

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL
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School of Applied Human Sciences: Understanding the
lived experiences of teenage parents in a designated
secondary school in a Durban Township.

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Abstract

Irrespective of age, parenthood can be a life-changing event, which is filled with mixed feelings of anxiety and excitement for the journey ahead. There is increased anxiety and pressure for school-going teenagers that enter parenthood, as this adds to their major role responsibilities of learner, another major role of mother or father, which represent competing and conflict demands. Managing the conflicting roles can be extremely daunting and impact the day-to-day functioning of learners. Society assumes different roles for men and women, especially around parenthood that are based on presumed age of maturity amongst other factors. While the dominant societal discourse is on the problem of teen pregnancies and teen parents, their underlying structural determinants are often over-looked. The pathology-based approach labels and categories teen parents as problems. They are often described in condescending language, which overlooks the root causes of high rates of teen parenthood.

Consistent with dominant stereotypical gender discourses, teenage fathers are often ignored. This study was designed to understand the experiences and narratives of both teenage fathers and mothers in a secondary school environment. The study employed a qualitative paradigm and a descriptive-exploratory design. The participants were identified through the use of convenience and snowball sampling. They were a total of 11 black African participants, seven being females and four being males. The data was collected using a focus group interview and semi-structured individual interviews. Audio-recorded sessions, which were transcribed and field notes were coded and developed into themes. The findings revealed that financial challenges, and disruption in schooling induced by entering parenthood while still being a learner were majors concern. There were also positive experiences that were born out of their challenging circumstances such as personal growth, increased sense of responsibility, and childrearing providing a sense of purpose and hope. But none of them would recommend other learners falling pregnant, and they suggested ways in which teen pregnancies might be prevented. There were some clear gender differences in the experiences of teen mothers and fathers. On the basis of the major findings and existing literature, recommendations are made in respect of policy, practice and further research.

Keywords: teen parents, schooling, role conflict, poverty, child support grant.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late maternal grandmother who fought, and worked very hard to sustain our family, in the face of poverty, HIV/AIDS and loss of loved ones. All she ever wanted was to see me at least complete matric, ehlala ebalisa uMaGumede kwaze kwamehlula ukufa ngoba kona akukhethi futhi kuyinuku. I know she would be proud of me. Well, I am proud of her for giving me unconditional love and nurturance, and for always doing everything to put a smile on uThobe kagogo. Ngibonga noma usungasekho.

A special dedication to all orphaned children and youth, like me. Growing up without biological parents is not easy but with perseverance and an appetite for success, you will reach a better destination. Your history does not determine your future, aim high and be optimistic.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Ntini Thobeka declare that this dissertation is my original work and all sources and/or authors have been correctly referenced using the American Psychology Association (APA) style. I have to the best of my abilities properly acknowledged other sources and a bibliography has been attached as a form of reference.

Thobeka Ntini (2115 01327)

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CHAPTER ONE

1 CONTEXTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy is a poignant issue in South Africa, elevated in the media as destructive and damaging, causing the majority to formulate conceptualisations that are often patronising to teen parents. The often demeaning definitions and labels constructed by the media and the public overlooks the root causes of high rates of teen parents. These root causes include gender inequality, child marriage, poverty, issues related to human rights, sexual violence and coercion, issues related to contraceptives, lack of access to education and reproductive health services (United Nations Population Fund, 2013). Dominant descriptions of teenage mothers as merely ‘promiscuous’, imply that it is their absolute accountability. Consistent with dominant stereotypical gender discourses, teenage fathers are not noticed, almost as if they are invisible or do not exist. If all the negative assertions about teenage mothers have validity, the question we should be asking is: why are teenage fathers neglected in the analysis of the destruction caused by teen pregnancies? This study attempts to understand the experiences and narratives of both teenage fathers and mothers in a secondary school environment.

This chapter begins by detailing the definition of concepts in order to provide a clearer understanding of how concepts are contextualised in this study. These definitions include teenager/adolescent, teenage parent and teenage/adolescent pregnancy. This is followed by an introduction to the background of the study and rationale of the study. Additionally, the chapter states the problem, and further provides the study’s objectives and research questions. Moreover, it gives information on the selected location of the study, which is not limited to geographical dimension, but includes its socio-political-economic context. More significantly, it discusses, comprehensively, the theoretical framework guiding the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the value of the study and the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Definition of concepts

- (a) **Teenager/Adolescent** – It is a person between the ages of 13 and 19 years old (Nzama, 2004; Nkwanyana, 2011). However, this study only selected teenagers from the ages of 16 to 19 years old.
- (b) **Teenage parent** – According to Singh (2005) a parent is a person's father or mother. This suggests that a teenage parent is any teenager (13-19 years) who is a mother or a father to a person or people. This study involves teen fathers and mothers as the people of concern relevant to this study.
- (c) **Teenage/Adolescent pregnancy** – United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) defines teenage pregnancy as a pregnancy that occurs in a teenage girl between the ages of 13-19 years (2008). However, Macleod (2011) describes teenage pregnancy as a social problem in which a person who is not an adult but a teenager displays adult practices such as sexual intercourse, mothering and reproduction. In this study, teenage pregnancy is understood as falling pregnant and taking parental responsibilities while a girl/s is/are enrolled in the designated secondary school, focusing on ages between 16 and 19.

1.3 Background and Context of the Study

Historically, teen pregnancies and teenage parents have not been the focus of people, especially in Africa (Nkwanyana, 2011; Nzama, 2004). Even until today, teen pregnancies within marriage are still widely accepted in Africa, as it corresponds with the cultural norms and ideology of the dominant population group (UNFPA 2013; 2014). The good news is that there has been a noticed downtrend. However, teen pregnancy remains prevalent, particularly in the developing countries (World Health Organisation-WHO, 2014). Therefore, the downtrend should not make interventionists relax, as the statistics may vary from country to country. As it stands, it is sobering that after numerous initiatives to combat HIV, “about 1 000 people become infected with HIV in South Africa each day” (Daily News, 2015). This

does not only suggest the risk of unintended pregnancies but indicates other sexual health risks, which is not desired by any country.

Recent statistics suggest that the adolescent birth rate in South Africa (SA) is at 51 per 1000 teenagers (World Bank, 2014). These statistics heighten concerns about the country's level of social development, as teenage birth rates, in part, are reflective of the economic and development indicators of a country. High teenage pregnancy rates yield increased chances of school dropouts, and/or prolonged periods of absence from school, and increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and STIs (Singh, 2005; Zondo, 2006). However, it is important that we recognise teen parents as human beings, with rights, who experience particular life difficulties and challenges. The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and parenting cannot only be explained by statistics. Rather, the emic approaches to understanding female and male teen parents would enhance our understanding of their lived experiences that might contribute to informed policies, possible preventive strategies and more effective social work intervention, with this designated population group.

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2013):

In every region of the world, impoverished, poorly educated and rural girls are more likely to become pregnant than their wealthier, urban, educated counterparts. Girls who are from an ethnic minority or marginalized group, who lack choices and opportunities in life, or who have limited or no access to sexual and reproductive health, including contraceptive information and services, are also more likely to become pregnant. Most of the world's births to adolescents— 95 per cent—occur in developing countries, and nine in 10 of these births occur within marriage or a union. About 19 per cent of young women in developing countries become pregnant before age 18. Girls under 15 account for 2 million of the 7.3 million births that occur to adolescent girls under 18 every year in developing countries (p.3).

The above characteristics and statistics provided by the UNFPA show that having teenagers join parenthood causes commotion in the world, and raises concerns and anxieties about the future. Though one may understand these concerns, one must be cognisant about the data presented in the above quote. These represent important indicators of some of the causal

factors of high teen pregnancies and parents in developing countries. Developing countries occupy disadvantaged positions in the world, choked with income inequalities, lack of resources and poverty. The disadvantage corresponds with the historical colonialism, which caused significant damage in terms of resource allocation. However, it cannot be narrowed to colonialism; there are cultural, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, class and religious factors that form part of causal factors, not forgetting dominant ideologies and assumptions existing in societies (Sewpaul, 2014). Hence, we can say that high rates of teen parents are channelled by factors relative to poverty, poor resources, low class, income-disparities, and lack of information, which is all unjust, as it sabotages a designated group, and limits their opportunities. Understanding of the influences of structural factors on people's lives do not negate the place of human agency. However, as Sen (1999) argued, "the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us" (xi-xii).

