I just did not expect it. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would have a child. I never thought that I would have a child. I really disappointed my parents). (Nomalungelo⁵, 19 years old)

Another participant, Nqobile, had a similar response about her pregnancy being unplanned and the sense of remorse it brought with it.

...ngangiyobachazela ukuthi ukukhulelwa kwami kwaba yiphutha futhi nganginqondile...(sigh) ngangizocela noxolo.

(...I would have explained to them that my pregnancy was a mistake and it was unintentional... (sigh). I would have also asked for forgiveness). (Nqobile, 15 years old)

Lulu also emphasised that her pregnancy was unplanned and unexpected and suggested that she could not have planned it as she already struggled with the responsibilities of being in a child-headed household.

Mina ngangingafune ngane. Ngathi ngangixakwe ukunakekela izingane zasekhaya ezingilamayo. Kangakanani ke indaba yokunakekela ingane encane. Yayizovelaphi nje imali yokuthenga izinto zengane njengoba ingane iyizindleko ezingaka nje ukuyikhulisa?

⁵ All names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants

(I did not want to have a child. I was already struggling to take care of my own siblings. How much more taking care of an infant? Where was I supposed to get money for taking care of the baby's needs?). (Lulu, 19 years old)

Zathaba lamented missing out on her youth:

Impilo yami ishintshe kakhulu. Ngibona sengathi ngiyaphuthelwa yizinto ezenziwa ontanga wami ngesikhathi ngilibele ukugada ugogo kanye nomntanami.

(My life has changed a lot. I feel that I am missing out on things that girls my age are doing, while I am stuck at home taking care of my baby and my granny). (Zathaba, 16 years old).

Another participant, Nomalungelo, added the following:

Buka nje ngoba ngase ngizofunda umatric wam ngiy'yele noma iseMangosuthu ngiyoziqhubekela khona nemfudo yami.

(Just imagine (because) I was about to do my matric and then go to Mangosuthu (tertiary institution) and further my studies). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old).

A third shared the same sentiments, stating that:

...ukukhulelwa kwami nje kwaphazamisa ama plani ami amaningi. Njalo ekseni nantambama mangbona iyngane zaseskole, ngvele ngifise sengathi ngingayjoyina nam. Kung'phatha kab'hlungu ukuthi angiyi etertiary ngonyaka ozayo. Ngaleskhathi seksele kancane ukuthi ukuthi lelo phupho lifezeka, kwavela kwashintsha yonkinto.

(My pregnancy disturbed most of my plans. Everytime when I see my schoolmates in the morning and in the afternoon, I wish I could join them. I am also saddened that I will not be going to tertiary next year. Just when I was about to see that dream realised, everything changed). (Wenzi, 19 years old).

Some participants were concerned about the delay in their future aspirations due to dropping out of school because of pregnancy. As Nomalungelo lamented:

Mina ngangifuna ukuyofunda noma iseMangosuthu noma eDUT ngifunde ijournalism. Ngangizibona sengisebenza kwi tv ngifunda iyndaba. Ngiwu-glamour nje. (Angikaze ngicabange ukuthi ngiyoshiya iskole ngingaqedile.

I just wanted to go to either go to Mangosuthu or DUT (universities) to study journalism. I just saw myself working on TV as a newsreader. Looking all glamorous. I never thought I would drop out of school before completing my studies). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Over and above their acknowledgement of their pregnancies being unplanned and unexpected, the participants reported being acutely aware of the disappointment and shame they brought to their families. Their responses coincide with those in the study by Singh and Hamid (2015, p. 2) where teenage mothers expressed great regret at disappointing their parents and understood parents' disappointment to "be linked to possible negative ways in which early pregnancy can change their paths and limit their possibilities". The participants were further aware of the responsibilities associated with becoming a parent. Interestingly, even though many of them indicated that being a mother while at school was a 'mistake', none of them stated categorically that they regarded their children as mistakes (see also Singh & Hamid, 2015).

5.2.2 Feelings of Shame

Informed by the gender socialisation theory, this study was premised on the notion that gender socialisation plays a major role in influencing how peers, teachers, the family and the media views pregnant teenage girls and young mothering girls, which in turn might contribute to girls who are pregnant or mothering dropping out of school (Oakley, 1972; Šikić-Mićanović, 1997; UNICEF, 2007; Chartschlaa, 2004; Crespi, 2003.; Karam, n.d.). For some teenage girls, becoming pregnant and a mother come with a multitude of reactions, which are associated with shame. For the participants in this study, words such as “*amahloni*” (shame or disgrace), and “*ukuthuka*” (shock) painted a clear picture of how these young girls regretted being pregnant and becoming parents as teenagers. Londiwe, for example, suggested that her feelings of shame were due to letting both herself and her parents down by becoming pregnant:

...nami futhi nganginamahloni futhi ngithukile ngengangikwenzile. nganginamahloni ngoba ngangiphoxe umndeni wami kanye nami uqobo.

(... I was shocked and not proud of what I had done. ...I felt that I had let both myself and my family down). (Londiwe, 18 years old)

Wenzi felt disappointed as her pregnancy was unexpected. She also felt that she had let her teachers as well as her peers down as she was seen as their role model at her school.

...ngingasho nje ngithi ngangthuke kakhulu ngesikhathi ngithola ukuthi ngikhulelwe. Ngangingalindele nhlobo. ...ngacasuka kakhulu ngoba baningi abantu engangibenzele phansi eskoleni. (*a long pause*) iyngane eyningi eskoleni zaybukela imina ngoba othisha babethi ngiyisbonelo sokbekezela noksebenza kanzima.

(...I must say that I was very shocked when I discovered that I was pregnant. I did not expect it all... I was very angry because I had disappointed many people at

school... (a long pause) many students looked up to me because many teachers would use me as an example of perseverance and hard work). (Wenzi, 19 years old)

The above responses from the participants in this study suggest that not only did their pregnancies come as a shock to them they also brought feelings of shame for having disappointed themselves, their family members as well as their peers. Similarly, McGraha-Garnett (2007) and Runhare (2010) note that besides the hostility from significant others in their lives, teenage girls also feel ashamed because of disappointing their parents and the community.

5.2.3 Anxiety and Fear

As illustrated above, the realisation of being pregnant often comes as a shock to young girls. Lima, Coviello, Lima, Alves, Dawim et al (2016) state that pregnancy is a traumatic event, with feelings of displeasure related to anxiety, fear, sadness, uncertainty, loneliness, instability and frustration. In their study of 22 teenage girls in Bogotá, Colombia, the authors found that the participants experienced negative feelings about their pregnancy. I also found that: some of the participants reported feelings of fear upon discovering that they were pregnant. For example, Nomalungelo stated that the principal of her former school was known as an “anaconda” as he was feared not only by the learners, but also the teachers. The fear of the principal emanated from the fact that he was harsh and was quick to call out and humiliate pregnant learners in front of other learners at assembly or even to suspend learners for whatever he perceived as any form of wrongdoing.

Wonk’umuntu umbiza nge anaconda Ngisho othisha imbala bayamsaba. Uxoshana manje nje...

(Everybody calls him an anaconda. Even the teachers are scared of him. He is quick to suspend people ...). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Another participant, Nomali also reported having feelings of fear and anxiety when she discovered that she was pregnant. Her fears were realised when the principal expelled her from the school. The principal had included in school policy that pregnant learners were to be suspended with immediate effect as he felt that being pregnant at that particular school tarnished its image,

Mina eskoleni ngaxoshwa uthishomkhulu. Eskoleni vele kunomthetho wokuthi awufundi khona uma ukhulelwe ngoba bathi lokho kwehlisa igama lesikole. Uthishomkhulu wathi akasidingi eskoleni sakhe uma sikhulelwe. Sathi siqala sibonakala isisu, wavele wabiza ugogo wathi akangikhiphe.

(I was expelled by the principal from school. There is a rule at school which states that you are not supposed to attend our school while pregnant as that tarnishes the image of the school. The principal said he does not need us at his school if we are pregnant. As soon as my tummy started to show, he called my gran and told her to remove me from school). (Nomali, 14 years old)

Similar experiences of fear and anxiety were also shared by Sibusisiwe. Her anxiety emanated from the manner in which some of teachers at her school treated pregnant girls. According to her, some of the teachers ill-treated pregnant girls and made rude and unflattering comments to them.

Othisha bona babengasho lutho kangako except for labo ke abathanda izindaba Those would make sure ukuthi it's either bakubuka kabi.

(As for the teachers, most of them did not say anything, except for those who were always prying on other people's businesses. Those would make sure that it's either

they look at you in a disapproving manner or even make a comment or two just to make you feel bad). (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

From the above examples, it is clear that teenage pregnancy is clouded by fear and anxiety. The reasons for this include fear of suspension, expulsion and negative treatment by some of the teachers. The ecological systems perspective argues that the behavior of an individual always occurs within a particular environment (see also Potjo, 2012). Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are located in a highly gendered society (Magwaza, 2003; Mcambi, 2010). For these participants, anxiety and fear emanated from the fact that teenage pregnancy was perceived as unacceptable for young girls (Mcambi, 2010; Magwaza, 2003).

5.2.4. Embracing New Motherhood Role

While teenage pregnancy is often experienced negatively by both the young mother and those around her, in this study, some of the participants were determined to devote their lives to ensuring that their children were cared for. This was in spite of the delays and the changes the pregnancy and motherhood had brought into their lives. Furthermore, some teenage mothers indicated that being pregnant and having a child while still at school provided an impetus for them to take control of their lives. Singh and Hamid (2015, p. 2) suggest that some teenage mothers used their reflections to construct a version of femininity that allowed them to express themselves “in ways that demonstrate greater agency by the prevention of subsequent unintended pregnancies by drawing on useful insights from lessons learned”. Similar conclusions were drawn by Akella and Jordan (2011), who stated that some young girls use their pregnancies as some form of encouragement to be more focused on their future prospects. They quote one of their participants as stating that, “*Being pregnant makes me want to do*

better and finish school. Now, I am really taking school serious(ly)...” (Akella & Jordan, 2011, p. 2). Another participant in the same study stated: I have a long road ahead of me, but I have something to look forward to. I want my child to look up to me, not look down on me because I was pregnant with him and did not want to finish school” (Akella & Jordan, 2011, p. 2).

The participants in this study also indicated that despite the disruptions that were associated with being pregnant while at school, they had fully embraced their new roles of motherhood. Nomalungelo opined:

Ngiyakhumbula kakhulu eskoleni. Ngiyaythanda ne-role yam entsha yokuba umama, kodwa futhi ngiyakhumbula kakhulu eskoleni.

(I miss school very much. I also love my new role as a mother, but I still miss school more). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Continuing, Nomalungelo stated that while her life seems to have stopped for a while because of the pregnancy, her total commitment was devoted to looking after her child.

... Noma impilo yami kungathi imile nje, kodwa ayikho into engingayenza okwamanje. Wonke amandla ami enginawo awokuthi ngibheke ingane yami ...

(...even though my life seems stagnant for now, but there is nothing I can do. All the strength that I have for now is devoted to looking after my baby). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Despite the disruption in schooling caused by pregnancy and early motherhood, one of the participants (Nokwanda) also noted that a positive attribute to becoming a mother was having the urge and the tenacity to deal with challenges she encountered as a young mother. She suggested that these challenges encouraged her to pursue future aspirations.

Ngithanda ukusho ukuthi ukuba nengane usemncane kungabukeka sengathi kuphambene nalokhu okulindelwe umphakathini, kodwa noma kunjalo kukhona izifundo ezifundwa omama abancane.

(I would like to say that having a child at a young age might be perceived as deviant to what is expected by the society, nonetheless there are lessons learnt by young mothers). (Nokwanda, 17 years)

The above extracts illustrate that while teenage pregnancy and motherhood are often a disruption to schooling for girls, some of the young mothers do not always see them as deterrents to the attainment of life goals. Instead, some fully embrace their new motherhood roles.

5.2.5 Enduring Educational Aspirations

Some scholars suggest that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood result in low personal efficacy and low educational aspirations and occupational goals (McNeely, Shew, Beuhring, Sieving, Miller et al., 2002; Young, Martin, Young, & Ting, 2001). These are viewed as “serious school disruptions” (Makgalabone, 1999 p. 60). Others, such as Noshir (2017), believe that young mothers view education as vital in order to ensure that they had a better future not only for themselves, but also for their children. According to this group, for some teenagers, pregnancy and early motherhood encourage high educational aspirations and determination to carry on with their schooling after child birth. For example, in the study by SmithBattle (2006), the findings suggest that teenage mothers’ were committed to return to school as they had a strong belief that completing their schooling was key to accessing tertiary education, and this would, in turn, ensure that they had access to better job opportunities.

Similarly, in this study, despite the challenges they faced while pregnant and after assuming their new parenting roles, the participants showed eagerness to complete their high school education. The following extracts illustrate:

Nomali shared similar concerns, stating that: “Ngiyethemba ukuthi uzongivumela ukuthi ngibuyele esikoleni uma ingane yami isikhulakhulile.” (***I hope he [her father] would allow me to carry on with my studies once my baby has grown a bit***). (Nomali, 14 years old)

Explaining her wish to be allowed to complete her schooling, she highlighted the importance of attaining high school education as a means of ensuring that she does not become dependent upon government support for survival.

...Ingoba ngiyakwazi ukubaluleka kwemfundo futhi akekho umuntu eskhathini samanje ongajabulela ukuba umahlalela owondliwa uHulumeni.

(***... It's because I know the importance of education and there is no one at this day and age who would like to be dependent on government for everything***). (Nomali, 14years old)

For these participants, without education, they would become dependent on handouts from others to take care of their basic needs, a situation they did not want for them and their children:

...ukuba kuya ngami ngabe mina ngisafunda... (**pause**). Iyini nje impilo ngaphandle kwemfundo? Ugcina uphila impilo yokuncenga nokubheka ukuphiwa, ulokhu uncengana nabantu ukuthi bakwenzele izinto...

(***...if I still had a choice, I would still be at school... (pause). What is the meaning of life if you do not have education? You become too dependent on people and rely***

heavily on handouts. You always beg people to do things for you.) (Sethabile, 16 years old)

Despite being unsure of how the plan would unfold for her in order to be able to complete her schooling, 16 year-old Athandile showed a keen interest in going back to school in order to complete her high school education.

...Ngiyafuna ukubuyela eskoleni kodwa okwamanje angikazi ukuthi kuzokwenzeka kanjani lokho ngoba angifuni ukuthwesa ugogo umthwalo wokukhulisa ingane yami ngoba isancane... **(a long pause)**. Kodwa kona ngizobuyela noma ikanjani.

(I do want to go back to school, but for now I am not even sure how that is going to happen... (a long pause). But I will definitely go back). (Athandile, 16 years old)

Yet another participant, Nokwanda, confirmed her aspirations and willingness to complete her high school education. However, unlike the others above, she did not put any time frame to her wish to return to school. This was because she had the added responsibility of taking care of her child who was born with a disability. For her, this did not not completely curtail her future aspirations of attaining her high school education. She was adamant that this would enable her to further her studies to become a professional nurse and to assist others who might find themselves in a similar situation.

Eskoleni ngangisathanda ukuqhubeka kodwa isimo asivumi okwamanje. ...I will definitely go back to school ukuyoqedela umatric wam...**(pause)**, bese ngiyokwenza inursing ukuze ngikwazi ukusiza ingane yami kanye nabanye abayodinga usizo njengami.

(I would have loved to carry on with my studies, but the circumstances do not allow me to do so for now. I will definitely go back to school to complete my Matric

(pause)... *and then I will go study to become a nurse so that I will be able to assist people that might need help similar to mine*). (Nokwanda, 17 years old)

Zinhle, as well, wishes to complete her high school education, which she sees as an enabling factor in “continuing with life” For Zinhle, this implied that not completing high school education would bring her life to a standstill.

Ngonyaka ozayo ngifuna ukuyobhala umatric wami efinishing school, khona ngizokwazi ukuqhubeka nempilo ngoba impilo iyama ngaphandle kuka matric.

(Next year I am intending to write my matric at a finishing school⁶, so as to carry on with my life because life comes to a standstill without having matric.) (Zinhle, 19 years old)

For this participant, completing high school would enable her to further her studies at an FET college⁷, so that she could get a good job that would enable her to take care of her child.

...noma ngabe ngingathola ithuba lokuthi ngiye eFET College. ...ukuze ngikwazi ukufundela umsebenzi ukuze ngikwazi ukunakekela umntanami.

(...even if I can go to an FET College ...so that I will be able to acquire a skill that will enable me to get a job so that I can be able to take care of my child). (Zinhle, 19 years old)

⁶ A private college which offers students a chance to complete their high school education/improve matric results even after leaving mainstream education.

⁷ Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, now known Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges are post-school institutions which focus on skills training.

The participant emphasised the importance of education as a means of altering her life circumstances for the better after she had to take over the responsibility of caring for her siblings after their parents' death due to illness.

Iskole ngangisthanda, iyona ndlela engangibona ukuthi yayiyosiza ukwenza impilo esasiyphila ekhaya ibe ngcono. ...Ukuba abazali bami basekhona angiboni ukuthi ngabe isimo sinje. Ngabe ngiyaziqhubekela nesikole.

(I used to love school, I believed it was the only that was going to change my home circumstances. If my parents were still alive, I doubt that my circumstances would be this dire. I would be carrying on with my schooling). (Zinhle, 19 years old)

Phelisa also had similar aspirations of completing her schooling, although she wished to do so at a different school. She stated that “Ngifisa ukuqedela umatric wami ngokushesha, kodwa hhayi kulesikole ebengifunda kuso.” *(I wish to complete my matric as soon as possible but not at that school where I was.)* (Phelisa, 18 years old) This was due to the humiliation she suffered as a result of her pregnancy and the lack of empathy from the teachers at her school. From the above responses, the participants in this study made it clear that as teenage mothers, they valued their education. Despite becoming pregnant and young mothers while at school, they were determined to carry on with their schooling. The findings echo available scholarship which suggests that after becoming parents, some students express a renewed sense of commitment to their education and recognise its importance in their future aspirations (Zachry, 2005; Brosh, Weigel, & Evans, 2007; Smithbattle, 2007, 2009). Pregnant teenagers and young mothers view completing schooling and getting a career as their best chance of employment and escaping poverty (Nkani & Bhana, 2010). Therefore, it is vital that all stakeholders such as parents, family members, teachers and policy makers offer necessary support to create

conducive environments for pregnant girls and young mothers to continue with their schooling during pregnancy and after childbirth so as to enable them to fulfil their aspirations.

5.3 Relations between Pregnant Teens/ Young Mothers and Fathers of their Children

The participants in this study reported on the kinds and levels of support, or lack thereof, they were offered by the men who were responsible for the pregnancies. While some concealed their pregnancies and did not inform the men responsible, others informed the men. Among these men and boys, there were two who acknowledged responsibility, while four denied the paternity of their children. For this reason, some of the young mothers reported receiving irregular or no financial support from the men.

5.3.1 Rejection and Denial of Paternity

Four young mothers in this study reported facing rejection from the fathers of their children who had denied paternity of their children. According to them, these men did not provide any kind of support, including financial support for their children. The girls had to rely on their own families for the financial support of their children. This echoes findings from a study by Barry (2010) in Sierra Leone, where only 32% of the fathers of the children took up the financial responsibility for their children. In the case of Nomalungelo, for example, not only did the father of the child deny paternity and withhold financial support, he also threatened her with violence if she did not keep his involvement a secret.

...ukhona la endaweni. Ngiyaye ngimbone kodwa akanandaba nengane yakhe (**a big sigh and pause**) Wathi ngingahambe ngitshela abantu ukuthi mina ngingane yakhe ngoba lokho kuzongfaka enkingeni. Akaze aythengele ngisho iNAN nje yodwa le.

(...he is around. I sometimes see him, and he doesn't care about his own child (a big sigh and pause) ...he told me not to go around telling people that he has a child with me as that might get me into trouble. He has never ever bothered to buy NAN baby formula for his own child). (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Another participant, Athandile, also reported not receiving any support from the father of her child who had denied paternity. She commented, "...angimazi. Wayphika naleyo ngane. *(...I do not know his whereabouts. He denied paternity of the child.)* (Athandile, 16 years old)

A third participant, Zathaba, concurred, stating that:

Angikaze ngibe nobudlelwane obuserious nobaba wengane yami. Wavele wayiphika nje ingane wathi akuyona eyakhe kusukela ekuqaleni nje. Ngangingeke-ke ngimphoqe ukuthi abe sempilweni yami ngenkani.

(I never had a serious relationship with the father of my child. He denied paternity from the onset and said the child was not his. So there was no way I was going to force him to be part of my life). (Zathaba, 16 years old)

These findings contradict public discourse and some existing scholarship which suggest that for some young girls, pregnancy may be a means of securing financial support from older men. For example, Kanku and Mesh (2010) are of the view that teenage girls who are involved in intergenerational sexual relationships with older working men see these relationships as sources of income and support. They further argue that if these relationships include children, the young girls believe that the likelihood of on-going support will increase. However, other scholars offer an alternative view which suggests that most teenage pregnancies are unplanned

(Macleod & Tracey, 2010; Morehead & Soriano, 2005; Macleod & Durrheim, 2002; Jewkes et al, 2001).

In this study, one participant explained the lack of support and commitment to the relationship from the father of the child due to his marital status and the need to hide the relationship. As the participant below reported, the married man responsible for her pregnancy started withholding financial support and being abusive as soon as she informed him about it:

...kodwa nganele ngamtshela ukuthi ngikhulelwe, wavele waqala waba nezaba Akabanga esaba yiloya muntu owusizo ayekade enguyeWaqala ke wanyamalala. Ngelinye ilanga ngathi ngithi ngimcela imali yokuthengela ingane izingutshana nje. Wangithuka wathi yimina engaba isilima. Nhloboni yengane ethi iyintandane ibone isidingo sokuletha enye ingane emhlabeni. *(Pause)*. Akulula nokuthi ngimbophe ngoba yimina engaba uthathekile, ngathandana no sugar daddy oshadile.

(...but as soon as I told him about my pregnancy, he started to come up with excuses. He was no longer that helpful person that he was before I became pregnant. He just disappeared. One day I asked him for money to buy baby's clothes. He cursed me, saying that I was a fool. He said what kind of an orphan decides to bring a child into the world. (Pause). I can't even open a case against him because I was the one that was careless by getting involved with a married sugar daddy). (Lulu, 19 years old)

One participant in this study decided not to inform the father of her child about the pregnancy because she was no longer in a relationship with him and she assumed that he was going to deny paternity.

...angikaze ngibe nerelationship naye. Wayengeyona ngisho i-boyfriend yami. Kwavele kwazenzakalela nje, futhi ngangazi ukuthi uma ngimtshela ukuthi nngikhulelwe, wayezovele aphike ...*(Pause)*

(...I never had any relationship with him. He was not even my boyfriend. It just happened and I knew that if I told him about my pregnancy, he would just deny everything (Pause)). (Thuthu, 15 years old)

From the above extracts, it is evident that some pregnant girls do not receive any form of financial support from the men and boys responsible for their pregnancies due to denied paternity. Reasons for this included the men's marital status, the nature of the relationship between the girl and man/boy, and others. This meant that the girls were left to take care of the babies while the men and boys responsible continued their lives unhindered. The above findings are further confirmed by Morrell, Bhana and Shefer (2012) who state that "Childbearing and parenting are highly gendered practices where labour and responsibility fall largely on women" (p. 4).

5.3.2 The Significance of Acknowledgement of Paternity

One of the most critical cultural beliefs in some black Southern African communities is the acknowledgement of the child, regardless of the marital status of the parents (Kaufman, De Wet & Stadler, 2001; Nkani, 2012). For children born out of wedlock, the responsible man pays "damages" (Dlamini, 2016, p. 35), signifying his acknowledgement of paternity, and which may be in the form of financial compensation (Kaufman, De Wet & Stadler, 2001; Nkani, 2012). According to Dlamini (2016), this traditional practice entails taking the pregnant girl or young woman to the family of the man or boy who impregnated her where he will either admit or deny being responsible for the pregnancy:

“If he acknowledges this, he is then required to pay “damages” to the family of the girl to show that he admits that he is the father of the child and rightfully apologises to the family for impregnating their child out of wedlock. This process then allows the father to assume responsibility for the child in all respects” (Dlamini, 2016, p. 35).

In this study, both Mafutha and Zandile had the paternity of their children acknowledged by the fathers through the payment of *inhlawulo* (damages) to their families.

...sisathandana. Ngaphezu kwalokho, abakubo bafika ukuzohlawula ekhaya, bezokhombisa ukuthi bayayazi ingane engiy’khulelwe.

(...we are still seeing each other. Over and above that, his family came to pay ‘inhlawulo’- “damages” to my my family, acknowledging paternity of his child.)

(Mafutha, 18 years old)

...Nangempela wafika ekhaya nabantu bakubo bezoybika. Akazange alekhu eshona le nale. Wavuma ukuthi ingane eyakhe nokuthi futhi uzoyondla. **(long pause)**. Wasale esehlawula ngisho nokuhlawula.

(Indeed, he came home and was accompanied by the delegation from his family to come and inform my mother about what had happened [pregnancy]. He did not deny paternity and he promised to take care of the baby... (long pause). He even paid “inhlawulo”- “damages”.) (Zandile, 18 years old)

Available research suggests that such acknowledgement or denial of the paternity of a child sets the tone for how the family will deal with the young girl’s pregnancy. For example, if paternity is denied it is perceived as a reflection of the girl’s unbecoming sexual behaviour of sleeping around and that, as a result, being unsure of who the father of her child is (Dlamini, 2016). Confirming this perspective, pregnant girls and young mothers tend to believe that the man’s denial of paternity is punishment for being careless and not taking contraceptives (Nduna

& Jewkes, 2012; Dlamini, 2016). For instance, three participants in this study (Nomalungelo, Athandile and Zathaba), expressed the feelings of distress and worry about unresolved paternity. Zathaba, Athandile and Sethabile had the paternity of their children denied. Zathaba stated that the father of her child denied the paternity from the onset and he has no relationship with his child.

Wavele wayiphika nje ingane wathi akuyona eyakhe kusukela ekuqaleni nje. Ngangingeke-ke ngimphoqe ukuthi abe sempilweni yami ngenkani.

(He denied paternity from the onset. So there was no way I was going to force him to be part of my life). (Zathaba, 16 years old)

Athandile stated that “Angimazi. Wayphika naleyo ngane. Sisizwa imali uma asithumelela yona.” ***(I do not know where he is. He denied paternity of the child. We depend on the money that my mother sends us.)*** (Athandile, 16 years old)

Sethabile had a similar experience:

Phela abakubo kwakufanele bavele nje ekhaya bazoziceba, kodwa abazange bayhluphe ngisho nokuyhlupha. Lokho nje kukodwa kwamcasula ubaba wathi bayamdelela futhi balulaza umuzi wakhe. Ukungahlawuli uma wenze umonakali, ukwedelela.

(His family was supposed to come to my home and declare what they have done, but they did not even bother to do that. That alone angered my father who said that they are looking down upon him. Not paying “inhlawulo” - “damages/atonement” when you have caused damages to another man’s family, is a sign of disrespect.) (Sethabile, 16 years old)

As a theoretical lens used to understand the participants' experiences of pregnancy and motherhood in this study, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory suggests that the macrosystem encompasses cultural values, traditions and law (see also Berk, 2000 cited in Harkonen, 2007). According to Harkonen, (2007), the characteristics of the macrosystem are transferred from one generation to another by means of different institutions such as family, school, workplace, congregation and administration. The above examples suggest that for one of the participants (Sethabile), having the paternity of their children denied had a negative effect on her because of the importance associated with the acknowledgement and the payment of "inhlawulo" in the isiZulu culture (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012; Dlamini, 2016). Furthermore, they had to take full responsibility for taking care of the child without any emotional and financial support (Zathaba), had to rely on family members for financial support (Athandile), and making their parents feel shamed and disrespected because of the non-payment of "inhlawulo".

"Gender inequality is manifested in contexts of pregnancy and disadvantages girls" (Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012, p. 3). The above findings of this study suggest that, it is the girls who bear most of the brunt of becoming pregnant and who are at the mercy of the men responsible for their pregnancies as to whether they will assume their fatherhood roles or not. However, their male counterparts are not obligated to show up for their responsibilities.

5.4 Parents' Responses to Teenage Pregnancy

Cultural, religious, and governmental institutions often see teenage pregnancy as one of society's most "pressing ills" and a "crisis" (Jimenez, 2012, p. 5). This framing of teenage pregnancy and early motherhood has negative implications for the girls and their families. As

discussed above, teenage pregnancy brings shame to the girl and her family (see also, Mwaba, 2000). In this study, the participants reflected on their parents' responses to their pregnancy and the impact it had on them.

5.4.1 Anger and Disappointment

Almost three decades ago, Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992) found that, in the communities they studied, families welcomed early childbearing. Kanku and Mesh (2010) and Nkwanyana (2011) suggest that cultural norms in some communities have shifted in this modern era and that being pregnant at an early age is not viewed as necessarily immoral because teenage girls may feel the need to prove that they are able to bear children before marriage. In fact, for many of the young mothers interviewed in a study by Stanistreet and Anwar (2014), becoming a mother at a young age was viewed as a normal occurrence.

However, there is abundant scholarship which suggests that apart from the fact that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are usually unplanned and sometimes unwanted, they also bring a sense of shame not only to the pregnant girls themselves, but to their parents as well. According to Nkani (2012), in her study, most parents were shocked, disappointed or showed great disapproval upon finding out about their daughters' pregnancies. As Mkhwanazi (2010, p. 221) observes, “[a]lthough teenage pregnancy is common, especially amongst blacks in South Africa, it is not socially acceptable”. As reported above, the participants in this study indicated remorse for having disappointed their parents by becoming pregnant at a young age. Among the parents, the feelings of shame and disappointment are further perpetuated by the construction of teenagers as too young and not fit to be parents (Jimenez, 2012).

...ngabaphoxa ngalento engayenza kubona. ...Babengacasukile! (*pause*) babebila
...ubaba yena wayengakwazi ngisho nokungibheka.

(...I disappointed them because of what I did to them (with closed eyes). They were extremely angry! (pause). They were boiling. ...my dad could not even look at me.)
(Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Sethabile's response was similar:

...ubaba wathi ngimshaye ikhanda. (This an isiZulu idiom which is loosely translated to mean, this is the worst pain you have ever caused to a person)

(...my dad just said it's like I had hit him on the head.) (Sethabile, 16 years old)

Similarly, Sibusisiwe's father equated his daughter's pregnancy to a public spectacle, stating that, "Wathi ngimhlekane nezwe... *(He said that I had made him a public spectacle...)*
(Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

The above examples suggest that teenage pregnancy brings a sense of shame and disappointment to both the parents and the young girls who become pregnant. Linked to this, available literature identifies family support as one of the key factors in ensuring that anxieties associated with teenage pregnancy and early motherhood are alleviated. Teenage pregnancy comes as a "shock and disappointment to most parents, and some stop supporting their daughters" (Nemutanzhela, 2007, p. 15). This may include refusing to pay for their daughters' schooling. As a participant in this study indicated, support from her family was intermittent, even though they were her only source of support. She explains, "... ngakho-ke ngeke aze angiyeke ngiqhubeke nesikole esikhokhelwa uyena. ... *(and he [her father] will not allow me to carry on with education that he is paying for.)* (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

Similarly, Nomalungelo's parents were angered and disappointed by their daughter's pregnancy which came as a shock to them.

... ngabaphoxa ngalento engayenza kubona. Bavele babona ngesisu nje ekhaya bengakaze basole lutho. Babengacasukile... babebila. Ubaba yena wayengakwazi ngisho nokungibheka Inkinga enkulu ukuthi sonke sibheke yena la ekhaya.

(... I disappointed them [parents] because of what I did to them. They just saw me with a bulging stomach without them suspecting anything. They were extremely angry (pause)... actually, they were livid. My dad could not even look at me.)

(Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

... ngenxa yokuthukuthela, ubaba wangixosha ekhaya ngahamba ngayohlala nogogo wami. Wathi angeke angenzele lutho futhi angithengele ngisho iduku lokufinya.

(My father chased me away and I then went and stayed with my grandmother).

(long pause). He said he will not do anything for me not even buy me a

handkerchief). (Atheadile, 16 years old)

These findings are a clear indication that teenage pregnancy evokes anger and disappointment among some parents. In some instances, the parents withdraw their financial support, forcing the girls to drop out of school, while others chase them away from the family homes. Linked to the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems, at mesosystem level, these findings confirm the suggestions that young mothering girls are reported to have low support due to social scrutiny and stigma associated with early pregnancy (Figueiredo, Bifulco, Pacheco et al, 2006; Wahn & Nissen, 2008; Baheiraei et al, 2012).

5.4.2 Negative Effects on Family Relations

Even though motherhood is a highly valued event in most families, when it occurs during the formative years of a girl's life, it can lead to anger, uncertainty, and instability within the family structure (Hoga, Borges & Alvarez, 2009). Influenced by their shame and disappointment, some parents of pregnant teenagers opt to chase their daughters away from home when they discover that they are pregnant (Barry, 2010). In this study, two participants suffered this fate. For example, Sibusisiwe reported that "...[ubaba] akazange angikhulumise kusukela ezwa ukuthi ngikhulelwe kuze kube yimanje. (...[dad] *he has never spoken to me since he heard about my pregnancy up to now.*) (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old). Another participant, Sethabile reported that "Ubaba wangixosha ekhaya, ngahamba ngayohlala nogogo wami". (*My father chased me away and I then went and stayed with my grandmother.*) (Athandile, 16 years old).

The negative effect on family relations did not only involve parents and the pregnant girls, it also impacted on other family members, including siblings. The following excerpt from an interview illustrates:

Iyngane zasekhaya zazingazi noma zingisize noma zingibuke nje. Impilo yavele yamuncu. Iyngane zasekhaya zavele zangijikela ke nje zona. Kwakungathi azisangazi nje. ...kwakungathi ngiyamnukela.

(My siblings were not sure whether to help me or just look at me. Life just became sour. My siblings just turned against me. It was like they did not know me... You would think I had a foul smell because of the way she [my sister] treated me.)

(Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

The above extract suggests that pregnant and mothering girls can be rejected by their families, leading them to feel separated from their siblings. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979)

ecological systems theory, the microsystem is the first stage of human development and includes the immediate elements such as one's family, friends, school and peer groups where face to face interactions take place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Paquette & Ryan, 2001; Amod & Seabi, 2013). This system also involves the daily activities, roles and relationships among the afore-mentioned immediate elements (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Amod & Seabi, 2013). When these are disrupted, the relationship among siblings and between the pregnant girl and the family is negatively affected. This is sometimes reflected in the ill-treatment, neglect and exclusion of the pregnant and mothering teenage girl by the siblings and other family members. Due to social scrutiny and stigma associated with early pregnancy, teenage mothers tend to receive limited support (Baheiraei et al, 2012; Wahn & Nissen, 2008; Figueiredo, Bifulco, Pacheco et al, 2006 as cited in MinKim, 2007).

5.4.3 Emotional Support

Available literature has shown that support for pregnant teenagers and young mothers is important for increasing their educational aspirations and addressing their marginalised positions as girls and women in society (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Mcambi, 2011; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Shefer, Bhana & Morrell, 2013). The kind of support that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers receive can be a determining factor in whether they will be able to resume their studies after childbirth. For instance, in an ethnographic study conducted in Cameroon, the findings indicated that some young women opted to send their babies away to live in the father's household or otherwise relinquished parental rights to other relatives in order to be able to carry on with their schooling (Johnson-Hanks, 2002). Without such family support, such opportunity are unattainable as pregnant girls and young mothers are forced to stay home to care for their children.

Zathaba's response in this study suggests that while her mother's initial response to her pregnancy was that of disappointment, in time, she provided the necessary support for her daughter and encouraged her not to give up on her hopes and dreams for the future, including education.

...esanda kuzwa ngokukhulelwa kwami uma wayephatheke kabi kakhulu. Kodwa ngokuhamba kweskhathi wabuye wehlisa umoya waqhubeka nokunginakekela. Wayengifonela engitshela ukuthi ngingalokothi ngilahle ithemba ngephupho enagnginalo ngempilo yami.

(...at first my mom was very upset with me when she found out about my pregnancy. But eventually came through for me. She would call me and tell me not to give up on my dreams.) (Zathaba, 16 years old)

Mafutha also reported being surprised by the emotional support and protection she received from her mother when she discovered her pregnancy, stating that, "Okwangimangaza ukuthi wangisaphotha futhi engafuni lutho ngami." *(To my surprise, she was very supportive and protective.)* (Mafutha, 18 years old) Such emotional support is vital to pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in order to get them through the challenges associated with their new roles in life. Similarly, Thuthu marvelled at her grandmother's support:

...wathi [ugogo] ngizoluthola lonke uthando kanye ne- support engiyidingayo ngize ngidlule kuleskhathi esinzima engidlula kuso. *(...[granny] she said that I would get all the love and support I needed to get through that difficult time.)* (Thuthu, 15 years old)

In Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system, the mesosystem level emphasises the connectedness between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2000; Harkonen, 2007). This means that the development of individuals is dependent on assistance, advice and

structure of the society in which they come from (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In line with this, parental support is vital in ensuring that young mothers adapt to their new roles. This can be done by providing childcare support as well as any other relevant support which might lighten the burden of young mothers (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013).

5.5 Discussion

The aim of the study reported in this thesis was to explore the experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who had dropped out and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave school. This chapter has presented findings that address the first critical question in the study: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* Informed by gender socialisation theory (Oakley, 1972) as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979) as theoretical lenses, the analysis in this chapter has produced three themes emerging from the data. These suggest that first, at the microsystem level, there were two factors that influenced the young pregnant girls and young mothers to drop out of school: 1) how their families responded to their pregnancies and the impact thereof; and 2) At the mesosystem level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979), factors such as family support, school support (which includes school principals, teachers and peers) and access to childcare support, play a significant role in enabling young mothers to cope with their new parenting demands and on whether the girl is able to continue with her schooling prospects post-childbirth (see also Willan, 2013; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Bearinger et al, 2007). For the participants in this study, not receiving support from their families and schools led to their dropout from school.

Second, from a gender socialisation theory perspective, "gender and cultural values" (Noshir, 2017, p. 43) influence how pregnant and mothering teenagers are viewed in families and

communities and are key factors in determining the girl's decision to drop out of school or the family's decision to force her to drop out. For example, where paternity of the child was not acknowledged through the payment of *inhlawulo*, this was interpreted as a sign of disrespect to the family and its elders. However, instead of punishing the man/boy responsible, the pregnant girl was often blamed and punished, by for example, being chased away from home and not offered childcare support and therefore, forcing her to drop out of school (Oakley, 1972; 1981).

However, despite the challenges of pregnancy and motherhood, including dropout from school, some of the participants in this study still held on to their dreams of their schooling. These participants viewed education as an important factor in ensuring that they had a better future for themselves and their children (see also SmithBattle, 2006; Noshir, 2017).