According to StatSA, South Africa's population is mostly made up of youth; 18.5% are between 10-19 years old; and 24% are 15-24 years (cited in UNFPA, 2014), making it 42,5% total youth. It is therefore understandable that the country is concerned about indicators, such as teen pregnancies and high rates of teen parents, which suggest harm in further development and economic growth. A recent Sunday Tribune (2015) newspaper article, titled *Invest in youth or we have no future-UN*, is probably the very reason why the public gets anxious about the future of the country when teenagers become parents. One can understand the anxiety because of the challenges and consequences that teen parents experience. UNFPA (2013) asserts that teen parents can face consequences in their health, education and productivity. If all these dimensions mentioned by UNFPA are disturbed, they are most likely to lead to poverty, which is a significant contributor to hindered development and limited opportunities.

In recent years, there have been rancorous debates, though in absence of evidence-based arguments about the relationship between the Child Support Grant (CSG) and teen pregnancies. Some of the arguments raised suggested that teenagers were falling pregnant to secure the CSG which is R 330 (SASSA, 2015), which is less than 40\$ per month. Nonetheless, United Nations and other studies, providing supporting information that the relationship is at its weakest point, have dispelled these accusations. Regardless of research dispelling allegations, teen parents are still conceptualised as people who want to secure this

pint-sized amount. Hence, the need for this study to draw on the knowledge and experiences of teen parents, to find out to whether or not they attribute pregnancy to the CSG.

There is a wide range of research and attention drawn to teenage mothers, as if they are the only ones bringing ‘burden’ to society. Although recently there has been a rising focus on teenage fathers, the information is still limited, and thus warrants more research. Though one may understand that it is easier for teen fathers to dodge the bullets of stigma and labelling as males do not carry babies, and are not seen with a big belly, the dominant constructions of fatherhood and manhood in societies also play a huge role. Hence, a need for a better understanding from narratives of both teenage fathers and mothers as to how dominant societal constructions have influenced their notions and practices of motherhood and fatherhood, which is the focus of this study.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The interest in the study is stimulated by my experience as a fourth year social work student, undertaking a field placement in 2014. I was placed at a secondary school in an eThekweni Township. The school is situated in an area that is engulfed by many social ills. Amongst these, teenage pregnancies were one of the prominent issues raised by the school principal and educators. According to the school principal, more than 15 girls, eight of whom were in Grade 12, were pregnant in 2014. While the teachers’ concerns concentrated on the females that were pregnant, I saw the need for both teenage fathers and mothers to be given a platform to tell their stories about being young school-going parents. This study is therefore designed to allow young female and male parents to narrate their stories from their own point of view and experiences.

Additionally, I was astounded when President Jacob Zuma stated that, “The reality is you have got kids with kids. They do not know how to grow a child, how to look after them. They have become a burden to grandmothers, to society” (News24, 2015). I consider the president's conceptualisation of teen pregnancy and parenting as narrow-minded. Teenage pregnancy is influenced by many structural injustices such as race, economic status, and gender discrimination. Rather than deal with the structural factors/burdens that contribute to teenage pregnancies, the blame the person approach is adopted, and teenagers are constructed

as the source of societal problems (Weed, Nicholson & Farris, 2014). Given dominant societal discourses such as these, and the prevailing notion that teenagers fall pregnant in order to secure the CSG, I am encouraged to learn more from the perspectives of teenage parents, and interrogate some of these taken-for-granted assumptions.

This study is needed in this area for three reasons:

1. The wide range of literature tends to focus on teenage mothers. While I understand that young women may be a more accessible sample, it is as important to include the young fathers in an attempt to understand their experiences. According to Scott, Steward-Streng, Manlove & Moore (2012) it was estimated that 9% of young men in United States, between the ages of 12 and 16 in 1996, became fathers before they reached the age of 20. Furthermore, literature confirms that voices of teen fathers is limited and recommends more research (Gregson, 2010; Morell; 2005, 2009). This study will attempt to partially bridge this gap as I hope to get the teen fathers to share their experiences, which can add to the existing body of knowledge. The study will allow for a comparison of the experiences and views of teen mothers and fathers.
2. While literature informs of many factors associated with teenage pregnancies and parents, there is limited research that is guided by structural or anti-oppressive theories in a South African context, within the social work discipline. Hence, this study will attempt to make an analysis of the data collected in a critical manner, where structural factors that fuel high rates of teen parents will be identified, as well as the mis/conceptions about the selected sample.
3. Teenagers comprise a large proportion of the population, the country depends on them for development, and they are the ones most affected by the experience. Hence, selecting teenagers who are living, or have recently lived the experience of being a school-going teen mother or father can provide rich and thick descriptions. Moreover, teen parents' views and experiences on their own lives are important for dispelling misconceptions, and possibly contribute to amendments in policy and practice.

1.5 Problem statement

Teenage parents are often labelled with negative characteristics; these include promiscuity, delinquency and deviance (Holgate, Evans & Yuen, 2006). The problem is that these characterisations construct teen parents as ‘problems’. These labels are pathological, and adopt a blame the person approach, where the victim is seen as the problem, without realising the influences that come from the environment that the person resides in. According to Clifford & Burke (2009), oppression refers to structural injustices that come from oppressive assumptions and relationships that happen because of institutional and social customs, economic and cultural practices as well as rules. Thus, assuming that teenage parents are not yet at the ‘right age’ to join parenthood is confined to what the society has been accustomed to, not necessarily meaning it is a fact or law. It is therefore important to look beyond dominant labels of teenage parents, critically consider structural influences and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions in understanding teenage parents.

1.6 Main Aim of the study

The main aim of the study is to understand the lived experiences of teen parents in a secondary school, in a designated Durban Township.

1.7 Study objectives and questions

<i>1.7.1 Objectives</i>	<i>1.7.2 Questions</i>
(a) To explore the experiences of teen parents as young mothers and fathers	What are the experiences of teenage parents as young mothers and fathers?
(b) To explore how teen mothers and fathers negotiate their roles as parents and as learners	How do teen mothers and fathers negotiate their roles as parents and as learners?

(c) To explore how dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood influence school-going teenagers' roles as mothers and fathers	How do dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood influence school-going teenagers' experiences and roles as mothers and fathers?
(d) To explore the psycho-social and economic challenges that teen mothers and fathers face	What psychosocial and economic challenges teen mothers and fathers face?
(e) To explore their reasons for pregnancy and childbirth	What reasons do teenage mothers and fathers for pregnancy and childbirth provide?

1.8 Location of study

The study is located in the area of Besters, within Inanda in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). Inanda forms 1/3 of a larger community known as Inanda-Ntuzuma-KwaMashu (INK). According to INK Economic Strategy document (2006), the INK area is approximately 9423 hectares in size and has a population of nearly 580 000. The population of INK is mostly African, accounting for approximately 99% of the population (Census cited in INK Economic Strategy document, 2006). Although the school is not physically in the whole of INK, providing some of the information on INK is relevant because the school caters for the whole of INK, it is not only restricted to Inanda. This means that participants come from all over the INK area. The INK area has been reported to have high levels of unemployment, poverty and low income levels. This can be substantiated by Department of Provincial and Local Government (cited in Sewpaul, Ntini, Mkhize & Zandamela, 2014) affirming the following socio-economic characteristics of the INK area which include:

- Above 65% of the population is younger than 29 years of age, the majority of whom are unemployed.
- 67% are without fixed line telephones, 26% of the population is without electricity, 30% without piped water and 2% without waste removal services.
- 40% of the population is unemployed, with a further third (33%) recorded as being economically inactive. The high rate of poverty is directly related to the low rate of employment.

- In comparison with the real GDP growth in KZN, which was 3, 7% (2000-2004), INK's growth was only 1, 3%, characterized by jobless growth.
- Up to the 24-year-old INK population, 34% have never attended school. Of those that attended school, only 22% completed Grade 12 (matric) and only 4% attained a tertiary qualification.
- SA has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, with KZN being the epicentre of the virus; INK's HIV prevalence is recorded at 39% (these records are frequently subject to change due to migration and deaths).

Inanda

According to Nkani (2012), Inanda has limited basic service infrastructure. Most residents get water from communal taps and the community is still using the pit toilet system. The area is engulfed with high rates of unemployment, violence and crime and female learners experience sexual coercion and rape (Nkani, 2012). –Violence is the order of the day, with house burglary, mugging, stabbing, rape, sexual harassment and shooting common occurrences, and people being murdered on weekends” (Nkani, p.65). At times violent actions occur within the school premises, with learners beating each other or threatening to shoot or stab other pupils. In 2014 when I was doing my practice, there were learners who were arrested, as they were believed to belong to a certain gang, the school community was uncomfortable. Executive school community members had to organise random searches for weapons and drugs with the nearest police station. Some learners were caught with knives and drugs within the school premises.

The above socio-political-economic context the study, without doubt, gives the impression that the area is experiencing dire socio-economic ills. As a result, the development and general quality of life of the population may be threatened. According to Miller, Benson & Galbraith cited in Mangino (2008) –In neighborhoods that are characterized by high residential turnover, poverty and crime rates...adolescents tend to have early onset of sexual intercourse, low use of contraception, and high adolescent pregnancy rates” (p.88). These identified socio-economic ills influence the way of life and experiences of the designated population group (teenage parents), which is important for policy amendments, social work intervention, and awareness about teen parents.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The study is guided by anti-oppressive theory (Dominelli, 2002) also known as structural theory (Mulally, 2010) and emancipatory theory (Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014; Sewpaul et al, 2014), which falls within the broader rubric of critical social work (Dominelli, 2002; Mulally, 2010). This theory emphasises the importance of socio-political analysis, where problems are politicised, and the promotion of cohesion among individuals and the public are emphasised (Allan, 2003). It is guided by the belief and confidence in human dignity and worth of all peoples. Allan (2003) asserts that this theory trusts in the notion that human beings have the right to be respected, that social workers [and anybody else] should not discriminate against people on the basis of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality or ability, and that all people should have equal opportunities to meet their basic needs” (p. 53). Therefore, the value in this perspective is aligned with social justice and equality, which serve as the backbone for social work practice. Here, Campell & Baikie (2012), who could not have not explained this theory any better, assert that:

[S]ocial relationships are understood as being crucial in the development of both individual and collective identities...individual identities (how we see ourselves) are significantly influenced by our social positioning and identities (how others see us). The assignment of social identities (the most commonly discussed are rooted in race, culture, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability and class) has a tangible reality in a person’s day to day life and leads to differential and intersecting experiences of oppression, domination and privilege (p.72).

This means that our lives are to some extent, dependant on how others see us, which can result in different labels, both positive and negative, which may either be linked to oppression and/or privilege, and result in domination or subordination. Thus, we cannot understand anti-oppressive theory without understanding oppression and privilege.

According to Dominelli (2002), oppression involves relations of power that puts boundaries and divides people into superior and inferior groups. She adds that “[t]hese relations of domination [or power] consist of the systematic devaluing of the attributes and contributions of those deemed inferior, and their exclusion from the social resources available to those in the dominant group” (p. 8). Therefore, this theoretical approach focusses on the relationship

between structures and the agency of individuals, mainly the structural barriers that influence and limit the material circumstances of people (Weinberg, 2008). This suggests that our institutions are structured in such a way as to discriminate against some people based on class, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age etc. based on the hierarchies that exist in society (Sewpaul, 2013). This also means that some people gain at the expense of others. Thus, we can also say that structural theory is against capitalism and individual gain. This is well substantiated by Payne (2005) who asserts that these institutional arrangements serve those in power, allowing them to maintain their power and privilege at the expense of others.

Oppression exists because privilege exists, thus, discussing anti-oppressive theory is incomplete without analysing privilege. According to Johnson (cited in Mullaly, 2010) privilege is the opposite of oppression, as privilege opens doors of opportunity, oppression slams them shut. This means that privilege serves the interests of those in power, making them more dominant, yet too often; it is done at the expense of the oppressed group. According to Mullaly (2010), privileged groups have certain advantages in the society, in which some are earned and others are not. Earned advantages are those such as education and employment while unearned advantages are related to race (biological), gender etc. However, earned advantages are arguable and questionable if they are accessed because of race, class, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender etc. Yet again, one cannot solely blame those who have privileges because it is an ideology attached to them by society, they are given privileges because of their race, membership etc. For example, Mullaly (2010) asserts that —.privilege is not something we take; it is given to us by society if we possess the characteristics that society values, such as being male, white, heterosexual, affluent, and non-disabled” (p. 287). Nonetheless, I strongly believe that privilege has roots of oppressive ideology that was previously set to the subordinate groups. For example, in SA, Apartheid shaped most black African people’s ideology that supremacy and respect should be given to white people. Thus, privileges given to the dominant group is a product of oppression of the subordinate group, where the ideology and system was purposely meant to shape beliefs that a certain person in a specific membership was superior. Hence, privileges are also connected to historical domination, of the forefathers or ancestors of the dominant race or group.

The role of ideology is relevant in understanding anti-oppressive theory. This is because ideology maps —.the political and social worlds for us. We simply cannot do without them because we cannot act without making sense of the worlds we inhabit” (Freedon, 2003, p. 2).

However, making sense does not always mean making right or good sense, it may simply mean making common sense. Unfortunately, common sense is not always common as it depends on certain ideologies and norms. This means, ideologies may represent subjective reality of how that person's ideas have been influenced, possibly through cultural, religious, racial or class factors. For example, one may think that it is common sense to delay having a child, but rather seek employment and stability first, but for some, it was/is common sense to have a child during teen years in order to prove fertility and secure stability or marriage. Citing Gramsci, Sewpaul (2003) asserts that, "Common sense consists of the incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any given society, while good sense means practical, empirical common sense, thus the need to transform common sense into good sense" (p. 5). Thus, this theory involves examination and re-examination of our common sense, taken-for-granted assumptions about ourselves, the environment we inhabit and the world around us so that common sense may be transformed into good sense (Sewpaul et al. 2014). Hence, questioning the beliefs and ideas that we have been accustomed to, through the connections we have with existing structures of society is a crucial pathway for justice.

Being mindful and conscious about ideas that exist in the society is important for identifying sources of oppression. This means that anti-oppressive theory encourages the questioning of ideology as the purpose may serve individual gain, based on individual ideas, which can unfortunately steal other people's opportunity, though sometimes it is unconscious. Freeden (2003) raises a critical question about ideology, "Why are they [ideologies] considered to be at the very least alien caricatures, if not oppressive ideational straitjackets, that need to be debunked and dismantled to protect a society against brainwashing and dreaming false dreams?" (p.3). This question strikes my own understanding that ideas are made with a specific purpose. For example, the idea that a white person is superior to, and better than a black African person, is meant to secure certain opportunities amongst the dominant group (white race). The power of oppressive ideology is that people who are in subordinate groups end up normalising and internalising the oppression (Freire, 1970; 1973; Sewpaul, 2013).

The theory regards society as composed of groups with conflicting interests who compete for resources, power, and the imposition of their own ideological views of the world (Weinberg, 2008). This suggests that negative dominant ideologies in society can produce injustice, resulting in decreased quality of life and dignity of people that are not in power. Mullaly

(2010) asserts that social problems are more the result of “defective rules” which pathologise those who are marginalised and the consequence of institutional arrangements which maintain social hierarchies, rather than faulty socialisation of individuals. Thus, these inequalities are most likely to result in the exclusion of certain class, age, gender or race in the way that oppresses them.