5.6 Synthesis

Located within the social constructivist paradigm, this qualitative study examined the ways in which pregnancy and motherhood influenced a group of 16 purposively selected teenage girls living in a South African township to drop out from school. This chapter addressed the research question: *How do teenage girls in a township setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* To understand the factors that influenced the girls' or their parents'/guardians' decision-making regarding schooling, data analysis is informed by the gender socialisation theory (Oakley, 1972) and Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory. Findings from the study suggest that most of the pregnancies were unplanned and/or unwanted. As such, they brought feelings of shame, regret and remorse to the participants as they felt that they had disappointed or brought shame to their parents and families. The findings further suggest that the girls were

either suspended expelled from school (despite the country's law prohibiting their exclusion), or their parents or guardians pulled them out of school as punishment or to look after their children. Further, they felt overwhelmed by the competing demands of motherhood and schooling, and were therefore, forced to withdraw from school to take care of their children.

These findings will be further discussed in Chapter Seven of this thesis. The next chapter presents findings on the factors that influenced the pregnant and mothering teenage girls in this study to drop out of school.

CHAPTER SIX

FACTORS INFLUENCING PREGNANT GIRLS AND YOUNG MOTHERS TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

6.1 Introduction

The study reported in this thesis aimed to examine the extent and ways in which pregnancy and motherhood force teenage girls to drop out of school. To achieve this, I analysed the factors that influence school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls in a South African township. The overarching question in this study was: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* As discussed in Chapter Four, I used a qualitative research design which focuses on how the participants experience, understand and interpret the social world which then informs how they experience and make sense of their own lives (Mason, 2002; Creswell, 2003). To address the question, data in this study were generated through in-depth semi-structured individual interviews, field notes as well my research journal. In order to ensure that data analysis was rigorous, I employed thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This enabled me to systematically organise data, which then offered insight into patterns of meaning that I grouped into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012).

The previous chapter addressed the first sub-question: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* In the previous chapter, I presented a number of findings. Firstly, participants responded to news of their pregnancies with regret and remorse, anxiety, fear and shame. Secondly, some of the participants were rejected by the men responsible for their pregnancies. Thirdly, the findings suggest that despite the delay in the

completion of their schooling due to pregnancy and early motherhood, the participants' aspirations for their educational and career endured and they expressed a commitment to their education and recognised its importance as means of securing employment opportunities and escaping poverty. Fourthly, according to the participants in this study, acknowledgement or denial of paternity by the father of the child influenced how the pregnant girl was treated by family and community. In this regard, the participants revealed that their parents' responses to their pregnancies included anger and disappointment due to their view that the family image was tarnished by the pregnancy. In some instances, the pregnancy caused strife among family members. However, for some, their families offered the emotional (and other) support they needed to cope with their new roles as young mothers.

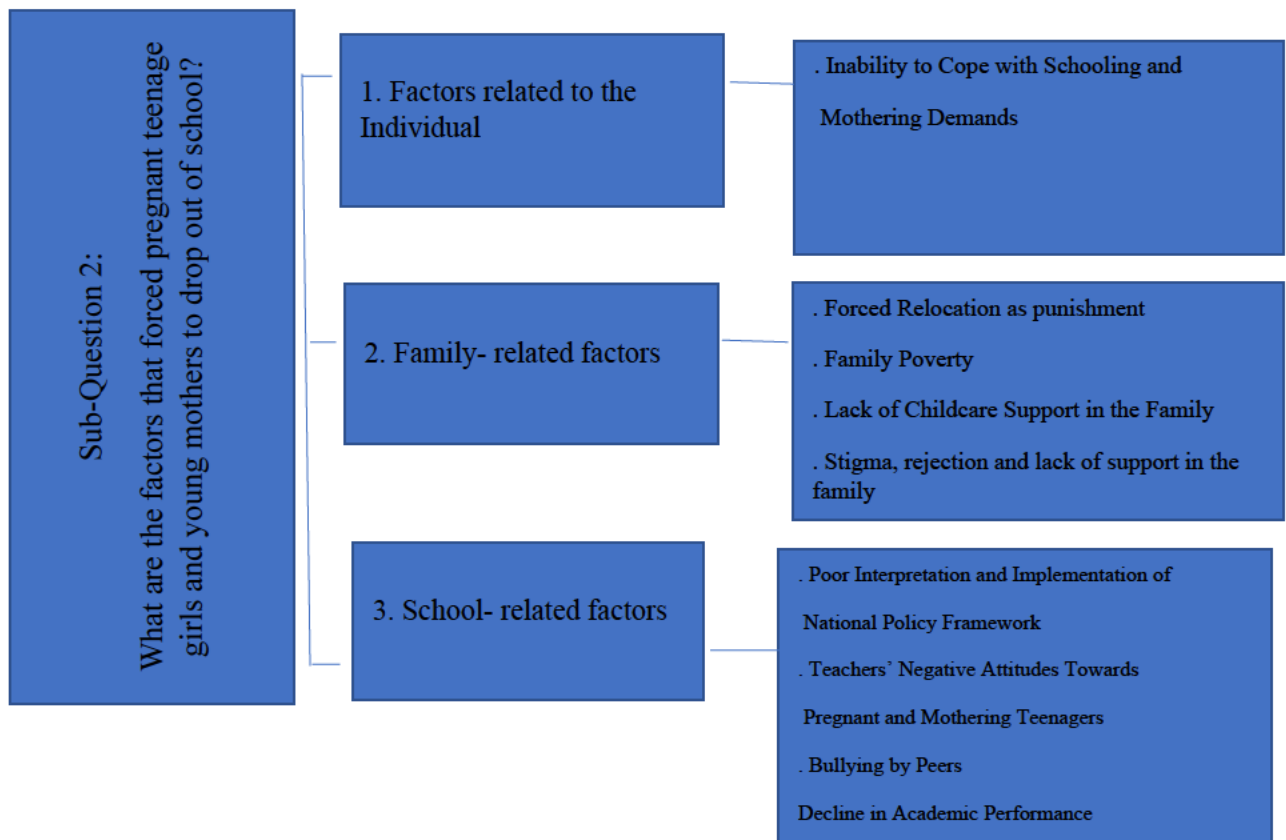
This chapter addresses the second sub-question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?* To analyse the data, the study was informed by gender socialisation theory (Oakley, 1972) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979) as theoretical lenses to examine the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave (see Chapter Three). As discussed in Chapter Three, gender socialisation theory argues that we are socialised into the already existing norms by various sources of socialisation which include multiple factors which include family, peers, school, community, media, legal systems and cultural beliefs all of which have a common goal of transmitting and promoting the socialisation goals of that particular society (Oakley, 1972; Šikić-Mićanović, 1997). This enabled to understand how these factors influenced the lives of these teenage girls and in particular, their decisions to leave school as a result of pregnancy or motherhood. Second, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory argues that every person is born into a complex

cultural ecological system of interacting people, situations, social attitudes and values, religion, political, economic and legalistic practices. It further emphasises that it is critical to strengthen human relationships within supportive environments as it leads to the increase in development which in return yields positive outcomes in learning (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). Therefore, in order to understand the factors that influenced pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school, the study examined how complex factors such as family, peers, school, community, and social attitudes all interact to impact on the lives of pregnant and mothering girls.

6.2 Factors That Forced Pregnant Teenage Girls and Young Mothers to Drop Out of School

What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school? The findings from this study suggest that such factors can be categorised into three broad themes: 1) Factors related to the individual; 2) family-related factors; and 3) school-related factors. 4 presents a diagrammatical overview of the themes and sub-themes that emerged in response to the research question

Figure 5: Factors that forced pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to drop out of school: Overview of the findings



6.2.1 Factors Related to the Individual

Many pregnant and mothering teenagers who drop out of school identify a set of personal factors that contribute to their leaving. In addition to the shame, fear and regret they suffered (see Chapter Five), the participants in this study also cited their inability to cope with school work and motherhood as a key factor in their decisions to drop out of school.

6.2.1.1 Inability to Cope with Schooling and Mothering Demands

Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood come with various changes and challenges for young girls, all of which happen simultaneously. Chigona (2007) found that motherhood takes much

of the teenage mothers' time. A study conducted in the Western Cape province in South Africa which aimed to examine challenges faced by schooling teen mothers (Chigona, 2007) found that 10 of the 16 teenage mothers in the study indicated that they missed classes due taking care of their sick children as well as ill-health due to pregnancy. For some teenage mothers, continuing with their education becomes challenging. For others who are able to carry on with their schooling after childbirth, it becomes difficult because of the challenges that are embedded within their new roles as mothers which include looking after their children due to the lack childcare support (Mcambi, 2011). In their study about how teenage mothers who were in school reflected on their experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, Singh and Hamid (2015) reported that teenage mothers experienced great difficulties in juggling their personal and schooling responsibilities. For example, one participant noted:

... well some days are really hard. I wake up in the morning and I get him [the baby] ready and take him to the crèche and then I come to school. After school I go pick him up, clean the house and then make him food and bath him and then I sit down to do my homework and sometimes I may not even do my homework because it gets to me sometimes, because I'm tired and I just want to go to sleep and then he's sick at night, he's crying and I have to see to him ... (Singh & Hamid, 2015, p. 281).

These difficulties might explain why some teens drop out and leave school.

In my study, the participants lamented the difficulty of juggling their schooling demands and motherhood responsibilities, such as taking care of a sick child. Lulu for example, observed:

...ingane yayivele ikhale, uma ingakhali ubusuku bonke uthole ukuthi inomkhuhlane noma ihlushwe isisu noma ivele ishise nje. Akekho ke engangimgakhala kuye ukuba angilekelele. Konke kwakubheke mina futhi kubheke mina ngedwa.

(...the baby would just start crying, ...would find that she has the flu, or a tummy problem or her temperature would just rise. I had no one to help me. I had to deal with everything on my own.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Nomalungelo also found it difficult to juggle pregnancy and the schooling demands. This was due to the lack of support from her family members as well as her siblings.

Ngazama ukuwncenga umsebenzi weskole kodwa hhayi kwakungelula. Iyngane zasekhaya zavele zangijikela ke nje zona

(I tried to carry on with my school work, but I just couldn't. My siblings just turned against me.) (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Similar sentiments were also shared by Phelisa who stated that:

Ukuba sesikoleni ube ukulelwe akulula nhlobo. Kwakunzima kakhulu ukwenza umsebenzi weskole ngibe ngikhulelwe. Eskoleni babengenandaba, in fact uma bekubona ukuthi ukhulelwe babekwenza ukuthi wenze yonkinto

(Being at school while pregnant was not easy at all. I found it difficult to do my schoolwork and be pregnant at the same time. At school they just did not care. In fact, the minute they saw that you were pregnant they would deliberately make you do all sorts of things.) (Phelisa, 18 years old)

The above examples confirm Kaufman, de Wet and Stadler's (2001) argument that juggling pregnancy or mothering and schooling is often riddled with challenges that emanate from such factors as the inability to cope with the schooling demands, absenteeism from school, and the subsequent responsibilities associated with childcare. For pregnant girls and young mothers in this study, juggling pregnancy or mothering demands and schooling also contributed to their dropping out of school. The challenges were further exacerbated by the lack of support from

the men responsible for their pregnancies and their family members, and the inability to manage time and other family responsibilities. The ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which involves social support from school, teachers as well as the community, which is critical in ensuring that pregnant girls and young mothers are able to carry on with their schooling, was largely dysfunctional. This meant that they were not able to continue with their schooling and therefore, had to drop out.

Coupled with the personal responsibilities of being pregnant or being a mother while schooling were the physical realities of being pregnant that made it challenging for them to continue with their schooling. One participant, for example, indicated that ill-health during pregnancy was among the factors that contributed to her dropping out of school.

Nesisu futhi naso sasingangithandi. Ngavele ngaphihlika izinduna, ngagula nje. Ngangingasakwazi ngisho nokuqeda kahle usuku ngingagulanga. Ikhandla lami laliphithene. Ekhaya bazibonela nabo ukuthi ngeke kusalunga ukuthi ngiqhubeke and akekho nowayezihlupha ukungibuza ukuthi nginjani.

(This pregnancy was problematic. I developed pimples and became very sick. I was not able to finish a day at school without being sick. I was all confused. At home they just saw for themselves that there was no way I would be able to carry on with my schooling and no-one even cared to ask me how I felt.) (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Another participant, Sibusisiwe, also experienced ill-health due to pregnancy.

noma vele abazali base benqume ukungiyekisa vele es'koloni, kodwa lokho kwanezezelwa ngase ngiyinto ehlala igula, iphalaza nje ngisho eskoleni imbala.

(Even though my parents had already decided that they would force me to drop out of school, what made things worse was that I was constantly sick, I would throw up even at school.) (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

Mpanza (2012) researched educators' experiences of dealing with teenage pregnancy in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, and also found that some pregnant girls struggled to cope with schooling due to illness. In another study, conducted by du Preez, Botha, Rabie and Manyathi (2019), which explored secondary school teachers' experiences related to teenage pregnancies and unexpected pregnancies in KwaZulu-Natal, the scholars found that ill-health due to pregnancy was a contributory factor in challenges with their schooling.

The findings indicate the burdens that pregnant teenage girls are subjected to such as the difficulty to juggle with the schooling demands as well as ill-health which were contributory factors to them dropping out of school while their male counterparts were exempted from these.

6.2.2 Family-related Factors

Becoming a mother and being able to continue with schooling is a challenging journey. According to Madhavan and Thomas (2005), to a large extent, the successful completion of schooling for most girls after childbirth is dependent on social as well as family support. In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) theory, it is at the mesosystem level where the individual's interactions with others is largely influenced by the broader society. Furthermore, family support, financial support, religious affiliation, relationships with peers and the neighbourhood are some of the mesosystem level factors that have a direct impact on teenage pregnancy and early motherhood (Asomani, 2017; Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000). In this study, family-

related factors influenced the participants to drop out of school included forced relocations, financial constraints and lack of childcare support.

6.2.2.1 Forced Relocation as Punishment

Teenage pregnancy is dealt with in varied ways from family to family. The news about pregnancy is generally not well received, especially when it occurs at a young age (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Nkani, 2012). Among the reasons mentioned by one of the participants for her parents' decisions to force her to go stay somewhere else (usually with the grandparents) was to "teach her a lesson". This implies that being away from home or a familiar environment might serve as a punitive measure for becoming pregnant or becoming teenage mothers. Similar findings were observed in the study by van Zyl, van der Merwe and Chigeza (2015) where two participants stated that they were kicked out of their homes and had to turn to grandparents and the child's father's family for survival. In the same study, participants mentioned that they were also chased away from home by their older siblings, thus making "teenage motherhood overwhelming when there is lack of adequate support" (Hanna, 2001, p. 459). This may ultimately force the young mother to drop out of school. For example, in my study, one participant was forced to leave her home in order to live with her grandmother in a rural village as punishment for getting pregnant:

Ngangitshelwe ukuthi abantu abantu abenza njengami kwakufanele bafundiswe isfundo....Emva kweviki ngathathwa ngayiswa kagogo emafamu eNdwedwe. Kwakungekho gesi, namanzi ayekhiwa emfuleni noma empomini womphakathi. Ngahlaliswa lapho ngaze ngabeletha. Ayikho into engangingayenza, ngaphandle kokulalela umthetho wabazali.

(I was told that people who behave like me must be taught a lesson. A week later I was taken to my maternal grandparents' homestead in rural Ndwedwe. There was no

electricity, and water was either collected from the river or from the communal tap. I was forced to stay there until I had delivered my baby. I had no choice but to comply with my parents' instructions.) (Sethabile, 16 years old)

Sethabile added that her father insisted that she drop out of school after discovering her pregnancy and forced her to relocate to her grandparents'. This situation made it impossible for her to continue going to school.

Ubaba wathi uzoya eskoleni ayobatshela ukuthi angeke ngisabuya eskoleni aze yena a-decide ukuthi ngibuyela nini.

(My dad told me that he was going to go to school and tell them that I was not coming back until he decided to send me back.) (Sethabile, 16 years old)

Another participant reported that she had been forced to terminate her schooling due to relocating to another place because of her pregnancy.

Ngaphoqeleka ukshiya kagrade 10 ngiyohlala nogogo. Ngangingeke ngisahlala ekhaya. Ubaba wayesekubeke kwacaca ukuthi akasangifuni kwakhe. (pause) Ngizihlalela nogogo nje kumanje.

(I was forced to drop out in grade 10 and go live with my granny. I could no longer stay at home. My father had clearly stated that he no longer wanted me in his house. (pause) I am staying with my granny as we speak.) (Athandile, 16 years old)

Another revealed that her relatives who had raised her after her parents died chased her away when they found out about her pregnancy.

Nganele ngavuma nje ukuthi ngikhulelwe, u-anti watshela umyeni wakhe, ngatshelwa ukuthi angiqoqe imthwalo yami ngihambe ngokukhulu ukushesha. Ngangingenayo enye indawo engangingaya kuyo ngaphandle kokuthi ngiye ka boyfriend yami.

(As soon as I had confirmed my pregnancy, my aunt informed her husband and I was told to pack my stuff immediately. I had no choice but to go and stay with my boyfriend.) (Londiwe, 18 years old)

The findings in the study suggest that some parents forced their daughters to relocate and stay with other relatives. These findings are indicative of the punitive societal beliefs in relation to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, thus compromising the young girls schooling.

The above examples coincide with UNICEF's (2007, p. 7) claims that through the process of gender socialisation, individuals are expected to behave in certain ways which are "predetermined and dictated by the societal beliefs, values, attitudes and examples". Therefore, some parents perceived teenage pregnancy and early motherhood to fall outside the scope of the "acceptable behaviour" among their children, which resulted in their decision to force their children or wards to drop out of school.

6.2.2.2 Family Poverty

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory suggests that the complex nature of the entire ecological system, which includes the economic status of the pregnant teenage or mothering girl, becomes one of the key determining factors in whether the pregnant teenage girls and mothers will carry on with their schooling or drop out of school prior to successful completion. Children coming from an environment of poverty may be affected by a multitude of other social factors. These social factors do not include teenage pregnancy alone, but also "include community violence, gang membership involvement, alcohol and substance abuse and a high incidence of illiteracy" (Akella & Jordan, 2011, p. 2). According Kaufman, de Wet and Stadler (2001) these factors

influence the girls' ability to manage logistics and finances associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously.

a) Inadequate Financial Resources in the Family

Most pregnant girls and young mothers in this study came from families with inadequate financial resources. In some instances, there was only one breadwinner in the family, and the additional financial responsibility of a birth to a teenage mother put even more economic strain on the family. To illustrate, Nomalungelo recalled her father's reaction to her pregnancy:

...Wathi ngingayenza kanjani into enje ngibe ngazi kahle ukuthi vele laykhaya siyazipatanisela. **(with tears in her eyes)** ...Inkinga enkulu ukuthi sonke sithembele kuyena [ubaba]. Uyena yedwa osebenzayo. Uma[ma] yena akasebenzi. ...konke nje laykhaya kwenziwa uyena. Iyngane zasekhaya zifundiswa uyena, sidla yena, ... sigqokiswa uyena (Nomalungelo, 18)..

(He asked how I could do such a thing knowing my family situation and the fact that we were struggling financially (with tears in her eyes) ...the biggest problem is that we are all depending on him. He is the only one who is employed. Mom is not employed. ...my father is responsible for everything. He is responsible for my siblings' education, even for the food that we eat, (a long pause) ...even the clothes that we wear) (Nomalungelo, 18)

Similarly, Nomali, who indicated that she was dependent on her mother for her needs as well as those of her baby, with her grandmother assisting occasionally when she could, stated:

...phela uyena [umama] othumela imali ekpheleni kwenyanga. ...uyena okhokhela yonke into laykhaya bese ugogo eyalekelela uma enamandla. Akukho muntu omunye osilekelelayo.

(...she [mother] sends us money at the end of each month. ...she is the one that pays for everything here at home and granny only assists when she is able to do so. There is nobody else that assists us.) (Nomali, 14 years old)

For Athandile, her mother had to conceal the financial assistance that she gave to her because her father believed that any assistance offered to the young mother might lead her to have another child.