Societies are comprised of hierarchies, which results in categorisation and classification. The major problem with hierarchies is that it involves power. According to Dominelli (2002) power relations are directed within a conjecture that those who are being dominated are passive victims of other people’s actions. They are denied recognition of their capabilities as social actors and the opportunity to demonstrate agency where possible. For example, in the context of teenage parents, confining teen parents to delinquency, denies them recognition of their abilities beyond teen motherhood/fatherhood. For the SA President to state that teen parents must be taken to a designated place where they are forced to learn, utterly denies them agency as human beings. Thus, power can allow the dominant group to easily attach labels to ‘other’ subordinate groups because they believe that they occupy better positions, and that they can exclude those who are different, or perhaps who have deviated from accepted norms. This process of othering involves treating people that are different as pathological, deviant, undesirable and excluding them (Dominelli, 2002).

Essential to the arguments of this study is that people (teen parents) are not simply treated as problems or burdens of society. Rather the point of departure is understanding teen parents as victims of structural injustices that exist in society, while recognising and valuing human agency. Furthermore, being aware of dominant ideologies that exacerbate oppression and subordination of other individuals or groups who do not meet the requirements of the ‘accepted norms’. In the context of teen parents, they are numerously labelled because they have deviated from the norm of having to attain employment, get married or be an adult before they can have children. Thus, they are judged for having children during their teen years, often, without understanding their experiences and over-looking structural injustices that exist. According to Hölscher & Bozalek (2012),

The human capabilities approach...insists that particularity and context are important in understanding what human beings require to flourish, which refers to their ability to do valuable things, and not to be constrained into a particular form of life. This, according to Fraser (2008), requires that

everybody is able to participate equitably, as full partners in interaction with others and as fully recognised members of society (participatory parity), which is therefore a central goal of social justice. Achieving participatory parity requires a just distribution of rights, opportunities and resources, as well as equal recognition of status and just framing, that is, the fair awarding of membership and political voice (p.4).

This means that it is important that this study attempts to understand where the teen parents are, their experiences, in order to avoid labelling them as the ‘_other’. Labelling teen parents, or anyone for that matter, is problematic because it restricts participation which results in unjust decisions and interventions for identified problems. Once the problem is mis-identified, presumably the interventions will not have as much impact. Thus, this theory frame makes one aware of the ‘_blame the victim’ approach, where privileged people may say, for example, that if teen parents could focus on their education, and stop being promiscuous, they would probably not experience problems as ‘_teenage parents’. The danger of such thinking is that ‘_oppression is blamed on the people who suffer most from it, while privilege and those that benefit from it remain invisible and relatively untouched’ (Mullaly, 2010: p.297).

Dominelli (2002) asserts that people can act in ways that reflect their own endeavours and interests at either accepting or resisting oppression. This means that people do not exclusively act or live on the terms set by other people. Thus, we can say that people have individual agency, they have choices. For example, it is not every teenager that becomes a parent while attending their secondary schooling at the designated secondary school, although they may all face similar social ills (considering the socio-economic context discussed under location earlier in this chapter). This means that some learners resisted some of the structural injustices that exist in the society, by making choices that they believed favoured them. However, as much as individual agency means having a choice, sometimes, if those choices are rooted in oppression, where people are allocated a second class citizenship because of their membership in a particular category or group (Dominelli, 2002; Mullaly, 2010), then we can say their choices were constrained (Sen, 1999). Nevertheless, it is important that this study recognises and acknowledges the individual agency that teen parents have.

The general approach and common conceptualisation of teenage parents as ‘_the problem’ is unjust. Structural or emancipatory theory requires that we dismantle our general mentality

and common sense assumptions with consciousness raising strategies as elucidated by Freire (1970; 1973). Open up space where individuals or groups can develop their own interpretations of their own experiences and see how dominant discourses operate to suppress their stories and identities. The aim is to minimise impulsive and submissive thinking, especially about the concept of equality. For example, according to Nkani (2012) most teenage births occur among the most socio-economically disadvantaged people. The centre of the matter is usually related to allocation of resources, who accesses them, who knows about them and who affords them. The question that may arise is; why are teenage births low among the upper class? I am not defending teenage parents, or promoting teenage pregnancies. Rather, I argue that the form of categorisation and labelling is unjust. Reframing thinking can contribute to a body of knowledge that might enable social workers and other professionals to work with teen parents differently.

Nkani (2012) asserts that poor working-class teenage parents become the target of stigmatisation and marginalisation because they have deviated from the expected life pattern of the middle-class (white), which is attaining tertiary education, establishing a career and later starting a family. This life route of middle-class conforms to the current governmental objectives of economic growth (Wilson & Huntington cited in Nkani, 2012). Then, it becomes just as unfortunate that those who are in the low-class (often) do not have the opportunities that are available to the middle-class. According to Dominelli (2002), the government provides regulations through legislation and social policies that are articulated to manage people's behaviour, mainly those surrounding their parenting capabilities and sexuality. It becomes more problematic when interventions from the government and other stakeholders' objectives and regulations, stem from the life trajectory of the middle-class or high-class, which mostly affect the poor.

Notwithstanding that high rates of teen parents can tamper with economic growth and to some extent hinder development, excluding teen parents from intervention planning, implementation and evaluation is unjust and does not contribute to the achievement of desired ends. Thus, allowing teenage parents to be experts in their lives can retain their agency, and possibly produce intervention strategies based on their own experiences. When professionals are too directive, and believe that they know what is best for the people that they work with, it can thwart development initiatives. The application of this theory will allow me to deal with the complexities of domination and dominant ideologies in the South

African context. How dominant ideologies, taken-for-granted assumptions and power contributes to oppression. In this case, the focus will be on the sample of this research. The analysis, conclusions as well as recommendations will be built on the experiences and views of teenage mothers and fathers. This theory will be a valuable framework in deconstructing socio-political discourses to reveal the relationship with individual struggles (Weinberg, 2008). It will bring to our attention how societal resources, such as the CSG, are used and the possible need for paradigm shifts in our conceptualisation of teen parents and the ways in which intervention is planned and implemented. Allan (2003) asserts that structural theorists recommend linking people to needed resources and greater advocacy initiatives through the direct inclusion of those involved. Hence, the value of this study in identifying structures that limit human potential, mainly because of the exclusion and categorisation of teenage parents.

1.10 Value of Study

This dissertation makes available to the SA government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), schools, researchers, advocates, policymakers and programme planners, including social workers, a comprehensive body of knowledge and evidence about teenage parents. It reflects global perspectives and statistics about teen pregnancies, as well as global definitions and conceptualisations. More importantly, it focuses on the South African context in relation to teen pregnancies and teen parents. It attempts to form a better understanding of teen parents from a structural point of view. Framed by critical theory, the dissertation makes recommendations in respect of those factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy, and it can help to meet the ongoing challenge of providing young people with the information and support they need when they are teen parents. Additionally, it is important for the practice of many professionals such as nurses, doctors and educators when dealing with teen parents, but specifically for the social workers who engage in casework, group work and community work related to teenage parents.

The findings of this research study can be useful to many practitioners in the Department of Education (DoE) such as educators, school-based social workers, school nurses, DoE heads of departments and other stakeholders involved in the South African education system. The findings present valuable knowledge on the different experiences of teenage parents, which can inform their practice with teenage parents. The more understanding they get from this

dissertation the more empathetic can their approaches be in handling issues related to the concerned population group.

The Department of Health and the Department of Social Development (DSD) in respect of policy formulation, and programme planning and implementation can also use these findings. Expansion of the knowledge that these institutions can enhance their responses. By sharing the results of the study in popular media such as the radio, television and print media, they can contribute to the deconstruction of dominant societal conceptualisations of teenage pregnancies.

1.11 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into five chapters:

Chapter One: This chapter gives an overview of the contextual and theoretical framework of the study. It includes the background of the study, together with the definition of frequently used concepts. It further provides the rationale of the study and identifies the research objectives and questions that underpin the study. Moreover, it gives the context of the location, the theoretical framework guiding the study and value of the study.

Chapter Two: This chapter consists of the literature review. It provides useful statistics from a global perspective, Africa, and South Africa. It tackles important discussions and references relevant literature on selected topics that cohere with the study's objectives and questions.

Chapter Three: This chapter deals with the methodology. It reports on the research design and sampling method. It also informs of the steps and materials used to collect and analyse the data. More importantly, it reports on how trustworthiness was maintained throughout the research and reports on matters relating to ethical issues and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four: This chapter is particularly interesting because it details the findings of the study. It is the essence of the study, as it quotes participants' words during interviews, and it compares and contrasts the findings, using the literature and the theory guiding the study.

Chapter Five: This chapter is the final section of the thesis. It summarises the whole dissertation, draws out the major conclusions of the study, and makes relevant recommendations.

1.12 Summary

In the above discussion, it is clear that there are various factors to consider when attempting to understand teenage parents. Firstly, the chapter introduced the background of the study and outlined the rationale for the study. Secondly, it stated the identified problem, and then outlined the study's objectives and research questions. Thirdly, it discussed relevant information on the location of the study, which comprised its spatial, demographic and socio-political-economic context. Lastly, it extensively discussed the theoretical framework guiding the study. Finally, it outlined the value of the study and the structure of the dissertation.

Throughout this chapter, I argued that teen parents are often labelled and defined negatively by many spheres of society, observing a blame the person approach, which is oppressive and limiting. This steered me to discussing the anti-oppressive theory, and its relevance to this study. The remaining chapters address, comprehensively, the issues raised in this chapter. The following chapter deals with the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy and parenting, which is a contentious issue, has been the subject of debates, literature, media, and research and results of which have influenced both public opinions and even amendments to public policies. Teenage parents have been largely described as problems, and a burden to families and society as a whole (Checkland & Wong, 1999; Weed, Nicholson & Farris, 2014). Other studies inform that teen pregnancy and parenthood can offer teenage parents a chance to change their lives for the better, and be seen as an option that is totally within their own control, and different from most conventional ways of changing their lives, such as education or employment (Cater & Coleman, 2006; Anwar & Stanistreet, 2014). However, Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod, & Letsoalo (2009) assert that "... transition to parenthood is a major event in the lifespan of any individual, but takes on special significance when it precedes the transition to education ... resources and social stock necessary to succeed as parents" (p.9). If parenthood is affirmed as the foremost change for any individual, including adults, then understanding the experiences of those who join parenthood in their teen years would be an important enquiry for research, policy and practice since there is a public concern about the high rates of teenage parents and pregnancies in the world. Yet, it is difficult, although some studies have, to articulate teenage parents and pregnancy as a mere problem on its own, without considering other factors that contribute to the phenomenon.

This chapter includes a review of appropriate peer-reviewed articles, newspapers, books and other relevant academic sources to further discuss the interests of the study, as recommended by Dawidowicz (2010). It presents the review of literature related to the overview of teenage parents in a global context, Africa and particularly South Africa as it is the study location. Additionally, it looks at South African National Education Policy (National Education Policy Act of 1996) as it is important in understanding school-going teenage parents. It moves on to discuss the public conceptualisations of both teenage mothers and fathers. It then significantly provides literature on the causes of high rates of teen parents and pregnancies in

a South African context. Furthermore, it discusses the learner roles that are intertwined with the parental roles. Since the study focuses on school-going parents, it is important to be informed about how they negotiate these roles in order to balance their lives. In addition, an important aspect that is discussed is social security and its relationship to teen parents. Since the definitions and public conceptualisations of teenage parents cannot be discussed or understood in isolation from dominant constructions of parenthood, this chapter also discusses the dominant constructions of both fatherhood and motherhood, and how it affects teenage parents. Moreover, various challenges and consequences experienced by teenage parents are also included, focusing on the psychosocial and economic factors. Finally, the chapter concludes with acknowledging various concepts discussed throughout the literature review, it also recaps some of the issues and concerns raised in the overall literature presented.

2.2 Global background of teenage parents overview

Globally, recent statistics indicate that the average birth rate among 15 to 19 year olds is 49 per 1000 girls (World Health Organization, 2014). The high level of teenage pregnancy suggests a high number of teenagers becoming parents at a young age. The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy has influenced broad discussions on international policies and various intervention programmes that were seen as tools to curb the ‘problem’ of teenagers becoming parents at a young age (Aria, 2009; Holgate et al., 2006). In other words, globally, teenage parents are seen as a disturbance to the economy and therefore unwanted, resulting in labelling them as ‘problems’ that call for intervention. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2014) asserts that adolescent pregnancy is a major contributor to maternal and child mortality, and to the cycle of ill health and poverty. Although teenage pregnancies are a social problem and indisputably warrant interventions, the phenomenon cannot be disarticulated from wider and deeper societal concerns, inequalities, injustices, and adult values and norms around sexuality and parenting behaviours.

There is no doubt that various interventions have had an impact, as WHO (2014) reported that there has been a marked decrease in the birth rates among adolescent girls since 1990 in the world. However, despite the downward trend of teen pregnancies, societies are still witnessing teen parents in their communities at a substantial rate. The limitation with

worldwide statistics is that they look at the average position of the subject in the world, which unfortunately do not apply equally to all countries, particularly to those with poorer economic status. Therefore, the general decline assigned to teen pregnancies worldwide is not a true reflection of all countries, especially where hospitals (where statistics are often obtained) are minimal, or where children are still traditionally delivered. This is not to contest rates released by WHO or other sources, but rather to raise awareness that regardless of the recorded declines, teen parents are rising in some contexts, and a possible approach that is radical in nature, is needed.

2.3 Overview of teenage pregnancy and parenting in Africa

While global declines have been noted in statistics, Sub-Saharan Africa remains to have the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world (United Nations cited in Panday et al, 2009; WHO, 2014). Nzama (2004) asserts that historically most African cultures' approved way of having children was for the mother and father to be married. This marriage did not necessarily take into account the ages concerned. In fact, according to Nzama (2004) and Nkwanyana (2011) young teenage girls were usually married to older men. Hence, teenage pregnancy was not seen as an issue. It was only problematic when the teenager or woman was pregnant out-of-wedlock. However, the concern was not the age but the assumed stability and prevention of poverty (Nkwanyana, 2011). Africans were not concerned, and probably did not understand poverty recycling, that is now noted in research and statistics such as World Bank and WHO (UNFPA, 2013; World Bank, 2014). According to a drafted concept note in *–Course on ending Child Marriage and Harmful Traditional Practices in Africa: Mechanisms and Strategies”* released by the Department of Social Affairs, African Union Commission, Africa has the second highest rate of child marriage in the world, with West and Central Africa having approximately 40% girls marrying before 18 years (African Union, 2015). This suggests that the phenomenon of teenage parents (more focus on teen mothers rather than teen fathers) was historically overlooked and continues to be in Africa, especially if the teenage parent conforms to cultural requirements such as marriage.

Africa is characterised by its culture and ceremonies that are highly embraced and respected within communities. This, however, does not suggest that the culture embraced is in the best interest of all. For instance, in some African countries such as South Africa, Swaziland and

Zambia, virginity testing is practiced and celebrated by many African people (Nkosi, 2013). A virginity test in Africa is a practice of determining whether a female person has had sexual intercourse (Vukunta, 2010). The test is presumed as a celebration of purity of the girls, also valued as a preventative strategy for teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Regardless of contestations and condemnation of the practice by the United Nations, with South African Commission on Gender Equality describing the practice as a “discriminatory, invasive of privacy...impinging on the dignity of young girls and unconstitutional” (Vukunta, p. 34), the practice is still happening. Nevertheless, teenagers are still falling pregnant, and teenage males are impregnating them, despite the assertion that such cultural practices are aimed at preventing premarital sex.