...Sisizwa imali uma asithumelela yona. **(pause)** ...kodwa uyamfihlela ubaba ukuthi uyasthumelela imali ngoba ubaba wathi uma umuntu enengane kufanele azikhulisele ingane ngamandla akhe ngoba uma kungenjalo, nenye izolandela.

(...My mother sends us money (pause) ...but my father doesn't know that she sends us money because he said once if a person decides to become a parent, they must take full responsibility and because if they get assisted they are likely to have another child soon thereafter. Because my father said that if a person has a child, s/he must work to support his/her child because if that is not the case, that person might soon have another child thereafter.) (Athandile, 16 years old)

For one participant, the decision to drop out of school was influenced by her realisation that the family finances were stretched even further by the birth of her baby:

...ngenhlanhla esikoleni abazange bangixoshe ngesikhathi ngikhulelwe, kodwa ngavele ngaphoqwa yiso isimo seymali ukuthi ngishiye phansi. Impilo yaba nzima ngenye indlela ke emva kokuthola umntwana.

(...fortunately at school they did not suspend me when I became pregnant, but I was forced by the financial circumstances to drop out myself. Life became too difficult to manage after I became a mother.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Another participant in the study stated that she depended on the Child Support Grant as well as her aunt for financial support in order to take care of the needs of her child.

...imali ye-grant yanyanga zonke ibincane kakhulu, ingenzi mahluko...u-anti Thenjiwe (**pseudonym**) ubesisiza kakhulu.

(...the money that we received from the (social) grant that we received every month, was too little and did make a difference. ...aunt Thenjiwe (pseudonym) also helped a lot.) (Wenzi, 19 years old)

Wenzi's assertions about the Child Support Grant money not being enough to take care of all the baby's needs do not align with the findings from Granlund and Hochfeld's, (2019) study which explored people's perceptions of the role of unconditional cash transfers in building, maintaining, and transforming social relations in a small village in rural South Africa. They found that the Child Support Grant reduced the recipients' unequal relations of dependence on other members in the family and community as this grant enables mothers to take care of their children's needs. These findings contradict public perception and findings from several studies (e.g., Matyu, 2005; Bullen & Kenway, 2000) which suggest that many people perceived the Child Support Grant as "an incentive to young women to fall pregnant, because they receive financial support when they bear children" (Nkani, 2012, p. 31).

b) Lack of Financial Support from Boyfriends

As discussed above, available literature cites lack of or inadequate financial resources as one of the key challenges faced by the teenage mothers, impacting negatively on their ability to buy food and clothing and to pay for day-care for their children (Barry, 2010; Singh & Hamid, 2015). This may be exacerbated by the father's inability or unwillingness to contribute money to the care of the child. In this regard, three participants in this study reported that in some instances, the financial support provided by the fathers of their children was inadequate and sometimes inconsistent. This lack of stable financial support from the fathers resulted in them asking their families for support.

...okunye okungphatha kabi ukuthi ubaba wengane yami akayondli ingane yakhe kahle. Indlela aykhipha ngayo imali yengane ave iyinkinga. Sengvele ngakhohlwa nje indaba yokujahana naye. Mina sengizinakele umndeni wami).

(...what also makes me sad is that the father of my child does not support his daughter regularly. His financial support is very erratic. I have just lost interest in chasing after him. I am focusing on my family.) (Wenzi, 19 years old)

Lulu reported that she has never received any financial support from the father of her child, but instead had to rely on family assistance and social grant (Child Support Grant) in order to take care of her child's needs.

... akakaze anginike ngisho nesenti elimnyama leli. Imina nje engizipatanisela ngemali esiythola emsebenzini kababa kanye nale yeqolo.

(...He has never given me even a black cent until today. I try to make ends meet by using a monthly allowance that we receive from my dad's former employer plus the money that I receive from the social grant.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Another participant, Londiwe, also reported irregular financial support from the father of her child. She was forced to go and live with him after being chased away from her relatives' home after they discovered her pregnancy. However, the father of her child, a married man, had to prioritise taking care of his family's needs over Londiwe and the baby.

...ayikho engangingayenza ngaphandle kokuyohlala naye. Uyena, futhi osenzela konke mina nomntanami noma abuye angabi nawo amandla. Ngangazi futhi nokuthi ushadile, ... Ngashiya kanjalo eskoleni njengoba kwase kfanele ngigade ingane yami.

(... I had no choice but to go stay with him [her boyfriend]. He is also the one who does everything for me and my child, even though he sometimes fails to fulfil his obligations. I was also aware of his marital status. ...I had to leave school as I had to prioritise taking care of my child.) (Londiwe, 18 years)

Even though the financial support that Londiwe received from the father of her child was irregular. However, it enabled her to take care of the needs of her child. Without this support, Londiwe would have been forced to fend for herself and the baby and to do this, she had to drop out of school and go and live with the man as his mistress as both she and the baby solely depended on him for financial support. Furthermore, Londiwe could not continue attending school as she was expected to look after her child even though she had moved to live with the father of her child.

The above extracts suggest that due to poverty and inadequate access to financial resources some young mothers have to rely on family members and the government social grant in order to take care of their children's needs. According Bronfenbrenner (1976, p. 519) at macrosystems level there are "general prototypes" that exist in a particular culture or subculture. These interconnected societal blueprints define the "cultural contexts such as the

socio-economic status, poverty and ethnicity within which each individual lives” (Matlala, 2011, p. 88).

The findings in this section suggest that there are financial factors related to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood that may force girls to drop out of school. Without the financial assistance either from their parents, family members or the men responsible for their pregnancies, some teenage mothers struggled to take care of the needs of their children. Some teenage mothers’ dreams of completing their schooling were curtailed as they had the responsibility of taking care of their children’s needs.

6.2.2.3 Lack of Childcare Support in the Family

According to Chauke (2013), schooling is not an easy undertaking for young mothers, and as such, teenage motherhood is a major reason for school dropout among girls. The availability of childcare or day-care services is one of the most important variables in the lives of young mothers. Grant and Hallman (2006) note that young women who mention pregnancy as their reason for dropping out of school may be equally influenced by their family’s financial situation as the potential caregiving arrangements that will be available after the child is born. They suggest that these factors may be critical in determining how schoolgirls react to pregnancy and whether they will resume their education after childbirth. Without this, young mothers’ wishes of completing their schooling fade away. Pregnant teenage girls and young mothers often drop out of school due to the lack of childcare support from the family and their inability to afford childcare support from outside sources or services.

The difficulty of taking care of the child while attempting to fulfil the requirements of schooling was identified as a reason for dropping out by several participants in this study. For example, Nomalungelo stated:

...uma wathi ngeke nje bangone ngoba mangase bangigadele lengane ngingavele ngiyolanda enye. ... Manje nje ngihleli ekhaya ngigade ingane yami ngoba akekho ozongigadela yona.

(...my mom said if they assist me with taking care of my child, I would go and get another child soon thereafter ... I am now focusing on taking care of my child.)

(Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Another participant also confirmed the importance of childcare assistance in order to enable her to continue with her schooling.

Ngifisa ngabe kungakhona umuntu ongang'gadela ingane so that nami ngizokwazi ukubuyela eskoleni, ... ukuze nam'ngelinye ilanga ngiphumele...kodwa okwamanje ngisabheke ingane yami ngoba vele akekho nomuntu ozongigadela yona

(I just wish I could have someone to look after my baby so that I can go back to school ... so that one day I will be able to succeed ...for now, I am still looking after my child as I do not have anyone to assist me with that.) (Zinhle, 19 years)

Lulu dropped out of school in order to take care of her child and her siblings. She was unable to write the end of year examinations due to giving birth by Caesarean section.

...kodwa ok'khulu kakhulu nje ukuthi ngangingenaye umuntu ozonakekela mina nengane yam ngaleso skhathi. ... Ngangingenamuntu owayezongigadela ingane ngesikhathi ngisesikoleni. Kwakunzima ukuzama ukubhalansisa isikole, ukunakekela iyngane zakithi kanye nengane yami encane.

(...moreover, I did not have anyone to take of me and my baby at the time. The little strength that I had was for taking care of myself and my baby. I had no one to look after my child when I was at school.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Similarly, Nokwanda terminated her schooling in order to take care of her child who was born with a disability and the fact that, because of this, the child needed extra care.

Kwakungelula ukukwenza konke, umsebenzi weskole ngapha, uk'nakekela iyngane zasekhaya ngapha ngiphinde nginakekele nomntanam'.

(It was difficult to try to balance things out, that is to take care of my school work, taking care of my siblings as well as taking care of my baby.) (Nokwanda, 17 years old)

Nokwanda continued to state that:

Ngayeka eskoleni kagrade 11, ngoba ngakhulelwa kwase kwadingeka ukuthi nginakekele ingane yami ngoba yazalwa inenkinga. Wazalwa ekhubazekile ngeyndlela eziningi ezahlukene. Akekho ke owayengakwazi ukumnakekela ngendlela okufanele anakekelwe ngayo. Udinga isneke esimangalisayo futhi udinga nothando olumangalisayo. Ukumfunza nje kukodwa kuthatha eside isikhathi lesi. Angisaphathi ke eyokwehla wenyuka naye umyisa kodokotela.

(I dropped out in grade 11, because I became pregnant and I had to look after my baby because he was born with some problems. He was born with multiple disabilities. No one was going to be able to take care the way she is supposed to be taken care of. He needs extra patience and extra ordinary love. Feeding him alone takes a very long time, let alone taking him from one doctor to another.) (Nokwanda, 17 years old)

Sibusisiwe's father denied her any childcare support as punishment for her pregnancy so that she could feel the responsibilities of giving birth out of wedlock. This was in line with what Oakley (1981) refers to as manipulation and the encouragement by parents and other family members of behaviour that is perceived as normal and acceptable for a child, and discouragement of the behaviour that is contrary and not considered a norm.

Ubaba wathi ufuna ngizwe kahle ukuthi ubufazi buhamba kanjani. Wathi futhi akafune muntu ozngitetemisa la ngoba babangangithumanga ukuyozala. Wathi akanaskhathi samavezandlebe (ie. derogatory term in isiZulu referring to a child born out of wedlock).

(My dad said he wants me to feel what parenthood feels like and he does not want anyone to feel pity for me because they had not sent me to have a child. He said he does not have time for children born out of wedlock.) (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

As Panday et al (2009, p. 23) conclude:

Being ready to take on the lifelong responsibility of rearing a child, and in many respects shaping the outcomes of the next generation, requires not only physiological and psychological maturity, but also family circumstances that can offer the support necessary to make a successful transition to parenthood.

Akella and Jordan (2011) concur, noting that family assistance minimises the disruptions in the lives of teenage mothers. In their study, they found that the support from the grandparents, especially grandmothers, plays a crucial role in assisting with childcare if parents are unavailable to assist due to reasons such as work commitments or the death of the parents. Grandparents can also provide shelter for young girls who seek refuge after being chased away

from home by their parents due to pregnancy. The authors conclude that family support is key to enabling pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to complete their schooling successfully.

Some participants in this study reflected on the importance of support received from family members such as grandparents in alleviating their burden of the new responsibility of motherhood. One participant stated:

...sometimes ugogo kaNqoba, umakaThemba, uyaye athi ingane ngiyilethe kuye,

(Sometimes Nqoba's [her baby] paternal grandmother asks me to bring him to her.)

(Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

Nomali reported:

Ugogo kanye nomawami bayikho konke kimina kanye nengane yami. Ugogo uyangisiza kakhulu ngengane. Uma igula, noma ikhala uvele athi angiyilethe kuye. Unendlela nje akwazi ukunakekela ngayo ingane.

(My granny and my mother are everything to me and my baby. Granny is very helpful with the baby. When the baby is sick or is crying, she tells me to bring the baby to her. She knows how to take care of the baby.) (Nomali, 14 years)

Similarly, Zathaba's grandmother provided the supported she needed when she had her baby:

Ngenhlanhala ngabeletha ngamaholide, kodwa noma kunjalo angikwazanga ukubuyela eskoleni ngoba kwakufanele nginakekele ingane yami. Ugogo wami okwakunguyena owayengangigadela ingane yami wayengaphilile. Kodwa wayekwazi ukungeluleka ngokwakumele ngikwenze noma ayengenawo amandla.

(Fortunately I had my baby during holidays, but I still could not go back to school because I had to take care of my baby. My granny who would have looked after my

baby was unwell. However, she was able to guide me as to how I was supposed to take care of my baby.) (Zathaba, 16 years old)

In all of the examples above, we note the importance of support that is offered to the teenage mothers by their grandmothers in particular. Such support can play a pivotal role in enabling young mothers to carry on with their schooling.

6.2.2.4 Stigma, Rejection and Lack of Support in the Family

Informed by the gender socialisation theory, this study was based on the notion that gender socialisation plays a major role in influencing how the peers, teachers at school, the family and the media at large views pregnant teenage girls and young mothering girls. This in turn might contribute in girls who are pregnant or mothering dropping out of school (Oakley, 1972; Šikić-Mićanović, 1997; Chartschlaa, 2004; UNICEF, 2007). For some teenage girls, becoming pregnant and a mother come with a multitude of reactions, most of which are associated with shame. As discussed in Chapter Five, for the participants in this study, words such as “*amahloni*” (shame or disgrace), and “*ukuthuka*” (shock) painted a clear picture of how these young girls regretted being pregnant and becoming parents as teenagers. For the majority, being ashamed and stigmatised meant that they could no longer stay in school. Stigma and rejection from family members, for example, led to the withholding of various forms of support, including financial support, help with taking care of the baby and others.

Similarly, in this study, one of the participants highlighted how she was stigmatised by her siblings due to her pregnancy and how this made her feel isolated and rejected and further contributed towards her dropping out of school.

Iyngane zasekhaya zavele zangijikela ke nje zona, Kwakungathi azisangazi nje. Yena nje uNtombi lo ongilamayo. Kwakungathi ngiyamnukela. Ngahlala kanjalo ke ekhaya **(a long pause... staring into space)**. Kwaphele kanjalo ke ngami nes Kole.

(My siblings just turned against me. It was like they did not know me. As for Ntombi, the one who comes after me. You would think I had foul smell because of the way she treated me (a long pause, staring into space). That's how I dropped out and stayed at home. That was the end of me and school.) (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

Another participant Nqobile, stated that her sibling disassociated herself from her after becoming pregnant.

...usisi wami omncane- eke yena akasayngeni eyami. Akasenandaba nami. Ngisho Ngizama nje ukumkhulumisa, uphendula mayethanda. Ngesinye is'khathi avele angbuke nje angaphenduli. ...Wayengang'lekeleli ngalutho **(pause)**. Ngisho ingane ingakhala kanjani, wayezbukela nje. Ngangingasakwazi nokwenza kahle konke okuqondene nomsebenzi wami wes Kole. Kwang'phoqa ukuthi ngiyeke kanjalo.

(...as for my younger sister, she no longer has time for me. She does not care about me at all. Even when I try to talk to her, she only responds when she wants to. Sometimes she just stares at me ... She did not help me with anything (pause). No matter how much the baby cried, she would just look away. I could not do my school work properly. I was forced to leave it [school] just like that.) (Nqobile, 15 years old)

In the case of Zinhle, her older siblings showed no support as they were already married and focussed on taking care of their families. Without their support, she could not manage going to school and taking care of the baby alone.

bow-three osisi bami abadala bayshadele futhi bazinakele imizi yabo. Bavele nje bathi ngizoz'bonela njengoba senginengane nje. Akekho oneskhathi sami, banake ezasemzini yabo. ...Ngase ngizokwenzenjani ngaphandle kokyeka iskole?

(All three of my older sisters are married and are focussing on their families. They just said I will have to fend for myself since I now have a baby. None of them has time for me. They are focussing on their families. ...What else was I supposed to do except drop out of school?) (Zinhle, 19 years old)

The above responses suggest that some girls felt stigmatised by their siblings, leading to the lack of support from them, and this was a factor the girls identified as influencing their drop out from school. Such stigmatisation is informed by the societal beliefs that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are deviant (Ngabaza, 2010). Similarly, McGraha-Garnett (2007) and Runhare (2010) note that besides the hostility from significant others in their lives, teenage girls also feel ashamed because they feel that they have disappointed their families and the communities. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory sheds light on the influence of family, suggesting it is at microsystem level where individuals have direct interactions with their immediate environment. It is at this level where daily activities, interactions, roles and relationships with the individual's family, friends, school and peer groups occur (Amod & Seabi, 2013).

6.2.3 School-Related Factors

South Africa is guided by legislative policy frameworks which advocate for the recognition of fundamental rights for all, which also includes the right to education. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is informed by the international treaties to which the country is a signatory, including Education for All of 1990 (UNESCO, 2000a), and more recently, the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs). The SDG goal 4 is of particular importance to my study, as it advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2016b). In line with this, at the national level, informed by the country's rights-based Constitution, the education policy framework aims to ensure equitable access to education for all learners, including pregnant and mothering girls (see Runhare, 2010; Prinsloo, 2005). This includes the South African Schools Act (No 84) of 1996 (SASA), which plays a crucial legal role in ensuring that all learners are protected from racism, sexism and any form of discrimination (Prinsloo, 2005). White paper 6: *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* which aims to promote inclusive education. It outlines "the government's strategy to transform the current education system to make it more efficient, more equitable and more just, recognising the rights of all learners to attend their local neighbourhood school and to receive the necessary support" so as to minimise obstacles to learning (Department of Education, 2001 p. 1).

In relation to the education of pregnant and mothering girls, the Department of Basic Education introduced the *National Policy Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools* (Department of Basic Education, 2007). Revised and gazetted in 2018, the aim of the guidelines is to eliminate the gender disparities in education. To achieve this, the guidelines stipulate that the school, family and the broader community within which a learner becomes pregnant are obligated to assure the continued education of the affected learners and to support them during and after the pregnancy (Department of Basic Education, 2018).

Despite these rights-based policies and frameworks which "have constitutional, legal and policy provisions that allow pregnant and former pregnant teenagers to continue with their

education” (Runhare, 2010, p. 47), pregnant and mothering girls still face multiple hostile policies and practices in schools.

6.2.3.1 Poor Interpretation and Implementation of the National Policy Framework

Several studies in South Africa have found evidence of some school principals deviating from the progressive policies regarding the pregnant girls’ and young mothers’ rights to education, instead forcing them out of school and terminating their education (Chauke, 2013; Bhana et al, 2010; Mpanza & Nzima, 2010; Runhare, 2010; Chigona, 2007. Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013) suggest that there are diverse ways in which teachers and principals interpret the national policy framework regarding pregnancy and motherhood among girls. This is because they still staunchly believe that “schools are expected to be spaces of sexual innocence and to them pregnant schoolgirls incite anger and hostility and are framed as sexually immoral and censured” (Oni, Prinsloo, Notje & Joubert, 2005, p. 54).

Similarly, the findings from this study suggest that some principals still contravene and disregard the country’s policy framework, and instead, implement school policies and practices that force pregnant girls and young mothers to drop out of school. Nomali, for example, stated the following:

... Uthishomkhulu wathi akasidingi eskoleni sakhe uma sikhulelwe. Sathi siqala sibonakala isisu, wavele wabiza ugogo wathi akangikhiphe. Ayikho into ugogo ayengayenza ngoba umthetho weskole. Vele wayeseke wabaxosha nabanye ngaphambi kwami.

(... The principal said he does not need us at his school if we are pregnant. As soon as my tummy started to show, he called my grandmother and told her to remove me

from school. There was nothing that granny could do because that was one of the school rules. He had already suspended other girls before me.) (Nomali, 14 years old)

In the case of another participant, Nqobile, both she and the boy who was responsible for her pregnancy were suspended by the principal who claimed that they had tarnished the image of the school and therefore no longer deserved to be part of the school community. Breaking with practice in other schools, which tend to punish the pregnant girl but not the boy/man responsible for the pregnancy, Nqobile's school expelled both of them.