It is problematic that many African cultural rituals are directed to womanhood, girlhood and their purity as a way of preventing teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, but the male figures are not equally provided with the same. This indicating a gender disparity in dealing with teen pregnancies and HIV/AIDS, these are a result of both male and female sexual activities. According to Kambarami (2006) “In the Shona culture, once a girl reaches puberty all teachings are directed towards pleasing one’s future husband as well as being a gentle and obedient wife... she is taught how to use it (*her body*) for the benefit of the male race” (p.3). This does not only show how some African cultural practices reinforce gender inequality, but also suggest that the age of the girl concerned is generally not considered. In other words, once a girl is fertile, regardless of age, she is ready to be a parent. Such practices raise concerns regarding manhood or fatherhood, where it is common for male figures not to be taught or prepared to be a ‘good’ husband to their future wives. Although, amongst the Xhosa tribe in SA, a ceremony of initiating manhood known as *ukulukwa* (ritual circumcision in IsiXhosa language) is practiced despite the reported medical complications (Papu & Vester, 2006). Nevertheless, many African rituals focus on the females. While this study is not focused on cultural rituals amongst the Africans, providing brief information is relevant in an attempt to understand teenage parents, as a subject which cannot be separated from matters related to social structures based on racial, cultural, age as well as gender influences in their environment.

With access to knowledge, policies and information, some Africans have come to identify teenage parents as a problem and burden to society. The realisation is that having children nowadays at a young age paves a pathway to poverty (for some), and older people are left

with a burden to take care of the children while the mothers or fathers attend school (Nzama, 2004; Zondo, 2006; Schatz, 2007). Notwithstanding the reports on decreased teenage pregnancies, and regardless of how the understanding of teen parents has evolved in Africa, the fact is that teenagers are still becoming parents. The phenomenon of teenage parents is a result of various, complex inter-locking factors, with culture being one of them.

2.4 South Africa and teenage parents

The increasing rate of teenage pregnancy is a major concern for South African youth and the population at large. According to Greathead (cited in Nkwanyana, 2011) teenage pregnancy has become a critical social problem in South Africa (SA), and pregnancy under the age of seventeen has been viewed as a devastation for individuals, family and society. This suggests that teenage parents are seen as a burden to the society as whole by having babies at a young age. The high rates of pregnancies occur in spite of free contraceptives services, including emergency contraception at the public clinics and hospitals, including some secondary schools (Nkwanyana, 2011). Although teenage pregnancies are not only caused by the lack of access to contraceptives, but it is important to acknowledge SA's intervention initiatives such as Love Life programs, awareness campaigns by Department of Health, Department of Social Development, Life Orientation subject by the Department of Education and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as Life Line. Nonetheless, it is clear that these are not enough, as statistics indicate that teen pregnancy rates in South Africa are currently at 51 per 1000 teenagers (World Bank, 2014).

There are many debates in South Africa on the urgency of pregnancy and parenting among teenagers, factors that contribute to, and the consequences it has for the teen parents, families and the country as a whole. Although statistics indicate that there has been a general decline in teenage pregnancies (WHO, 2014), according to a newspaper article published on World AIDS Day –there was a significant number of new infections every day. A quarter of these were in women between the ages of 15 and 24” (News24, 2015). This suggests that the youth is still not using contraceptives such as condoms, putting them at high risk of pregnancies, HIV infection and other health related issues such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). This is definitely a challenge, which SA does not need, as this means more expenditure on public medical treatments and staffing, which may compromise other developments of the

country. Such statistics suggest that SA still has extra miles to travel before reaching zero new HIV infections and AIDS related deaths, as targeted by goal 6 of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2012). Thus, awareness and prevention initiatives are still desperately mandatory, especially amongst the most vulnerable group (teenagers and young adults).

In South Africa, teen mothers are widely spoken about, exposed with media topics such as *“Teenage pregnancy dropouts create ostracised generation”* (SABC, 2013) and *“Pregnancy Tsunami”* (The Times, 2011). While these topics are eye-catching, the attention is drawn to teen mothers while the teenage fathers are being neglected. Although it may be difficult to tell the number of teen fathers, but teen pregnancies suggest their existence too. Therefore, if media condemns teen pregnancies, so should the teen fathers be included in such articles. According to Morrell (2005) teenage fathers are usually not given attention, generally neglected in literature, even their experiences in research are scant. Hence, one of the aims of this study is to partially attempt to bridge this gap, as one of the study’s objective is to understand the experiences of teenage fathers though without the exclusion of teen mothers. After all, it is salient that SA still has a long way to go, in order to get to a state where there are no new HIV infections and teen pregnancies.

2.4.1 Teenage parents in KwaZulu-Natal

Considering the demographics and the location of the study that it is in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), providing a brief overview of the province in relation to teenage parents is important. The Department of Health figures show that from April 2012 to March 2013, more than 21 000 girls under 18 years of age visited government hospitals for antenatal care (Wolhuter, 2013). These statistics reveal that the number of KZN teens becoming pregnant remains very high. KZN recorded 16 pregnant Grade 3 learners in 2009, which was seen to pose an alarming threat to SA and a call for intervention (SABC, 2013). Besides the economic and social development impediments that high teenage pregnancies contribute to in the province, this might jeopardise the life opportunities of those who become parents at a young age.

KZN has attempted interventions through various campaigns in hospitals, schools, universities and clinics. Yet, despite the province’s wide awareness campaigns by different

departments to combat the issue of teen pregnancies, minimal impact has been achieved. So what is the problem exactly? Although an answer to this question would be difficult to answer, but one can express that because of different and diverse influences of teenage pregnancy and high rates of teen parents, a critical consideration, at a maximum, needs to be considered before planning, implementing and evaluating intervention strategies. This can begin by actively involving active participation of those experiencing and living or have lived as teenage parents, a comprehensive approach including traditional leaders, families, teen fathers, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders.

2.5 South African National Education Policy and school-going teenage parents

Policies and legal frameworks play a pivotal role in trying to achieve a balance across all citizens and attempts to solve identified problems of a country. While policies are important in solving problems of a country, from time to time they overlap and contradict each other. According to Shefer, Bhana & Morrell (2013) the South African National Education Policy has made efforts to support teenage parents in the period of being mothers while they are at school in order to facilitate successful completion. The Department of Education (DoE) upholds the SA law that permits pregnant teenagers to be enrolled in schools. However, the DoE has not been specific with parents who are teenage fathers enrolled in schools. According to Nkani (2012):

The DoE provides only a legal imperative that ensures that pregnant teenagers (*females*) remain in school and are permitted to re-enter after childbirth, besides the (*controversial*) policy of the DoE (2007), the *Measurement on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*, which gives a directive that no young mother should be allowed school re-entry before the end of two years after giving birth and that no learner should be readmitted in the same year that she has given birth. This policy is in contradiction to the Constitution of SA... as it impinges on the rights of young mothers. With the SASA (*South African Schools Act*) stating that teenage mothers should be allowed school re-entry after giving birth and not be discriminated against (Bhana et al., 2010), there is an indication that they are not given adequate support to balance both motherhood and schooling (p.52).

To further Nkani's argument, school-going teenage fathers are not included at all in this policy. This raises critical concerns and questions about matters related to gender equality that is, again attempted by this very policy and the SA Constitution. In my view, this policy assumes a gender-based parental role for teen mothers; it has a tendency to uphold dominant constructions of motherhood (which will be later discussed in this chapter). Nonetheless, this shows that teenage parents, as well as interventions, in this case through policy are influenced by broader social factors and people's responses to teenage pregnancy, parenting and sexuality (Shefer et al, 2013).

According to a study that explored the challenges faced by teenage mothers in schools conducted by Mr Zondo (2006) in KZN, besides learners discriminating against the teen parents, teachers also perpetuated the exclusion in class. This practice is intimidating and unjust. It is unacceptable for 'supposedly' informed people like teachers who are aware of the laws, and trusted with learners' development, to fuel discrimination and division. As a result, negative perceptions and attitudes contribute to the decision to drop out of school, which affected teens attribute to the lack of empathy and inconsideration from some of the educators (Zondo, 2006; Molapo, 2011). For example, Buhle, a research participant who was a teenage mother in Zondo's study (2006) said, *"...we become humiliated... some teachers tell us that we are old... we are not supposed to be in his class... we should be working"* (p.55). Experiences such as these inform us about broader societal issues, connected to generalised yet oppressive conceptualisations and constructions of parenthood, or perhaps in this case, motherhood, as well as discrimination on the basis of gender and age.

2.6 Conceptualisations of teenage parents

According to Singh (2005) –"Children Bearing Children"; "Teenage Catastrophe"; "Our Greatest Demographic Disaster"... (p.24) are some of the ways in which teenage parents have been described. Teenage parents have been characterised as being delinquent, promiscuous, immoral, increasing unemployed population, lacking educational attainments, burden to state welfare and disturbance to the economy (Checkland & Wong, 1999; Salusky, 2013). These characterisations associated with the teen parents, are limited and have a tendency to encourage division and exclusion of teenage parents. There are policies and intervention projects developed 'for' the 'problem' of teenage parents. Yet, the voices of

teenage parents in developing those policies and interventions are silent. These conceptualisations are therefore pathological, and place these teenagers at a disadvantage as they are discriminated against the basis of their age (Holgate et al., 2006). If social service practitioners are to assist teenage parents, they need to be reflexive in their thinking in order to empower these teen parents and to enable them to become more resilient than to feel less of themselves. Discussing them as the ‘_other’ who are delinquent and as a source of straining the economy is not a radical route. Policy, practice and development needs to be informed by the lived experiences and views of teen parents.

Warwick (2008) asserts that positioning young parents, and classifying them as the problem to society is an oppressive approach. Therefore teenage parents must not be discussed as if they do not have the ability to think because they joined (sometimes not by choice) motherhood and/or fatherhood at an early age of their life. This is not to say that high rates of teenage parents is not an issue, but the argument is rested in the critical perspectives of allowing dominant ideologies, myths and conceptions to contribute to further marginalisation of teen parents. Thus this research aims to discourage the ignorance about teenage parents through documenting their own narratives and experiences.

2.6.1 Teenage Mothers

Teenagers who join the role of being a mother are described and defined differently. –Among the terms used are ‘_young mother’...‘_schoolgirl mother’...‘_teenage mother’...Language...reflects the social processes and structures...thus the choice of labelling terminology is significant to the way in which the described...person or people comes to be interpreted” (Holgate et al., 2006: p.11). This means that definitions constructed to categorise people, in this context teen mothers, shows how they are perceived. This also informs us about how stigmatisation is connected to ways in which people are defined. O’Reilly (2010) asserts that in many societies there is a hierarchy of motherhood with some mothers seen as more appropriate than others. Therefore, suggesting that based on certain characteristics, constructed by society, some mothers may be defined as ‘_good’ while others are ‘_bad’. Teenage mothers are usually characterised negatively, with attributes ranging from delinquency and promiscuity to birth complications and poverty (O’Reilly, 2010). This means that teenage mothers usually fall under the bad or inappropriate sort of mother, as perceived by the society. This inappropriateness is usually attributed to their age (Holgate et al., 2006;

O'Reilly, 2010), and they are not trusted with child rearing and the general role of being a 'good' mother. Again one may be sceptical, and question: who is in the position to define a good mother? While the role of being a teenage mother may be demanding, it does not suggest the impossibility of successful parenting.

Though there are successful teenage parenting cases, literature argues that young mothers and their children confront higher maternal, child mortality as well as lower educational and economic outcomes compared to adult mothers (Salusky, 2013; WHO, 2013). This means that there are not only medical risks for females who give birth at a young age, but that there are socio-economic factors that affect their lives. Yet some studies suggest that when adequate medical care and social support is available, medical risks only increase for females below the age of 15 (Lawlor & Shaw, 2002). Although the concerns about issues such as child mortality and lower educational outcomes for teenage mothers need to be considered in interventions, conceptualising teenage mothers to the limits of society's anxieties can further marginalise and discriminate against them.

2.6.2 Teenage Fathers

Kiselica (2008) and Paschal (2006) assert that teen fathers face challenges of being described as predators, uncaring and absent (cited in Weber, 2012). This shows that teen fathers are the victims of society's labelling and categorisation too, which can limit their potential as fathers to their children. This is because if one is negatively labelled, one can end up normalising the negative ideas, feel less of themselves, and lose confidence in their abilities. Teenage fathers have been described as having reduced income potential, low socio-economic status, poor academic performance and higher school drop-out rates, careless sexual practices and rare use of contraceptives (Paschal, Lewis-Moss & Hsiao, 2011). These indicate a strong link with characteristics of impulsive and gullible behaviour, which limit teenage fathers. However, some fathers do reject their children, deny paternity and deliberately do not take part in the lives of their partners and children. Still, a critical question that may arise about the dominant characterisations of fathers is: is father absenteeism purely and directly linked to only carelessness? Father absenteeism needs to be understood in relation to other factors embedded in learned norms and taken-for-granted assumptions about masculinity and dominant ideas about fatherhood, and socio-economic issues.

Contrary of the above descriptions of teenage fathers, Morrell (2005) asserts that it is not all men that threaten harmony, democracy and peace. He further substantiates my perception of father absenteeism mentioned above, and asserts that particular constructions of masculinity legitimatises the unfair declarations of power of men over women and their children (Morrell, 2005). This means that dominant constructions on the basis of gender influence the way that fathers understand their roles. Moreover, according to Morrell (2005), when males aspire to fill the fatherhood role, they do not only benefit individually but contribute positively to society. This is because when men are given a chance to play their roles, they are left without much reason to follow negative masculine characteristics. Morrell (2005) asserts that fathers who are positively engaged in the lives of their children are less likely to be depressed, commit suicide or abuse their partners. Therefore, there is likelihood of benefits for many families, when hegemonic forms of masculinity are minimised or removed. Hence, it is vital to understand the role of teen fathers in the lives of their children.

According to the findings from the study titled *'The Invisible Father'* conducted in South Africa, teen fathers embraced their children and their role of being a father (Jacobs & Marais, 2013). Therefore, sometimes, the case is not that they do not want to be good fathers to their children. It is important to acknowledge the battle they are up against, which is centred in masculine hegemony, linked to deeper societal issues embedded in ideology and societal constructions, and expected gender roles. It is clear that fatherhood cannot be disarticulated from issues of society, same as teen mothers, as they learn certain ideas and apply them to their lives, often without reflexivity and consciousness or resistance to the acquired social norms, and accepted ways of doing things.

2.7 Causes of teenage pregnancy and childbirth in South Africa

From the above discussion, it is with no doubt that high rates of teenage parents is influenced by diverse and various factors. The phenomenon cannot be understood as an accidental circumstance, but rather as a consequence of existing societal imbalances or harms. It is vital for the study to consider teenage parents as human beings, who face challenging life situations in their environment. Although literature confirms that high rates of teenage parents are a global phenomenon, it is important to be cognisant about the context as the

causes may vary from country to country. Hence, it is relevant for this study to discuss causes in the context of this research study location, South Africa.

Teenage pregnancy in SA is driven by many factors including: gender inequalities; gendered expectations of how teenage boys and girls should behave; sexual taboos and sexual permissiveness, sugar daddies and age disparities, poverty; poor access to contraceptives and termination of pregnancies; judgmental attitudes of some health care workers toward contraception, dominant ideas around abortion; high levels of gender-based violence; and poor sex education (Nzama, 2004, Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009; Chigona & Chetty, 2008). This depicts a complex picture of the many underlying factors that contribute to the high number of teenage parents in the country. Some of these influences are rooted in disadvantage, structural injustices of society, aligned with poor access to resources but some are based on dominant ideology, and taken-for granted assumptions about how a certain category of people should behave or act.