Wavuma ukuthi uyena owangikhulelisa, emva kwalokho kwabe sekuthathwa isinqumo sokuthi sixoshwe ngokukhulu ukushesha. Lesi nqumo sathathwa abaphathi besikole emva kokubonisana nabazali bethu.

(He did confirm that he was responsible for the pregnancy and a decision to expel both of us with immediate effect was taken by the school management team after consulting both our parents.) (Nqobile, 15 years old).

Another participant reported that:

Esikoleni babengeke besangivumela ukuthi ngiqhubeke Abahlangani nje nendaba yokunesa ingane ekhulelwe... umthetho wesikole nje owaziwa ima ubani.

(At school they would not allow me to carry on with my studies. They just do not have time to nurse pregnant learners. It is a well-known rule.) (Nomalungelo, 18 years old)

According to Nomalungelo, the principal was known for humiliating learners in front of the school. Because of this, she knew that he would not have allowed her to write her examinations if he discovered her pregnancy. As was found in previous studies (van Wyk, 2006;

Matshotyana, 2010), she dropped out of school because of past experiences of pregnant and parenting learners in her school. She explained:

Akanqeni nje ukuthi mangabe wenze into ewrong ukuthi akubhadlaze kwi assembly. A vele athi woza phambili ubukwe iskole sonke bese esho yonkinto le ngawe. Akenqeni nje ukuthi asho wonke amahlazo akho phambi kwezinye iyingane **(pause)** futhi akanandaba noma uyakhala yena uqhubeka nokukuhlambalaza nje... Into ebheda kakhulu nje ukuthi uthishomkhulu wayengeke aze angivumele nokuthi ngibhale i-exam yodwa le. ...Uxoshana manje nje... Wathi lamanyala enziwa iyingane nje manje njengakho lokhu kukhulelwa ingoba sezaba namalungelo ngisho okwenza noma yini.

(He does not hesitate to expose you in front of the whole school in assembly if you have done something wrong. He would just call you to the front to be seen by the whole school and say everything about you. He does not mind exposing all of your wrong doings in front of the other children (pause), neither does he care whether you cry or not, he carries on and embarrasses you ... The worst part is that the principal would not have even allowed me to write my exams ... He is quick to expel people ... He said all the disgusting things including pregnancy that are now happening was because children have rights to do as they please) (Nomalungelo, 18 years, old)

The above example suggests that the principal considered pregnancy to be “*amanyala*” (disgusting) for which he blamed the “rights” that children had, suggesting that he was aware of the children’s rights to education which also includes that of pregnant and mothering girls.

Nomali also suggested that her school did not accommodate pregnant girls.

...Eskoleni sami vele kunomthetho wokuthi awufundi khona uma ukhulelwe ngoba bathi lokho kwehlisa igama lesikole. ... Vele wayeseke wabaxosha nabanye ngaphambi kwami.

(...At my school there is a rule at school which states that you are not supposed to attend our school while pregnant as that tarnishes the image of the school ... He [the principal] had already suspended other girls before me.) (Nomali, 14 years old)

The above examples clearly show how some school policies and practices are in contradiction of the National Policy framework and that, in some instances, the principals' attitudes towards pregnant girls overshadowed the children's right to education as guaranteed in legislation and policy. These findings indeed confirm that despite the availability of policies that are meant to secure students' right to education, at the school level, some principals still ignore these and instead force pregnant and mothering girls to drop out of school.

6.2.3.2 Teachers' Negative Attitudes Towards Pregnant and Mothering Teenagers

Despite the high number of learners that are pregnant in secondary schools in South Africa, teachers have varied perceptions about this phenomenon. For example, some teachers are supportive and offer assistance to pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in schools (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013), while others tend to be intolerant and punitive towards them. Among the latter group are teachers who consider the teenage mother's situation as a private matter that does not concern them, and avoid giving them assistance if they lag behind while attending to their babies (Olivier & Bloem, 2000). For example, in the study conducted by Chigona (2007), more than half of the teenage mothers felt that some teachers did not have empathy for their situation. Notably, a Grade 9 learner lamented the fact that, "...because my baby is crying all the time ... I don't have time to do my homework, teachers are nagging, I come to school sleepy, ... because they don't

know your situation they really attack you Sometimes you feel like you have got all the world on your shoulders ... so you break from school for a week or two (Chigona, 2007, p. 94).

In this study, the teenage mothers stated that their teachers thought they did not attend classes regularly and did not finish homework on time due to laziness, and that the teachers expected them to complete their homework and behave just like their fellow learners who did not have mothering responsibilities. In addition, the teachers reportedly made derogatory comments or looked at pregnant girls and young mothers in a way that made them feel uncomfortable. The following extract illustrates:

Omunye uthisha wangibuza phambi kwekilasi ukuthi uma ngikhulelwe ngineminyaka ewu 16, kusho ukuthi ukulala nabafana ngakuqala ngimncane kakhulu kunalokhu engiyikho (**pause**) ...Ngase ngibikelwa mangabe kufanele ngiye eskoleni.

(One teacher asked me in front of the class that if I was pregnant at age 16, it meant I started being sexually active at an even younger age (pause) ... I dreaded going to school.) (Zathaba, 16 years old)

The same feelings were shared by Phelisa who stated that her teacher was not empathetic towards her and she had a perception that she would be treated differently due to her pregnancy. For her, the humiliation she suffered was a contributory factor in her decision to drop out of school.

UMiss Dlomo wangimemeza, wangitshela ukuthi akuyona iprivate school, bonke abafundi benza imisebenzi efanayo. Ngabona ukuthi kungcono ngizenzele ifavour, ngenzele nothisha ifavour ngokuthi ngingabe ngisaba ingxenye yeskole.

(Miss Dlomo (pseudonym) shouted at me telling me that this was not a private school and all learners were expected to do the same chores. It was then that I decided to just do both myself and the teacher a favour by not becoming part of the school anymore.) (Phelisa, 18 years old)

For Lulu, the teachers were initially sympathetic when they first learnt about her pregnancy:

Othisha baqala bezwelana nami, kodwa ngokuhamba kwesikhathi base bevele basho sakubhuqa uma bengibona ngikhona esikoleni.

(At first the teachers would sympathise with me, but as time went on they would just be sarcastic when they saw me at school.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Another participant, Sibusisiwe, shared the same sentiments about the negative attitudes from teachers towards pregnant girls and young mothers.

...Eskoleni akphindanga kwaba nandi njengakqala ngenxa yendlela othisha abase bengiphatha ngayo. ...Ngase ngizohlalelani? Base bengithathisa okukadoti nje, intengelutho.

(...I never enjoyed being at school like I used to because of the way they [the teachers] treated me. ... Why would I even want to carry on [with schooling]? They treated me like dirt, like a nobody.) (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old).

The above examples are indicative of the amount of harm that humiliation from teachers can cause in pregnant girls. The levels of humiliation ranging from sarcasm to lack of sympathy as well as being treated badly, all contributed towards a negative social climate at school, which in turn led to some of the pregnant girls' decisions to drop out of school. This has negative

implications for gender equality in education, as the girls' male counterparts (the fathers of babies) are not subjected to any forms of embarrassment and humiliation from teachers.

Over and above feeling rejected, being humiliated and being treated differently by teachers, some young mothers in this study reported being required to participate in activities which they regarded as dangerous for their health and that of their babies. The following extracts from our interviews illustrate:

Babebukisa ngami ukuze nabanye abafundi babone ukuthi labothisha banezinhliziyo ezimbi kanjani. Ngelinye ilanga nganginama cramps ngacela ukuba ngenziswe omunye umsebenzi ngaphandle kokucosha amaphepha efield.

(I usually felt like some teachers were targeting me just to show how mean they can be. One day I suffered from terrible cramps and I asked to be excused from picking up litter on the field. I asked if I could be given another chore.) (Phelisa, 18 years old)

Linked to the legacy of Apartheid and the unequal resourcing of schools, some schools and teachers are sometimes empathetic towards pregnant and mothering girls in schools. For instance, in some historically white schools in South Africa, counselling and support for young mothers and mothers-to-be is offered (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Mcambi, 2011; Mpanza & Nzima, 2010). In a 2014 study by Matlala, Nolte and Temane, a Life Orientation teacher explained that her role is to look after any pregnant girl, and that the teacher "must make sure that there are precautions in place that if she [engages in] this sporting activity, this might be [a] danger for her. Now I need to check if there are any other simpler activities that cannot harm her or the baby in anyway" (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2012, p. 23).

Likewise, some of the participants in this study did receive support from their teachers. The following extracts illustrate:

...Nabangani bami bayangtshela ukuthi abany'othisha abebengfundisa bakhathazekile ngam' nokuthi kuqhubekani ngempilo yam. Lokho nje kukodwa kungenza ngijabule ukuthi kanti kukhona abantu abacabanga ngami.

(...even my friends at school always say that some of the teachers that taught me are concerned about what is going on in my life. That on its own makes me happy to know that there are people that are concerned about my well-being.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

In the case of another participant in the study, Wenzu, even though she was offered support in the form of advice by her teachers after discovering her pregnancy, it did not yield any positive results due to the state of confusion that she was in due to her pregnancy. Phelisa stated that,

Ubuhlungu nokubukelwa phansi engadlula kukho kulesa skole kwenza kwaba lula ukuthi ngithathe isinqumo sokushiya lesiya skole.

(The pain and humiliation I experienced in that school made it easy for me to decide to drop out of that particular school.) (Phelisa, 18 years old)

As the findings from literature and this current study show, the treatment of pregnant girls in schools is often a reflection of the societal beliefs towards teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, including that these are a deviation from what is morally correct, particularly for girls (James, van Rooyen & Strümpher, 2011) and that schools are not meant for pregnant learners (Mpanza & Nzima, 2010). This “universal lack of enthusiasm and a negative attitude

among teachers in accommodating pregnant learners in school” (Runhare, 2010, p. 148) often leads to pregnant girls dropping out of school.

6.2.3.3 Bullying by Peers

As noted in Bronfenbrenner (1979), the maintenance of cordial interactions and relationships between the individual and the social institutions such as the school, teachers, parents as well as peers is vital. Friends and peers have vital roles in the lives of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers as their support can go a long way to ensuring that they continue with their schooling. Akella and Jordan (2011) found that friends were very supportive to teenage mothers in the school. However, in this study, the participants paint a different picture, with their friends and peers bullying them upon discovering their pregnancy. Sibusisiwe for example, reported:

...kusukela lapho ke impilo yami ayphindanga yafana ngoba ngajikelwa ngisho nangabangani bami engangibethemba futhi ngibathanda. **(pause)** Babengasazihlanganisi nami, sebehambela kude. Ngangihlala sengizithola ngingedwa nje ngisho nangama breaks eskoleni...Kwavele kwanqwabelana izinto eziningi kanyekanye (voice cracking and teary eyes).

(From that point onwards my life was not the same, as my friends that I loved and trusted so much turned their backs on me (pause). They did not want to be associated with me and they became very aloof towards me. I would sit all by myself even during breaks at school. Things just became too much for me (voice cracking and teary eyes).) (Sibusisiwe, 18 years old)

Another participant was already finding school difficult after video footage of a sexual encounter with her boyfriend went viral on social media platforms. Over and above the humiliation caused by the circulation of the video footage, upon discovering that she was pregnant, she took a decision to drop out of school to avoid further shame as her peers had already disassociated themselves from her.

Umuntu owashutha levideo wayevele ehlose ukusi- destroya. Kusukela ngaleso skhathi ke impilo yami ayiphindanda yafana. Lowo muntu wangibulala ngiphila Ubuso bami babunanyathiselwe yonkindawo eskoleni. Ngangingeke ngisakwazi ukubekezela. Kusukela ngalesoskhathi ngangingasakwazi ngisho ukunakisisa umsebenzi wam weskole. Kwathi uma ngithola ukuthi ngikhulelwe, ngavele ngasangana kakhulu. Ngangingasafuni ukuba kulesiya skole (pause). Vele ngase ngiyinhlwa nje eskoleni.

(Whoever shot that video clip and circulated it was out to destroy us. From that moment onwards, my life was destroyed. My face was all over the school walls. I just could not take it anymore. From that moment onwards I just could not focus on my school work. So when I found out that I was pregnant, I became even more distraught. I just could not bear being at that school (pause). Learners had already disassociated themselves from me.) (Mafutha, 18 years old)

Wenzi also experienced some form of discrimination from her peers:

Kwakuba khona labo ke ababesuke bezo- eda icomment lapha nalapha nje. Impilo yam eskoleni ayphazamisekanga kangako... ok'khulu kakhulu nje ukuthi ngangingenaye umuntu ozonakekela mina nengane yam ngaleso skhathi.

(There were those who would pass odd comments here and there. My school life was not affected that much ... I did not have anyone to take care of me and my baby at the time.) (Wenzi, 19 years old)

The above examples reflect the negative effect that lack of support from peers had on pregnant teenage girls at school. This contributed towards the school environment becoming unbearable for them. Furthermore, the lack of empathy from their peers made their new roles as mothers more burdensome, including emotionally.

6.2.3.4 Decline in Academic Performance

Manacorda (2012) and Shahidul, Karim and Zehadul (2015) argue that girls generally are at a greater risk of absenteeism, repetition and dropout, and have lower educational achievement than boys. Furthermore, teenage pregnancy contributes towards girls' low achievement scores (Mpanza & Nzima, 2010). Teachers believe that frequent absence of pregnant girls from school leads to under-achievement which in turn lowers the school's pass rate (Masuku, 1998).

The participants in this study also underscored the negative effects of teenage pregnancy and motherhood on their academic performance and identified this as one of the reasons they dropped out. To illustrate, Lulu reflected on how her poor academic performance influenced her decisions about schooling, stating that,

...umsebenzi wami wesikole wavele washona phansi. Umsebenzi wami wesikole wavele washona phansi. Othisha baqala bezwelana nami, kodwa ngokuhamba kwesikhathi base bevele basho sakubhuqa uma bengibona ngikhona esikoleni. Ngazama ukubekezela kodwa ngaphoqeleka ukuba ngidlale indima yokuba umama enganeni yami nasezinganeni zakithi.

(My performance at school just declined. My performance at school just declined. ... At first the teachers would sympathise with me, but as time went on they would just be sarcastic when they saw me at school. At first I tried to

persevere, but I was forced to take over the role of being a mother to my child and to my siblings.) (Lulu, 19 years old)

Similarly, Nomalungelo reported on her struggle to balance schooling demands and childcare, noting,

“Ngazama ukuqhubeka nomsebenzi wami weskole, kodwa ngacina ngihlukile” Ngavele ngazibona sengiyisdomu nje. Ngasengazi ukuthi mangabe kade sibhale itest ukuthi vele yimina ozothola amamarks aphantsi kunawo wonke umuntu ek’lasini. Wonke umuntu nje wayesekwazi lokho. Ubani-ke owayengabekezelela ukuba inhlekisa?

(I tried to carry on with my school work, but I just couldn’t. I just became dumb. I knew that whenever we wrote a test that I will get the lowest mark in class. Everybody knew that. Who then would have carried on [schooling] when they have become a laughing stock?) (Nomalungelo, 19 years old)

In the case of one of the participants, Phelisa, even though the reason for dropping out was not directly linked to the academic performance, being expected to participate in Physical Education led to her decision to drop out.

Uyabona nje kuma lessons e-PE (Physical Education) ulindele ukuthiwone umfundi ayenze i-PE. Umuntu okhulelwe uwenza kanjani nje ama push up nama sit up? Ngangibuye ngibone ngathi othisha vele benza ngamabomu.

(For instance if we have PE lessons, the PE teacher expects every learner in her class to participate. How do they expect a pregnant person to do push ups and sit ups?)

(Phelisa, 18 years old)

Phelisa continued:

Babebukisa ngami ukuze nabanye abafundi babone ukuthi labothisha banezinhliziyo ezimbi kanjani. Ngangingafuni ukuphathiswa okuka queen, kodwa ngangilindele ukuthi ngiphathwe ngenhlonipho.

(They just wanted to humiliate me so that other learners could see how mean they could be. I did not expect to be treated like a queen, but I at least expected to be treated with respect.) (Phelisa, 18 years old)

From the above examples, it is clear that teenage pregnancy contributed to the decline in the academic performance of the participants. Both Lulu and Nomalungelo highlighted that juggling motherhood demands and schooling responsibilities affected them negatively as it caused a decline in her academic performance. The latter response also from Nomalungelo reveals that despite her trying to focus on her school work, she could not manage to give full attention to both. In this study, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework was used to understand how teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood. The school as well as the family form part of the microsystems which are vital in the development of any individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979). Therefore, this thesis argues that if there is no harmony in any of these systems, pregnant teenage girls and young mothers are unlikely to thrive in these environments which in turn might lead to school dropout.

In the context of South Africa, on one hand, there are available policies (e.g., the South Africa's Schools Act (1996) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2007), which legislate that pregnant school girls have a right to education and cannot be expelled from school because of their pregnancy (Runhare, 2010; DoE, 2007). On the other hand, the findings in this study suggest that the participants did not receive the full academic as well as emotional support from the teachers during and after pregnancy. This caused a decline in their academic performance.

6.3 Discussion

This study examined the experiences of a sample of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who had dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave. This chapter has presented findings that address the second critical question in the study: What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school? Informed by gender socialisation theory (Oakley, 1972), this whole study was premised on the notion that gender socialisation plays a major role in influencing how the peers, teachers, family members and the media at large view pregnant and mothering teenage girls, and these views might contribute to those girls dropping out of school (Yardley, 2008; Kelly et al, 2007). Furthermore, this study used Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory as another theoretical lens. The analysis in this chapter has produced four findings from the data. These indicate that firstly, teenage pregnancy can affect the health of pregnant young girls to the point of forcing them to drop out of school. Secondly, at the mesosystem level, teenage pregnancy can cause such a strain in family relations that the family shows their anger and disappointment for their image being tarnished by forcing the teens to relocate. Thirdly, also at mesosystem level, teenage pregnancy can cause financial strains in the family as it acquires the added

responsibility of caring for the baby's needs. Fourthly, and again at the mesosystem level, negative social factors at school include the girls being bullied by their peers. Linked to the above, at macrosystem level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979), the findings further indicate that pregnant girls face hostilities from the teachers who contravene and disregard the country's policy framework which mandates that all children, regardless of status or circumstances have a right to education due. This is in opposition to gender and cultural values in schools and society, and other factors that force ultimately force pregnant girls and young mothers to drop out of school. Therefore, the complex nature of the whole ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979) which includes the pregnant and mothering girls, their families, peers as well as the social attitudes become the determining factors of whether they drop out of school or not.

6.4 Synthesis

Located within the social constructivist paradigm, this qualitative study examined the ways in which pregnancy and motherhood influenced a group of 16 purposively-selected teenage girls living in a South African township to drop out from school. This chapter addressed the research question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?* To understand the factors that influenced these girls, data analysis is informed by the gender socialisation theory (Ekin, 1968) and Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory. Findings from study show that there are a number of factors that force pregnant and mothering teenage girls to leave school. These include: 1) Factors related to them as individuals, including their inability to cope with motherhood and school work; 2) Family-related factors (forced relocation as punishment, family poverty, lack of childcare support in the family, and stigma, rejection and lack of family support); and 3) School-related factors (poor interpretation and implementation of national policy framework, teachers' negative

attitudes towards pregnant and mothering teenagers, bullying by peers and decline in academic performance).

The next chapter discusses the findings and presents my reflections from as well as the implications of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWNSHIP TEENAGE GIRLS' EXPERIENCES OF PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD AS DRIVERS OF SCHOOL DROPOUT: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, my interest in this study emerged from my personal and professional observations as a teacher. I have worked as a teacher for more than 20 years, more than 15 of which have been at a single sex high school for girls. I have also spent most of my life living in a township. In both these environments, I have witnessed girls becoming pregnant and subsequently becoming teenage mothers. In the township of Umlazi where I grew up, it was my observation are that not all girls who became pregnant returned to school after childbirth. This was confirmed in the school where I teach: it is true that not all girls who become pregnant return to school after childbirth. While some disappear during the latter part of their pregnancy and come back months later, others drop out completely. The aim of this study was to examine the reasons for these different outcomes, and in particular, the factors that push pregnant and mothering girls to drop out of school in this context.

Studies that focus on teenage pregnancy as a worldwide phenomenon are abundant. However, studies that focus specifically on the factors that lead pregnant and mothering teenagers to drop out of school in South African townships are limited. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influenced the decisions of pregnant or mothering girls to withdraw from school or their families' decisions to pull them out of school. The study

addressed two critical questions. Chapter Five presents findings responding to the first sub-question: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* Chapter Six presents findings from this study in relation to the second sub-question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?* This chapter reviews the study, reflects on the research process and critically reflects on the findings, presents implications drawn from the findings and concludes the thesis.

7.2 Review of the Thesis

The study reported in this thesis addressed the question: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage mothers' access to and success in school?* Chapter One introduced the study and outlined the background and rationale for it. In the chapter, I argued that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood continue to be of great concern not only in South Africa and the Sub-Saharan region, but around the world. This is largely because of the detrimental effects it has on girls' lives and their schooling, often leading them to drop out from school (Acharya et al, 2010; Yates, 2011; South Africa Demographic and Health Survey, 2016; The Population Reference Bureau, 2017). The chapter discussed the national and the international policy frameworks that inform how schools and education systems should address teenage pregnancy and motherhood. These include national frameworks such as Education for All (EFA) of 1990, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015, and local ones such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the South African Schools Act (No 84) of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996). Chapter One further highlighted that on one hand, South Africa has one of the lowest teenage pregnancy rates on the African continent, while on the other hand, pregnant and mothering young girls are inundated with multiple challenges, including balancing motherhood and schooling, and thus forcing them to drop out of school. These challenges tend

to be largely influenced by unequal gender relations between girls and boys and men and women and the gendered identity ascribed to them (Moletsane, 2014; Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012; Molapo, 2011).

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature on teenage pregnancy and motherhood and the factors that influence pregnant and mothering girls' dropout from school. The literature identifies teenage pregnancy as a global phenomenon, with African countries constituting the highest proportions of teenage pregnancies in the world (Odejimi & Billingham-Young, 2016; Briwe, Masingila, Huang et al, 2011; Marteleto, Lam & Ranchod, 2008). Notably, the review highlights the fact that despite the availability of progressive policies which seek to ensure the right to education for all learners including those who are pregnant or mothering, many girls face challenges due to poor or uneven implementation of these policies, thus putting them at risk of dropping out of school (HEART, 2015; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Barry, 2010; Bhana et al, 2010; Runhare, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Department of Education, 2007). The findings from various studies identify a number of factors that influence the schooling experiences of pregnant and mothering teenagers, and whether or not they complete their schooling. These include intersecting factors such as gender, race and social class (Hanson et al, 2014; WHO, 2011a), inability to cope with the stigma, bullying and rejection from family, friends and teachers (Chambers & Erasquin, 2015; Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013), religion, culture, the media (Leung et al, 2019; Humberstone, 2018; Frostad, Pijl, & Mjaavatn 2015; Ngabaza, 2010) and the geographic location of schools and healthcare facilities (Kachur et al, 2013; Presler-Marshall & Jones, 2012; Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009).

Informed largely by the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, Chapter Three presented the theoretical framework that informs data analysis in this thesis. First, the study adopts Oakely's (1972) gender socialisation theory which argues that our gender identities are formed through the ways in which we are socialised by social agencies such as the family, peer groups, school and media. According to this theory, any individual who does not conform to and departs from socially-accepted gender scripts is perceived as deviant. Second, Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory was the second theory used to analyse the various systems of influence that contribute to pregnant teenage girls and young mothers dropping out of school. Bronfenbrenner proposes that human development is influenced by the individual's interaction with the wider environment, including family, peers, the school, neighbourhood, society, religious affiliations, as well as economic, political and education systems. These two theories were used as a framework through which to analyse the participants' experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, and the factors that drove them to drop out of school.

In Chapter Four, I presented the research design and methodology used in this study. Informed by the social constructivist paradigm, the study adopted a qualitative approach to research, using data generation methods such as in-depth individual interviews, field notes and a research journal. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The chapter elaborated on the ethical considerations, reflected on the rigour and trustworthiness of the study and outlined the biographies of all the participants in the study.

Chapter Five presented findings from the first sub-question: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?* The findings emerging from this study, from the perspectives of the participants, show that, first, most of the pregnancies were

unplanned and/or unwanted. As such, they brought feelings of shame, regret and remorse to the participants as they felt that they had brought shame to their parents and families. Second, despite the country's laws prohibiting their exclusion, the girls were either suspended from school or their parents or guardians removed them from school either as punishment or to look after their children. Third, the findings suggest that these young mothers felt overwhelmed by the competing demands of motherhood and schooling, and were therefore forced to withdraw from school in order to ensure that their children were taken care of. However, some of the participants saw their situation as a learning opportunity and resolved to one day return to school to complete their studies.

Chapter Six presented findings addressing the second sub-question: *What factors influence pregnant and mothering teenage girls to drop out of school?* Four key findings emerged from the data. First, the findings suggest that family circumstances contributed to the girls' dropout from school. For example, social class or the economic status of the family, lack of childcare support as well as forced relocation were among the key factors that contributed towards the girls dropping out of school. In addition, shame, stigma and rejection by family members contributed to the withdrawal of support and to the girls' ultimate decision to leave or to their parents/guardians withdrawing them from school. This reported shame was made worse when the babies' fathers denied paternity of the children. Second, the participants' responses suggested that there was poor interpretation and implementation of national policies as well as inappropriate and inadequate school policies which further contributed to their decision to drop out of school. Third, while some participants reported that some teachers were empathetic towards them and offered support, others suggested that some of their teachers had negative attitudes towards pregnant girls and young mothers. Fourth, the participants reported that they

experienced discrimination and bullying from peers, struggled to cope with the mothering responsibilities, and were unable to cope with schooling due to pregnancy-related illnesses.

7.3 Reflecting on the Research Process

The study reported in this thesis was premised on the notion that there are various factors both within the schooling environment and in the greater society that contribute towards pregnant and mothering teenage girls terminating their schooling. Thus, in effect, I wanted to examine the experiences of pregnant or mothering girls who dropped out of school to understand the factors that influenced their decisions to leave. This was based on my belief that understanding how pregnant and mothering young girls navigate their schooling and the factors that push them to drop out are key to developing appropriate interventions for retaining and supporting them to succeed in their education.

The study was located within a social constructivist paradigm, which suggests that for individuals to understand their own world, they form meanings through their experiences and by interacting with others (Burr, 1995; 2003; Creswell, 2013). Informed by this paradigmatic view, I used a qualitative research design, and in particular used in-depth individual interviews to generate data to respond to the two critical questions in this study. The use of in-depth individual interviews yielded some positive outcomes. First, the use of in-depth individual interviews allowed me to probe and ask follow-up questions where necessary (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). Due to the open ended nature of these interviews, the participants were able to respond to the questions freely which in turn enabled me to get a comprehensive understanding of their experiences of teenage pregnancy and early motherhood and their schooling.

Second, these in-depth individual interviews were conducted in isiZulu, the participants' home language. This enabled the participants to express themselves freely, thus allowing me to engage them deeply in understanding their experiences and the factors that contributed towards their decisions to leave school. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English. Due to the complex linguistic and cultural nuances embedded in the isiZulu language, some meaning may have been lost in the translation process. To try and guard against this, as a first language speaker of isiZulu, I read through the translated data several times in order to pick up any gaps or loss of meaning in translation. However, in hindsight, since English is not my first language, it would have been ideal to incorporate the services of a language practitioner (e.g., translation practitioner) to verify my data transcripts. This would have ensured that my data transcription and translation were as accurate as possible. Nonetheless, listening to the audio-recordings and reading and re-reading the transcripts helped me to familiarise myself with the data, and to check where my translation was a bit inaccurate. In my writing, I have attempted to represent the participants' perspectives by providing direct quotes in isiZulu and translated into English to allow the reader to develop their own understanding of the experiences of this group of girls and young women.

Third, to supplement the interviews, I used field notes to detail the sequence of events as well as to document how the participants interacted and communicated throughout the interview process. The use of field notes enabled me to keep an on-going record of what was happening during the research process. Furthermore, they aided me to capture and information directly from the participants by documenting what I heard, saw and experienced during the research process especially during individual interviews with the participants (Deggs & Hernandez,

2018). This in turn assisted me to generate insightful data as I had a comprehensive understanding of the research setting and phenomenon (Tessier, 2012).

Fourth, throughout the research process, I kept a reflective journal in which I recorded my observations, experiences and my reactions to what I was seeing and hearing while interacting with the participants (Hebert & Beardsley, 2002). This enabled me to reflect on and evaluate my own thinking as a researcher in order to avoid biases that might infiltrate my analysis. Through this process, I was able immediately to identify instances where follow-up questions to particular participants needed to be posed. Therefore, the use of the reflective journal in this study “enhance[d] ethical and methodological rigour” (Smith, 1999, p. 360).

As a qualitative researcher, I need to acknowledge a number of concerns about the methodological approach I employed. Firstly, I relied heavily on in-depth individual interviews as the method of generating data in this study. In retrospect, the study would have benefitted from other data collection methods such as focus group interviews, personal biographies and others in order to enhance the richness of the data. However, my decision to use one-on-one in-depth interviews was mainly informed by the limited number of times I could schedule meetings with the participants due to their childcare responsibilities and priorities. Nonetheless, locating the data I generated within the broader scholarship on this issue helped to enhance the findings and the interpretations I could make from them.

Secondly, the duration of each individual interview was between 45 minutes and an hour. While this may seem short in a qualitative methodology, it became challenging for many of

my participants. For example, the latter parts of the interviews were in some instances rushed in order to avoid going over the available time. Due to time constraints, this somewhat compromised my ability to probe some of the participants' responses as deeply as I would have wanted to. This in turn affected the overall quality of the data generated for analysis. In retrospect, I should have negotiated with the participants for the interviews to be longer and/or to have more than one interview session with each participant so as to avoid rushing over the questions and responses. However, I was able to send follow-up questions to, and get responses from some of the participants to fill the gaps I identified in my initial analysis of the transcripts.

Thirdly, not including interviews with teachers and principals in some of the high schools in Umlazi township as well as with the participants' parents/guardians was another limitation in this study. This would have enabled me to understand their perspectives on teenage pregnancy and motherhood and the reasons which contributed to them dropping out of school (in the case of teachers and principals) and for removing them (in the case of parents/guardians).

Fourthly, in this study I worked with only 16 participants from one township who had dropped out of school. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all pregnant and mothering young girls who have dropped out of school in South Africa. However, it was not the intention of this qualitative study to generalise the findings and the analysis. The purpose was to get a snapshot of a group of girls in a particular socio-economic context as they navigated being young mothers and the factors that forced them to drop out of schools. These findings provide lessons for schools and policy-makers about how girls experience being pregnant in school and what might ultimately force them to drop out of school. These lessons could potentially inform

sustainable solutions aimed at keeping pregnant and mothering girls in school, and for supporting them as they balance the responsibilities of being both learners and mothers.

7.4 Discussion

To understand pregnant and mothering girls' experiences and decisions to leave school, I employed the gender lens and an ecological systems lens. These theories were able to assist my analysis as they offered ideas about how we are moulded, as people. In terms of gender socialisation, young boys and girls are taught their roles by institutions such as families, schools and social cultural systems. According to the ecological systems theory, perceptions of early pregnancy and childbirth are formed by layers of systems that surround individuals, beginning with the family, and ending with religious and economic systems. In the section below, I elaborate on the findings in response to the first research question: *How do teenage girls in a township-setting experience pregnancy and motherhood?*

7.4.1 Teenage Girls' Experiences of Pregnancy and Early Motherhood

In Chapter Five, I reported findings to the first research question about how young girls from a township experience pregnancy and motherhood. The findings in this study suggest that girls' experiences of pregnancy and motherhood are largely informed by and wrapped up in gendered norms (Willan, 2013). Societal perceptions of early pregnancy are that it is a total contravention of what good womanhood is or represents, and that pregnancy outside of wedlock is a social deviance (Leung et al, 2019; Mgbokwere, Esienumoh & Uyana, 2015).

7.4.1.1 Teenage Pregnancy is Shameful

My findings show that the pregnancies were unplanned and in some instances unwanted, hence the participants experienced the pregnancies as shameful, and were filled with regret and remorse (see also Wado, Sully & Mumah, 2019; Singh & Hamid, 2015; Moultrie & McGrath, 2007). Informed by their gender socialisation, these girls felt that they had acted in ways that brought shame not only to themselves as girls, but to their parents, guardians and others who expected them to behave in a particular way, and that way included not having children out of wedlock.

Being pregnant brought fear and anxiety to the young girls in the study. These feelings emanated from their observations of the harsh manner in which pregnant and mothering girls were treated by principals, teachers and their peers at school. Moreover, for some participants, these anxieties emanated from the realisation that their pregnancy meant the end of their schooling for them as some school policies mandated the expulsion of pregnant girls. Such girls were seen as bad examples to their peers and for the schools, and that their presence would tarnish the image of the school. These school level policies and practices disregarded the national policy framework which seeks to ensure that no child, including pregnant girls, is excluded from school. Not surprisingly, boys who fathered children were allowed to continue with their schooling. The findings in this study (like others) suggest that the men who fathered the participants' children were largely absent in raising them or even providing for them. It is the girls who bore the brunt of the negative consequences of early motherhood. For the fathers, except in a few cases, their lives were hardly altered by the arrival of their babies. Informed by their gender socialisation, the girls lamented this lack of support, but accepted their roles as mothers and the negative consequences they suffered as a result of that.

7.4.1.2 Pregnant Girls Deserve Punishment

The findings suggest that the initial response of parents to the news of the pregnancies was that of disappointment and anger. This was largely informed by the fact that teenage pregnancy is still socially unacceptable in many communities (Nkani, 2012; Mkhwanazi, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, particularly, the notion of the mesosystem level, highlights the importance of connectedness between the individual and such structures as the family, friends and others. That these participants were unable or in a few cases, unwilling to stay in school during pregnancy and as young mothers, was largely influenced by factors in the various ecological systems. For example, according to the participants in this study, angered by their daughters' pregnancy, parents and guardians punished them by withholding financial and emotional support from them. This forced their daughters to drop out of school. In addition, lack of support and shame and stigma (informed by cultural and religious norms) in school led to some deciding to drop out.

A related reason for punishing pregnant and mothering teenage girls was that for some families, an unplanned pregnancy in a home struggling with financial and other material resources added to the burden of feeding and caring for family members. In some instances, this led to the souring of family relations, including with siblings. This resulted in the withdrawal or withholding of support, including childcare and financial support, creating the conditions for the young mother to drop out of school. However, the findings also uncovered the fact that in some instances, despite the initial sense of disappointment and anger from the parents, some family members did provide the necessary support to the pregnant and mothering young girls. These included mothers and grandmothers, who provided emotional and financial support, as well as occasional childcare when the young mother needed it.

Not all the participants in the study saw the disruptions to their schooling due to suspension and expulsion as a permanent deterrent to them achieving their educational goals. Instead, some embraced their new motherhood role and the experience of becoming a mother, suggesting that it revived their sense of purpose to deal with the challenges of motherhood and to pursue their future aspirations, not only for themselves, but also for their babies.

7.4.2 Factors Influencing School Dropout

As discussed in Chapter Three and above, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory suggests that an individual's development is influenced by the support, guidance and structure of the society in which they live. In other words, such development is influenced by the individual's interaction with the environment, including the people who inhabit it (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Rojas, 2011). My analysis was premised on my belief, informed by this theory, that for pregnant and mothering girls to stay and succeed in school, they must have relationships with family members in the home, teachers and peers in the school, and community members in the wider world. This would influence whether or not they stayed in school or left before completion. Using this theory as a lens, I reflect on some of the discourses which emerged in Chapter Six, in response to the second research question about the factors that influence young mothers to drop out of school.

7.4.2.1 School is not Possible or Desirable for Pregnant or Mothering Teenagers

The first discourse which emerges from the findings involves the belief that schooling is neither possible nor desirable for pregnant or mothering girls. For example, my participants reported experiencing difficulty in balancing their schooling demands and motherhood responsibilities. This was due to the fact that the latter responsibilities took much of their time. For some, attending to childcare demands became even more burdensome than it could have been as they

did not receive any support from their parents and siblings. For these participants, these competing demands forced them to withdraw from school in order to look after their children.

Linked to the above, some pregnant and mothering teenage girls experienced being stigmatised and rejected by their siblings. In addition, they experienced rejection from other family members, mostly fathers. These feelings of rejection and shame were exacerbated by the babies' fathers' denial of paternity of the children. Not being offered support and denied paternity left the sole responsibility of childcare on them. Thus contributing towards the young mothering girls' ultimate decision to leave or be withdrawn from school.

Due to the general societal gender norms which relegate childcare responsibilities to the girls and women (Runhare, 2010) and the participants' own gender socialisation, the responsibility of caring for their babies fell largely on the girls and young women. As discussed above, while the birth of the babies had little or no impact on the lives of the boys and men responsible (Ngabaza, 2010; Kerrigan, Andrinopoulos & Johnson, 2007), the girls were forced to give up their schooling in order to take care of their children (see also Runhare, 2010; Leach, 2000).

7.4.2.2 Limited Family Resources Cannot be Spent on Educating Mothering Teenagers

Linked to the undesirability of continued schooling for pregnant and mothering girls, a second discourse which emerged from the findings in this study involved the non-desirability of spending limited (financial) resources on educating such girls. Available literature suggests that teenage mothers who come from economically challenged families are likely to have their schooling interrupted due to the family's inability to afford childcare services (Singh & Hamid,

2015; Barry, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). The findings from this study also confirmed these assertions, suggesting that inadequate financial resources in the family as well as the lack of financial support from the men responsible for the pregnancies contributed to the teens dropping out of school. This was due to the fact that the addition of the babies brought a further financial strain to the families, who were already struggling financially. Meeting the financial needs of the babies and their mothers rendered paying for education impossible and in some cases, undesirable. My findings align with those of Granlund and Hochfeld (2019), and demonstrate that even the participants who were beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant found that the money was not sufficient to cover all of their babies' needs. Therefore, without financial assistance from parents, family members or the men responsible for their pregnancies, these mothering girls were forced to drop out of school in order to take care of their children's needs.

7.4.2.3 Providing Childcare Support Will Encourage the Girls to Have More Children

A third discourse which emerged from the findings was that providing support, both childcare and financial, to pregnant and mothering teenage girls will encourage them to have more babies. Available literature shows that without the availability of childcare support, attending school becomes a major challenge for the young mothers (Chauke, 2013; Panday et al, 2009; Grant & Hallman, 2006). This had two implications for the participants in my study. The first is that lack of childcare support is punitive, the second is that the punishment involved relocation for some of the girls. This is due to the fact that teenage pregnancy is not received positively in families, thus has negative consequences for the pregnant girls (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Nkani, 2012; van Zyl, van der Merwe & Chigeza, 2015; Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Nkani, 2012). In this view, providing support to enable the girls to continue their schooling was seen as too permissive and as an encouragement for them to have more babies.

Second, due to anger, disappointment and shame that the news of pregnancy brought and the stigmatisation and rejection that followed (Durojaye, 2009), some of the pregnant or mothering girls were forced to relocate as a form of punishment, going to live with extended family members - mostly grandparents. This made it impossible for the girls to continue with their schooling and contributed to their dropping out.

7.4.2.4 Childbearing and Childcare are Women's Responsibilities

A fourth discourse, linked to societal gender norms, is that childbearing and care are girls' and women's responsibilities. To illustrate, the participants in this study attributed their dropout from school to the kinds and levels of support they received not only from their families, but also from the men who were responsible for the pregnancies. Some participants informed the men while others did not. For those men who denied paternity, their contributions to the care of the babies, including financial and upbringing, were non-existent. This left the girls (and their families) to care for the babies alone.

The findings suggest that in some cases, the denial of paternity caused anger in parents as they felt disrespected by these men responsible for their daughters' pregnancies. The denial of paternity also meant that these young mothers had to rely on their family members for financial and childcare support. It is at the macrosystem level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model that cultural values, traditions and law (Berk, 2000) are acknowledged. In many African communities, "fathers are symbols of discipline, power, order and authority and are perceived as providers in the family whose role is to bring financial stability in their households" (Mcambi, 2010, p. 85). It is the responsibility of *umnumzana* (homestead head) to protect his family as well as to take care of their needs (Hunter, 2005). In turn, an *umnumzana* is respected

(*ukuhlonishwa*) by the members of the family and the community (Mcambi, 2010; Hunter, 2005). Perceived as *ihlazo* or *ichilo* (disgrace) in many communities, teenage pregnancy undermines the *umnumzane* status and is perceived to be a reflection of poor parenting by the parents of the girl (Mcambi, 2010). This may explain why, as reported by the participants in this study, some of their parents were angered and disappointed upon learning of their pregnancy, and withdrew financial and childcare support, with some even disowning and banishing the girls from their homes as punishment. This forced the girls to drop out of school. Again, this perpetuates the beliefs, informed by gender socialisation, that childbearing and parenting responsibilities must fall largely on women (Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012; McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni & Rice, 2007) while their male counterparts' lives are unaffected by parenting responsibilities.

7.4.2.5 Pregnant and Mothering Girls do not Belong in School Spaces

A fifth discourse emerged out of the findings related to the role of schools in retaining or forcing pregnant and mothering girls to drop out. First, the findings suggest that the poor interpretation and implementation of the rights-based national policy framework often leads to the exclusion of these girls and others. Literature reviewed in this thesis suggests that despite the availability of the rights-based policies and frameworks in South Africa and other countries, which are aimed at ensuring that girls complete their schooling successfully (Runhare, 2010; Prinsloo, 2005), pregnant and mothering girls face multiple challenges to remaining in school. Similarly, in this study the findings suggest that in contravention of the country's policy framework, some principals and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) implemented school policies and practices that forced the pregnant girls and young mothers to drop out of school. The deviation from the progressive policies regarding pregnant girls' and young mothers'

rights to education has dire consequences as it forces them out of school (Chauke, 2013; Bhana et al, 2010; Mpanza & Nzima, 2010; Runhare, 2010; Chigona, 2008).

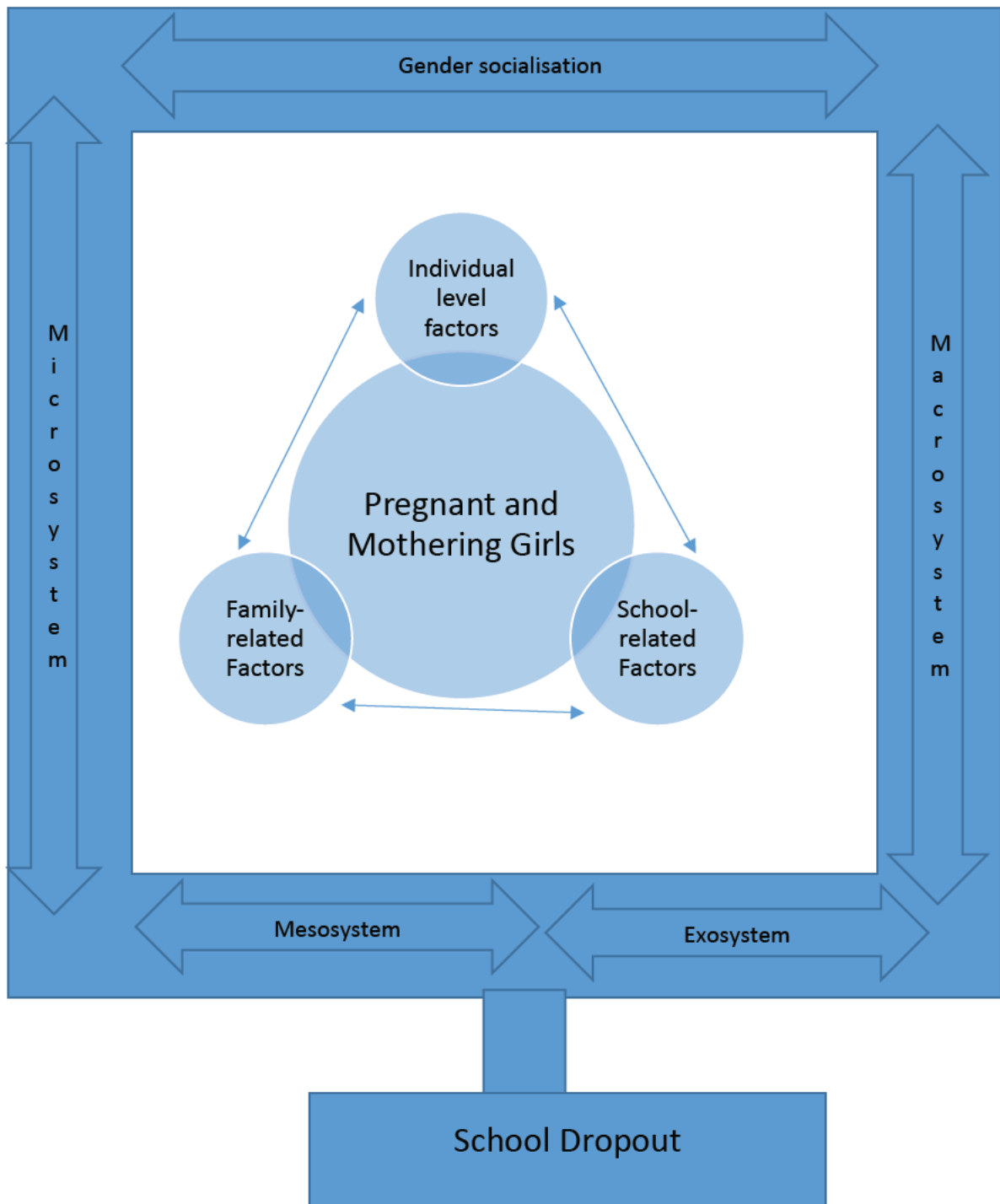
Second, available literature reports on the varied attitudes of teachers towards teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, with the majority of scholars signalling that most teachers do not approve of pregnant and mothering girls in the schooling system (Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014; James, van Rooyen & Strümpher, 2011; Runhare & Vandeyar, 2011; Maholo, Maja & Wright, 2009; Panday et al, 2009). In the same vein, the findings from this study show that some teachers were intolerant of pregnant and mothering girls in the school and tended to victimise and humiliate them by using derogatory terms. This forced the girls to drop out of school. While schools and teachers need to provide a nurturing and stable environment which is conducive to learning (Paquette & Ryan, 2001), my findings demonstrate that the girls who experienced rejection from their teachers ended up dropping out of school. Non-judgemental attitudes can be found, however, and some participants reported that some teachers were empathetic towards them and even offered them support in the form of advice. Should such attitudes and practices should be supported and replicated because Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory proposes that it is possible that a strong connection between the girls and their teachers might strengthen their desire and ability to stay in school.

Third, as stated in Chapter Six, bullying by peers was identified as a factor that contributed towards the participants dropping out of school. While Bronfenbrenner emphasised the importance of maintaining strong and positive relationships between individuals and various social institutions which include peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the findings in this study suggest that pregnant girls felt unwelcomed, stigmatised and bullied by their peers in schools.

This lack of support and empathy made schooling unbearable for the pregnant girls and contributed to them dropping out of school. As argued in Chapter Six, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), without harmonious relationships in the school and the family, pregnant teenage girls and young mothers struggle to cope with schooling demands. This leads to a deterioration in their academic performance and eventually, to their dropping out of school.

From the discourses discussed above, Figure 6 summarises the interaction among the factors that contribute towards pregnant and mothering young girls in this study dropping out of school. As Figure 6 illustrates, the unequal gender norms which place girls and women in families and society at a lower status than their male counterparts, and the relationships and connections that pregnant and mothering teenagers have/do not have in the various ecologies in which they live (the family, community) and learn (the school), create several factors that interact in complex ways to force them out of school. These include stigma and shame, poverty, access to childcare and others. Figure 6 below summarises and illustrates the interaction among the various factors that contribute to school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls.

Figure 6: Factors that contribute to school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls



Addressing and reversing the influence of these factors requires interventions at the family (and community), the school and the system levels. I return to the implications of the findings later in the chapter.

7.5 Contributions of the Study

The findings from this study build on existing literature on teenage pregnancy in schools, and particularly in the multifaceted factors that lead to school dropout among pregnant and mothering girls. The study adds to the existing body of knowledge about how teenage girls experience pregnancy and early motherhood, and linked to this, how a complex array of factors, at the individual, family and school levels, interact to force them to drop out of school. In particular, using gender socialisation theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as analytical lenses, the findings highlight the key roles played by unequal gender norms and poor relationships and connectedness between pregnant and mothering girls and significant others in the home (parents/guardians, siblings) and in the school (teachers and peers). In these contexts, it is the girls who often shoulder the blame for pregnancies out of wedlock, and are punished by, for example, withholding support and withdrawing them or excluding them from school. The study highlights how, even when men deny the paternity of the children they father with these girls, it is the girls who get stigmatised and shunned by their families and communities, while the men's lives are left uninterrupted. This has implications for developing solutions that not only target girls, but also aim to change social norms that make this acceptable. This includes working with boys and men. I return to this below.

7.6 Implications

In light of the discussions above, the findings from this study have a number of implications for educational policy and practice aimed at addressing teenage pregnancy and early motherhood and retention of girls in school

7.6.1 Implications for Policy

The findings suggest that even though there are rights-based legislative policies and frameworks aimed at ensuring that pregnant girls and young mothers complete their schooling successfully, there seems to be a gap in the way these policies are implemented and interpreted at the school level. Considering the challenges that pregnant girls and young mothers face in schools. Firstly, adequate and accurate dissemination of the policies must be ensured and officials in schools such as principals, teachers and SGBs must be trained in their content and integration into school-level policies and programming. At the programmatic level, information about these policies could be incorporated in the Life Orientation curriculum. This would ensure that the learners themselves are aware of the policies and it will empower them to challenge and act against incorrect or non-implementation of these policies. Furthermore, at school level, the principals and the SGBs must be mandated to develop and implement school policies that reflect the spirit of the rights-based national policies and international frameworks that aim to keep all learners in school, including pregnant and mothering teenagers. To ensure this, the national Department of Basic Education must monitor, through its interactions with SGBs, that the spirit of the Constitution is reflected in the content and application of school policies.

Secondly, addressing the frequent absenteeism of pregnant and mothering girls requires multisectoral collaboration to offer formalised support programmes (Runhare, 2010). Absenteeism is caused by their own ill-health and that of their babies, as well as lack of childcare support in the family, and can lead to their dropout from school. Such support could include closer collaboration between the school and nearby health facilities. The latter could accommodate pregnant and mothering girls by scheduling their visits at times that do not result in missing out on schooling time. In South Africa, there are collaborative programmes such as

the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) which was initiated by the Department of Health and the Department of Basic Education, and which is aimed at addressing social challenges such as teenage pregnancy, HIV & AIDS, and others (Molefe, 2016; Matlala, Nolte & Temane, 2014). However, such programmes have not been rolled out to all schools in the country. Access to these programmes would provide sexual reproductive health education to prevent early and unwanted pregnancies and services for those who are pregnant or are mothers (Molefe, 2016).

Thirdly, there needs to be childcare support provided so as to ensure that teenage mothers return and stay in school and complete their education (Omwancha, 2012; Riodan, 2002). It is not unthinkable that childcare facilities could be established in or near schools for those mothering girls to drop their babies off in the morning and fetch them after school. For instance, in the United Kingdom, there are multiple programmes such as Sure Start Children's Programmes and Family Nurse Partnership which provide a full range of childcare, parenting and health support to mothers, including to first time young mothers in the most disadvantaged areas (Ruhm, 2011). Such provisions would enable girls to stay in school and complete their education, thereby contributing to the human resource capacity in the country and alleviating poverty in their own families.

7.6.2 Implications for Teacher Education and Continued Professional Development

As demonstrated in this thesis, some pregnant and mothering young girls experience stigmatisation and negative attitudes from teachers. These hostilities and unwelcome traits might emanate from societal and cultural beliefs which perceive teenage pregnancy and early motherhood as deviant (Ngabaza, 2010; Mcambi, 2010; Hunter, 2005). Therefore, the inclusion of rights-based legislative policies and frameworks in the curriculum at teacher training level

would ensure that classroom teachers are well aware of these policies and how they should be interpreted and implemented. This would contribute to the elimination of poor interpretation and implementation of policy frameworks due to lack of understanding. Moreover, such training must address the unequal gender norms and values that student teachers bring to their training, and assist them to do the same in their own schools when they qualify. As in-service teachers, they must continue to receive on-going professional development on how to provide psychological and emotional support for girls during pregnancy and after childbirth. An example of this can be found in the United States, in a skills programme offered by the Resource Centre for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP). This is meant to equip teachers, counsellors and healthcare providers on how they can help young women to make informed decisions about their options once they know they are pregnant and offer psychological assistance in how to deal with the motherhood responsibilities after childbirth (ReCAPP, 2007). In the Australian context, policies such as Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy, are aimed at facilitating the completion of schooling by pregnant and mothering girls through continuous professional development and support for teachers and staff. Such programmes provide access to information to enhance pregnant and mothering student retention, curriculum flexibility, classroom management as well as ensuring a supportive learning environment (Queensland Department of Education, 2005; Department of Education and the Arts Queensland 2002). While these programmes are implemented in better resourced contexts than South Africa, it is conceivable that the country might begin to develop similar programmes, albeit on a more modest scale, and taking the local context into consideration.

7.6.3 Implications for Family Programming

The findings from this study confirm that the news of teenage pregnancy is not always received positively by parents and guardians (Francis, 2012; Bhattacharyya, 2002). This may be due to

socio-cultural and religious beliefs which link pregnancy and sexuality to issues of immorality and socio-economic circumstances in families. To mitigate this, the Department of Basic Education in collaboration with Department of Health could partner with community-based organisations to develop programmes that will create bridges between the pregnant and mothering young girls' homes and their schools in order to address the challenges such as bullying that these girls face both at home and at school. For instance, there are various secondary school-based models that have been implemented in the United States with the aim of supporting and ensuring that pregnant and mothering girls are retained in school. This is done through specialised school-based programmes that offer multidisciplinary services such as counselling services on how to cope with schooling and motherhood both at school and in the greater community (Hagan, Coleman, Foy, Goldson, Howard, et al, 2001). In the Australian context, programmes such as Present Pregnant and Proud offer access to culturally appropriate support to young women from non-English speaking backgrounds through various publications and guides for schools that want to ensure that their pregnant and mothering girls have the best possible chance of completing high school (Boulden 2001). The Present Pregnant and Proud programme has a manual that is intended to help teachers, parents as well as communities to work towards making the school environment conducive to learning for pregnant and mothering girls (Boulden 2001). Similarly, in Mozambique, the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth and Sports have established the Programa Geração Biz referral systems between schools and Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS). The programme includes an educational and counselling Sexual Reproductive Health programme, led by peer educators supervised by teachers (WHO, 2009). The programme focuses on health literacy and community support for the youth including pregnant and mothering girls (WHO, 2009).

In South Africa, these collaborative initiatives between the departments of education and health can further be used to provide information about the kinds of support that pregnant and mothering girls need in relation to health and childcare support, which can enable these girls to cope better with their schooling demands. In addition, the Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Social Development could work closely with community-based organisations and religious organisations to implement awareness campaigns and hold information-sharing sessions. These could be about how to destigmatise teenage pregnancy and early motherhood, the importance of paternal support, as well as other issues pertinent to the community. This will help to forge harmony or connectedness between pregnant and mothering young girls and their families and the community. For instance, the parliament of New South Wales initiated a collaborative effort between the Ministry for Health and Medical Research and the Ministry for Families, Communities and Disability Services. This is aimed at addressing various challenges faced by pregnant and mothering girls through social dialogues and the use of media platforms to share information on social issues pertinent to improving physical and mental health of young mothers and that of pregnant girls before and after childbirth. The programme also involves the use of new and emerging technology to enhance support for new parents and babies (Parliament of New South Wales, 2000). South Africa could adopt a similar model where it can forge partnership between various ministries such as the Department of Communications, the Department of Health, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development which can use roadshows, community dialogues and social media platforms to share information about the challenges faced by pregnant and mothering girls both at school and at home, how to support them and how to provide online learning opportunities for those who can no longer attend school.

7.6.4 Implications for Further Research

As discussed above, this study sought to explore the experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who had dropped out of school and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave school. The study was limited to a sample of 16 teenage participants who had dropped out of school either due to pregnancy or early motherhood. Further research is needed to solicit other stakeholders' views on how teenage pregnancy and early motherhood impacts families and the educational outcomes of affected teenage girls. Additionally, future studies could pay particular attention to the voices of the men and boys and their understandings of their roles as fathers and access to their children. This will contribute to the development of inclusive and effective strategies and ensure that pregnant and mothering girls are adequately supported, and that they remain in school until completion.

Finally, studies that test the potential for and efficacy of some of the ameliorative programmes outlined in the above sections are needed. Such studies could address the question: what works in interventions that seek to prevent early and unwanted pregnancies among teenagers, and to support those who get pregnant and become mothers to stay and complete their schooling? Addressing this question would go a long way towards enabling government, schools and families to support girls to prevent unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, and to support those with babies to stay in school.

7.7 Conclusion

The study reported in this thesis addressed the question: *In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?* Informed by the gender socialisation theory (Ekin, 1968), this study was premised on the notion that gender

socialisation plays a major role in influencing how peers, teachers at school, the family and the media view pregnant teenage girls and young mothering girls (UNICEF, 2007; Chartschlaa, 2004). In this regard, the findings suggest that, first, for most of the pregnant and mothering girls in this study, their pregnancies were unplanned and/or unwanted. As such, they brought feelings of shame, regret and remorse to the participants as they believed to have disappointed or brought shame to their parents and families. Linked to this, some felt stigmatised, alienated and rejected by their family members. This is due to gender relations in the families and communities, which place the burden of the pregnancy and care responsibilities largely on girls (Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012) while the lives of the men responsible for their pregnancies remain largely unaffected (Moletsane, 2014).

Second, the study was informed Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory which suggests that every individual is born into a complex cultural ecological system of interacting people, situations, social attitudes and values, religion, political, economic and legal practices (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1979). For the participants in this study, mesosystem level factors such as family support, financial support, religious affiliation, relationships with peers and the neighbourhood interacted to impact on their schooling, including their inability to cope with the multiple demands of being a mother and a learner, stigma and marginalisation by teachers and peers, withdrawal or withholding of support as a form of punishment by parents/guardians and other family members, and school policies that defy the country's rights-based. Their marginalisation and the lack support from the various components of their ecological system, including family members, teachers, peers and the larger community, led to their dropout from school.

The findings suggest that, firstly, policy and programming are required that seek to address the unequal gender dynamics that marginalise girls and women and place the burden of reproduction and childcare on them. Secondly, as the findings have shown, unless we prioritise programming that seeks to forge healthy relationships and connectedness between the girls and various ecological systems that influence their lives, pregnant and mothering girls will continue to face challenges that force them to drop out of school. This will yield undesirable results for them, their babies and the country, as they remain in a perpetual cycle of poverty, poor access to education and poor education and health outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: University Ethical Clearance



15 May 2014

Ms Sithembile Judith Mambi 206519919
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/1463/0130

Project title: School dropout in the context of teenage pregnancy and motherhood: a narrative study of the causes of dropout among a group of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in a South African township.

Dear Ms Mambi

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has now been granted full approval.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/s/

cc Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhatta
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr P Morojele
cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

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Appendix 2: Informed Consent Letter (Participants)

Dear Participant

My name is Sithembile Judith Mcambi. I am a Doctoral student working under the supervision of Professor Deevia Bhana at the University of KwaZulu Natal at Edgewood Campus. My student number is 2065199191. I am working on a research study titled: School dropouts in the context of teenage pregnancy and motherhood: a narrative study of the causes of dropout among a group of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in a South African township.

I kindly request you to be part of this research study. I seek your permission to interview you. The research intends to examine the causes that lead to pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to drop out of schools. The interview will be audio-taped. I will be careful to use the information that you will supply in a manner that will ensure your anonymity. In order to protect your identity, I will use a pseudonym in my transcripts and my research report. If you are uncomfortable at any time during the course of the interview, you are at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study without any negative consequences.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and there will be no monetary benefits associated with participating in this study. However, the travelling costs incurred during the interviewing process will be taken care of by the researcher. Furthermore, at the participant's request competent child care support can be offered to each participant during the interviewing process.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. Confidentiality throughout the study will be maintained by ensuring that the venue where interviews will be conducted is only known by the researcher and the participant only. I hope that this research will add to the understandings of the causes and consequences of dropout amongst pregnant teenagers and young mothers. Should you have any questions, my do not hesitate to contact me. My details are as follows:

████████████████████

E-mail: sithembilemcambi@gmail.com

Work: 031- 469 0425

Furthermore, you can contact the University's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Their details are as follows: Tel: 031- 260 3587/ 8350/ 4557

Fax: 031-260 4609

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za/ mohunp@ukzn.ac.za/ ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Informed Consent Declaration

I _____ (full name of the participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project and I agree to be part thereof. I am aware that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and there will be no monetary benefits associated with my participation in this study. I am also aware that should I become uncomfortable at any time during the course of the interview, I am at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study without any negative consequences.

I hereby consent/ do not consent to have the interview audio- recorded.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Letter (Parent/ Guardian)

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Sithembile Judith Mcambi. I am a 2nd year Doctoral student working under the supervision of Professor Deevia Bhana at the University of KwaZulu Natal at Edgewood Campus. My student number is 2065199191. I am working on a research study titled: School dropouts in the context of teenage pregnancy and motherhood: a narrative study of the causes of dropout among a group of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers in a South African township.

I seek your permission to interview your daughter/ward. The research intends to examine the causes that lead to pregnant teenage girls and young mothers to drop out of schools. All interviews will be audio-taped. I will be careful to use the information that will be supplied by your daughter/ ward in a manner that will ensure your anonymity. In order to protect their identity, I will use a pseudonym in my transcripts and my research report. If your daughter/ ward is uncomfortable at any time during the course of the interview, she is at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study without any negative consequences.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and there will be no monetary benefits associated with participating in this study. However, the travelling costs incurred during the interviewing process will be taken care of by the participants. Furthermore, at the request of the participant/parent/ guardian competent child care support will be offered to each participant during the interviewing process.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. Confidentiality throughout the study will be maintained by ensuring that the venue where interviews will be conducted is only known by the researcher and the participant only. I hope that this research will add to the understandings of the causes and consequences of dropout amongst pregnant teenagers and young mothers. Should you have any questions, my do not hesitate to contact me. My details are as follows:

████████████████████

E-mail: sithembilemcambi@gmail.com & 4sthe@mtloaded.co.za

████████████████████

Furthermore, you can contact the University's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Their details are as follows: Tel: 031- 260 3587/ 8350/ 4557 Fax: 031-260 4609

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za/ snymanm@ukzn.ac.za/ mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

My Supervisor's details are as follows: Prof. D. Bhana Tel: 031 260 2603 e-mail: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully

S.J. Mcambi (Miss)

Informed Consent Declaration

I _____ (full name of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project and I grant permission for my daughter/ ward _____ to be part of this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

DATE _____

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule 1 (IsiZulu)

Igama nesibongo:	
Usuku:	
Indawo:	
Isikhathi sokuqala:	
Isikhathi sokuqeda:	
Okuqaphelekile ngesikhathi sengxoxo:	

Ngithanda ukuqale ngibonge ukuthi uvume ukuba yingxenye yalolu cwaningo engilwenzayo. Inhloso yalo okunguthola kabanzi ukuthi ukukhulelwa kanye nokuthola umntwana kunamthelela muni ekutheni amantombazane asafunda angabe esakwazi ukuthola noma ukuqhubeka nemfundo, phecelezi (In what ways do pregnancy and motherhood function as barriers to teenage girls' success in school?).

Ngaphambi kokuqhubeka ngifisa ukuqinisekisa lokhu okulandelayo:

- Ingxoxo yethu yanamhlanje izoba yimfihlo.
- Imininingwane yakho soze yavezelwa muntu.
- Isikhathi salengxoxo ngeke sedlule emizuzwini ephakathi kwewu-45 kuya kwihora.
- Uvumelekile ukuthi ungabe usaqhubeka nokuba ingxenye yalolu cwaningo nanoma ingasiphi isikhathi oyofisa ngaso.
- Uma kukhona imibuzo ongathandi ukuyiphendula, uvumelekile ukuba ungayiphenduli.
- Unalo futhi nelungelo lokuthi ubuze ucele ukucaciseleka uma kukhona lapho ofisa ukucaciseleka khona.
- Akukho nzuzo yanama eyaluphi uhlobo eyotholakala ngalolu cwaningo.
- Inkulumbo- mpendulwano yethu iyoba izigaba ezimbili. Esokuqala yiso lesi lapho sizothola ithuba lokuthi sixoxe ukuze sazane kangcono. Isigaba sesibili, yilapho siyobe sesingena sesigxila emibuzeni emayelana nocwaningo.

Njengengxenye yengxoxo yethu ngizocela ukukubuza lemibuzo elandelayo.

1. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngawe.
 2. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngengane yakho. Noma ngabe yikuphi ofisa ukuthi ngikwazi ngengane yakho.
 3. Ngabe zikhona izinto othanda ukuzenza uma uzijabulisa? Uma, zikhona yiziphi?
 4. Yiziphi izinto ongazithandi? Uma zikhona, kungani ungazithandi?
 5. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngomndeni wakho. Ungangitshela ukuthi uhlala kuphi kanye nokuthi uhlala nobani?
 6. Abangani bona unabo? Uma unabo, ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngabo.
 7. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngesikole obufunda kuso nokuthi uyeke nini ukufunda kuso.
- Ngiyabonga ngesikhathi sakho. Ngizocela ukuba ungitshinte ukuze sihlale isikhathi kanye nendawo yengxoxo yethu yesibili.

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule 1 (Adapted to English)

Name and Surname:	
Date:	
Place:	
Interview Commencement Time:	
Interview Ending Time:	
Observations during the interview:	

I would first like to show my appreciation for having availed yourself to be part of this study. The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of pregnant teenage girls and young mothers who had dropped out and the factors that influenced their decisions to leave school. Before we even commence with our interview, I would like to inform you about the following: Ingxoxo yethu yanamhlanje izoba yimfihlo.

- Anonymity will be ensured and information about you will never be divulged to anyone.
 - The duration of this interview will be between 45 minutes to an hour.
 - The participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences.
 - You are at liberty to only respond to the questions that you are comfortable responding to.
 - You are also allowed to seek further clarity about the questions that will be posed to you at any time during the course of the interview.
 - There are no gains including monetary gains associated with this study.
 - The interview will be divided into two parts. The first part being this one where we get to know each other better through the sharing of the biographical information. The second part will be where we focus on the questions that are about the actual study.
 - The questions are as follows:
 1. Please tell me more about you.
 2. Please tell me more about your child. (It can be anything that you want me to know about your child)
 3. Are there things that you enjoy doing in your spare time? If you do, what are those things?
 4. Are there things that you do dread doing at all? If you do, which are those things?
 5. Please tell me about your family. You can include information such as where and your family members.
 6. Do you have friends? If you, please tell me about them.
 7. Please tell me more about your school as well as when last did you attend school.
- We have come to the end of our session. Once again, I would like to thank you for your time and availing yourself to be part of this interview. Please contact me so that we can arrange the date and time for our next interview.

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule 2 (IsiZulu)

Igama nesibongo:	
Usuku:	
Indawo:	
Isikhathi sokuqala:	
Isikhathi sokuqeda:	
Okuqaphelekile ngesikhathi sengxoxo:	

IMIBUZO EPHATHELENE NENDLELA APHATHEKA NGAYO ESIKOLENI

Othisha

- Ngicela uchaze kabanzi ukuthi othisha bakho bazi kanjani ngokukhulelwa kwakho?
- Emva kokuthi Bazile ngakho, ngicela uchaze ukuthi bakuphatha kanjani?
- Ngabe isikole sasinayo yini imigomo emisiwe emayelana nabafundi abakhulelwe? Uma ikhona, ngabe yayithini leyo migomo?
- Ukukhululwa kwakho ngabe kwabushintsha ubudlelwane phakathi kwakho kanye nothisha bakho? Uma yabushintsha, yabushintsha kanjani?
- Kukhona ukwesekwa (support) owakuthola kothisha? Uma bakweseka, bakweseka ngandlelani?
- Wakwazi kanjani ukumelana nokufunda kanye nokukhulelwa kanya kanye?

Ontanga

- Ontanga yakho/ abanye abafundi bona bazi kanjani ngokukhulelwa kwakho?
- Bakuphatha kanjani emva kokuzwa ngakho. Ngicela uchaze kabanzi.
- Wawuzizwa kanjani uma uphakathi kwabanye abafundi? Yin indaba wawuzizwa kanjalo?
- Ngabe ukukhulelwa kwakho kwabushintsa ubudlelwano phakathi kwakho kanye nozakwenu? Ngicela uchaze ukuthi uma bashintsha, bashintsha kanjani?
- Iziphi izizathu ezakwenza ukuba unqume ukushiya ungabe usaqhubeka nesikole?
- Ngelinye ilanga ungafisa ukubuyela esikoleni? Uma uvuma, kungani? Uma ungavumi, kungani?

Ubaba wengane

- Unabo ubudlelwano nobaba wengane yakho? Uma ungenabo, kungani ungenabo?
- Wathini ngesikhathi ezwa ukuthi ukhulelwe?
- Ikhona indlela akweseka ngayo wena kanye nomntwana wakho?
- Uma ekweseka, ukweseka ndlelani?
- Umndeni wakhe wona, ngabe kukhona indlela okweseka ngayo?
- Uma bekweseka, bakweseka ngayiphi indlela?

Umndeni

- Ngabe uhlala nomndeni wakho?
- Uma ungahlali nawo, ngabe uhlala nobani?
- Umndeni wakho wazizwa kanjani emva bethole ukuthi ukhulelwe? Kungani bazizwa kanjalo?
- Ubani onakekela ingane yakho isikhathi esiningi?
- Wenza njani mangabe kukhona la ofanele uye khona?
- Uyafisa ukuba nenye ingane maduzane?
- Ngobani?
- Uyazibona uqhubeka nokufunda esikhathini esizayo?
- Uma uvuma, ngobani?
- Uma uphika, ngobani?

Iyaphela lapha imibuzo enginayo. Ngibonge kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho nanokuthi uphinde ungiphe ithuba lokuthi sikwazi ukubonana.

Appendix 7: Interview Schedule 2 (Adapted to English)

Name and Surname:	
Date:	
Place:	
Interview Commencement Time:	
Interview Ending Time:	
Observations during the interview:	

SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES

Teachers

- How did teachers at school find out about your pregnancy?
- How did the teachers treat you when they found out that you were pregnant? Please elaborate.
- Was there an internal policy at the school which dealt specifically with pregnant learners and the issues around pregnancy? If there was, what did it entail?
- If there was such a policy, were you aware of it before you became pregnant?
- Did your pregnancy affect your relationship with your teachers in any way? If it did, how so? Please explain.
- Did you receive any support from the teachers? If you did, what kind of support did you receive?
- How did you cope with pregnancy and schoolwork demands?

Peers

- How did your peers find out about your pregnancy?
- How did they treat you after finding out about your pregnancy? Please explain.
- How did your pregnancy make you feel when you were around your fellow learners? Why did you feel that way?
- Did your pregnancy affect your relationship with your peers in any way? If it did, kindly explain how?
- What were the main reasons that caused you to terminate your schooling? Please explain.
- Would you one-day wish to go back to school? If yes, why?
- If, not, why not?

Father of the child

- Do you still have a relationship with the father of your child?
- If yes, how is the relationship between the two of you? Please elaborate.
- If no, why are you no longer in a relationship? Please explain.
- How did he react when he found out about the pregnancy?
- Do you receive any support from him?

- If yes, what kind of support does he provide?
- Do you receive any support from his family?
- If you do, what kind of support do they give you? Please explain.

Family

- Do you stay with your parents?
- If not, who do you stay with and how did you end up staying with that person or those people? Please explain.
- How did your family feel when they found out about your pregnancy?
- Why do you think they felt that way about your pregnancy? Please explain.
- Who takes care of your child most of the time? Why is that so? Please elaborate.
- Do you plan to have another child in the near future?
- If yes, why is that the case?
- If no, why? Please explain.
- Do you ever see yourself carrying on with schooling any time soon?
- If yes, why? Please explain further.
- If not, why? Please elaborate.

We have come to the end of our interview. Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for availing yourself for the interview.

Appendix 8: Turnitin Report

The screenshot displays the Turnitin 'feedback studio' interface. The main document area shows the title: "Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to Girls' Access to and Success in Education in a South African Township: A Qualitative Study" by Sithembile Judith Mcambi. The phrase "Girls' Access to and Success in Education in a" is highlighted in pink. The sidebar on the right, titled "Match Overview", shows a total match percentage of 11% and a list of six sources with their respective match percentages: 1. researchspace.ukzn.ac... (2%), 2. creativecommons.org (1%), 3. scholar.sun.ac.za (<1%), 4. hdl.handle.net (<1%), 5. uir.unisa.ac.za (<1%), and 6. repository.up.ac.za (<1%). The bottom status bar indicates "Page: 1 of 227", "Word Count: 61372", and "High Resolution" is turned on.

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feedback studio Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to Girls' Access to ... /0

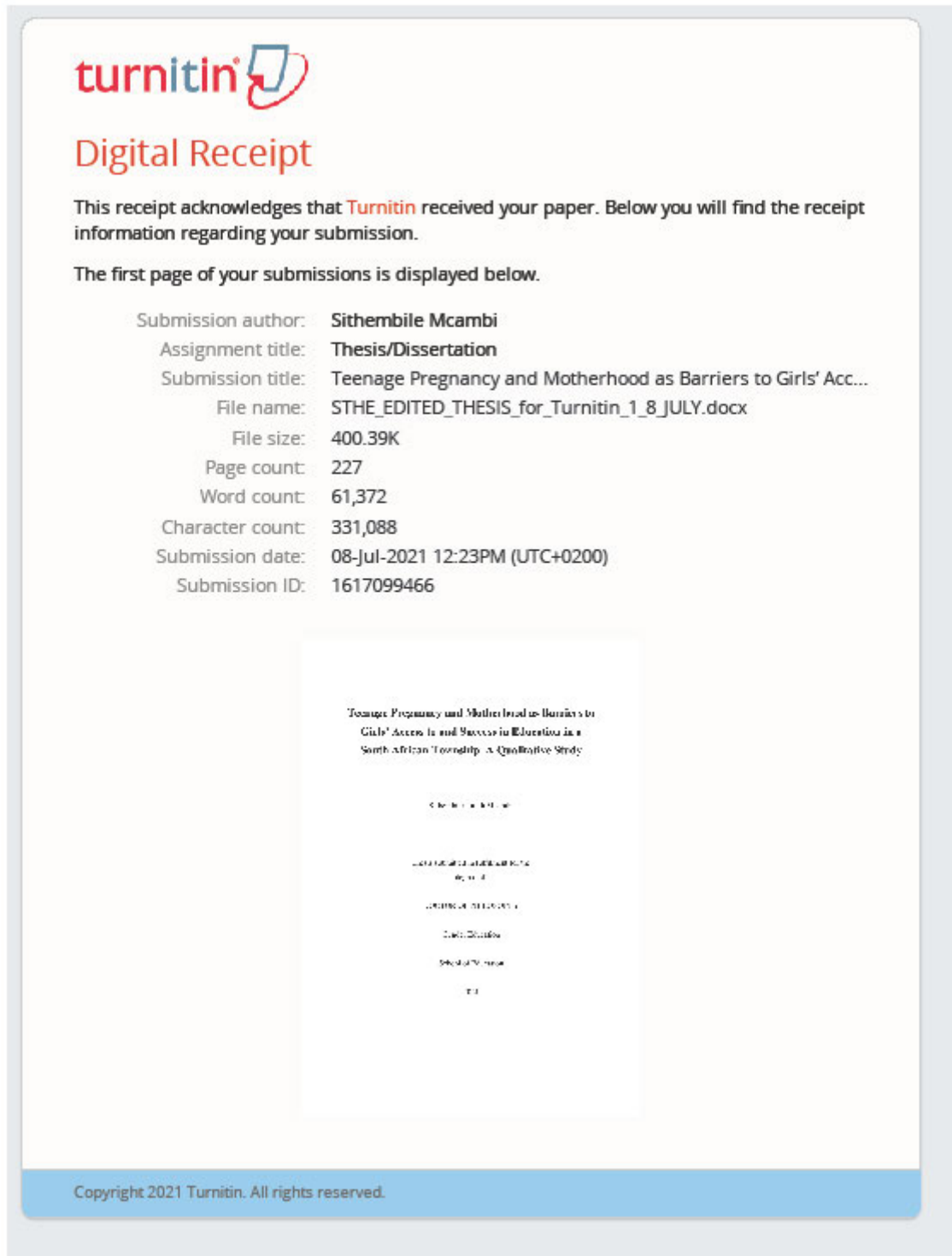
Match Overview

11%

Rank	Source	Match Percentage
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Appendix 9: Turnitin Digital Receipt



The image shows a Turnitin Digital Receipt. At the top left is the Turnitin logo. Below it is the title "Digital Receipt" in red. A paragraph explains that the receipt acknowledges the submission of a paper. Below this, it states that the first page of the submission is displayed. A list of submission details follows, including author, assignment title, submission title, file name, file size, page count, word count, character count, submission date, and submission ID. A preview of the first page of the document is shown, displaying the title "Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to Girls' Access to and Success in Education in a South African Township: A Qualitative Study" and the author's name "Sithembile Mcambi". At the bottom of the receipt, there is a blue bar with the text "Copyright 2021 Turnitin. All rights reserved."

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Submission title: **Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to Girls' Acc...**
File name: **STHE_EDITED_THESIS_for_Turnitin_1_8_JULY.docx**
File size: **400.39K**
Page count: **227**
Word count: **61,372**
Character count: **331,088**
Submission date: **08-Jul-2021 12:23PM (UTC+0200)**
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Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood as Barriers to
Girls' Access to and Success in Education in a
South African Township: A Qualitative Study

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