The following are some of the causes of teenage pregnancies and high rates of teen parents in SA. It is important to acknowledge that there are numerous causes of high rates of teen parents and pregnancies in SA, but only five causes have been selected for discussion in this section with careful observation of relevance to the designated population and the study's objectives.

2.7.1 Gender inequalities and gendered expectations

According to Nkani (2012) men in African culture control sexuality and fertility of women. This means that men usually hold hegemonic positions when it comes to decision-making on sexuality matters. This is connected to masculine ideas and practices of society, which influence such thinking and ideology. Noar & Morokoff (cited in Kabikira, 2010), in a research study on the relationship between masculinity and attitudes to condoms among university undergraduates, found that those with high degrees of masculine identity had a consistently high negative attitude to condoms and low usage levels. This supports the contention that gender dynamics and gendered expectations strongly influence the cause and impact of high fertility rates among youth.

Kambarami (2006) asserts that males are socialized to view themselves as breadwinners and heads of households, whilst females are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers. Ideas such as these indicate a gap that limits discussions and opinions between males and females about sex matters, even though there are risks for both the parties. Women end up occupying vulnerable positions because of the perception that they should be submissive and comply with decisions taken by men. The vulnerable positions secured by most women makes them more susceptible to HIV/AIDS and other sexually related diseases, and undeniably place them at a higher risk of falling pregnant. When the man is powerful and holds authority, a matter relating to condom usage would be a difficult topic to tackle in a relationship. Even though the woman may not agree, she may accept authority based on the gender norms that exist in society. Thus, teen females may feel obliged to submit to their boyfriends, whether it be teenagers or older men. As for teen males, they may feel that they can dictate what suits them in the relationship, because of the society's gender role construction. This makes both teenage females and males to be exposed to HIV/AIDS, STIs and unintended pregnancies.

2.7.2 Sugar daddy phenomenon and the age gap

Sugar daddies is a compelling cause related to HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies in SA. A sugar daddy is described as an adult male who exchanges money and/or gifts for sexual favours from a much younger woman (Luke, 2005). Research shows that some of the girls pregnant in schools are impregnated by older men, who are usually working (Heumann, 2011; Molapo, 2011). The relationship between young girls and sugar daddies is usually characterised by sex on reciprocal terms; the older man gives money and gifts to the young girl, in return to have sex, more like indirect prostitution. Luke (2005) substantiates this claim when she states that, "sugar daddy relationships are associated with both age and economic asymmetries, which are believed to limit young women's power to negotiate safer sexual behaviour" (p.6). The disadvantage in such relationships is that the young girls may find it difficult to negotiate condom use with the older men. In this kind of a relationship the girl occupies the position of a person who must comply and not question too much, even if she recognises the risks. The gendered-related and age gap closes room for discussion and reasonable agreement on condom use, as well as other forms of contraceptives.

In the study titled *“From „sugar daddies” to „sugar babies”: exploring a pathway among age-disparate sexual relationships, condom use and adolescent pregnancy in South Africa”*, the findings suggested that the inability to negotiate condom use in age-disparate sexual relationships drive teen pregnancies (Toska, Lucie, Cluver, Boyes, Pantelic & Kuo, 2015). The study further discussed the issues of power imbalance based on age, whereby the age gap difference between parties permits one to rule the other (Toska et al., 2015). This study does not only reflect gender inequalities but also shows how sugar daddy relationships can contribute to teen parents, HIV/AIDS and STIs. However, sugar daddy relationships cannot be separated from resource inequalities that exist in the society. If teenagers get involved with older men because they want to get money or gifts, it should indicate lack of resources and limited access, which is also aligned with poverty.

2.7.3 *Sexual taboos and sexual permissiveness*

Sexual taboos interfere with the facts related to sexual matters, for both men and women. Sexual taboos also put both men and women at risk of contracting sexually related diseases and unplanned pregnancies. According to Tsoaledi (2015) cultural beliefs about sexuality and fertility can be seen as a factor that contributes to teen pregnancies. Sexual taboos are closely related to culture, as certain beliefs and myths about sexuality are produced from cultural values. For example, in some cultures falling pregnant at an early age is highly valued as it proves fertility before marriage (Tsoaledi, 2015). Sexual taboos are not only fuelled by culture, even religion can. For example, some churches regard sexual education as a taboo (Makiwane, 2010). Therefore, religious beliefs and norms can perpetuate ignorance on matters relating to sexuality and fertility.

Although institutions that exist in the society do cause inequalities and discrimination, an individual’s ability to think for themselves, especially in the presence of risk is important to acknowledge. To illustrate this, Dominelli (2002) asserts that *“the dynamics of oppression provide the context in which oppressed individuals...exercise agency and attempt to shape their world as they envisage it”* (p.9). According to Ncube (2009) a high degree of ignorance contributes to the failure of prevention of teenage parents, in the context of teenagers seeking to meet their sexual needs whilst not being careful about the possible results of their sexual

activities. Hence, sexual permissiveness is also linked to the individual esteem and perception of risk.

2.7.4 Issues related to contraceptives

It is without doubt that there have been many attempts to spread information and services on contraceptives use. These attempts are visible in hospitals, clinics, schools, tertiary institutions and other domains. However, teenage unplanned pregnancies are still at a high rate, including abortion which means young people are still not using contraceptives. Against this brief background, the following will give some of the motives for teenagers not to use some of the available contraceptives in SA.

(a) Poor access to contraceptives

Although the South African Government and other NGOs have tried to reach poor people in rural areas, there is still a gap in comparison to towns and urban areas. People in the rural areas associate their reasons of non-adherence to contraceptives to the clinics being far from them, and the queues being long when one wants to get access (Nkwanyana, 2011). Therefore, for rural women accessing contraceptives means money that they do not have, as a result they end up opting for having sex without using any contraceptives. This is substantiated by the National Contraception Family Planning Policy (Department of Health, 2012), which asserts that women living in poor socio-economic environments or in rural areas are likely to have limited knowledge of contraception and limited access to available contraceptive facilities. It is important to note that socio-economic conditions of people are also influential in their choices, which may include high risk behaviours that may lead to pregnancy and/or HIV/AIDS. Thus, the decisions and debates around the use of contraceptives must take into account the unfair distribution of resources, and the inequality that exists. It is important to acknowledge the structural forces in decisions regarding contraceptives, as these are intertwined. However, the problem with many policies and interventions is the tendency to treat circumstances in isolation or give attention on another whilst neglecting others.

(b) Myths about contraceptives

According to Nkwanyana (2011) negative perceptions about contraceptives play a significant role in whether teenagers will use contraceptives or not. Such conceptions often arise from false beliefs about contraception, such as: a condom could slip off during intercourse and be left inside a women's vagina, condoms reduce sexual enjoyment, and condoms are of a poor quality, and fear of the physical effects (weight gain or nausea) and fertility-related side effects of contraceptive use (Panday et al, 2009). In a study conducted in South Africa, a research participant said that *“...Other people say if you use injection you will grow fatter and fatter...”* (Wood, Maepa & Jewkes, 1998: p.27). This shows some of the causes of teen pregnancies, where girls do not want to use certain contraceptives because of the stigma attached to it.

(c) Judgmental attitudes of health care workers toward contraception

According to Ncube (2009) a research study conducted by the Medical Research Council showed that the attitudes of nurses at the hospitals and other health centers are a barrier to teen contraceptive use in SA. These attitudes hinder teenagers from seeking protection and it contributes to generation of teenage parents. This is not new, it is even reflected in history, in a study on adolescent sex and contraceptive experiences conducted in SA back in 1998, one of the participants said, *“If I go to the clinic and enquire about sex related issues, I find a nurse. Instead of giving me the relevant information they laugh at me and say „a boy of your age doesn't know about these issues”* (Wood et al, 1998: p.27). This shows how attitudes of some health care workers hinder teenagers' access to contraceptives because of the professional power and position that nurses occupy. When the teenagers feel threatened, and judged for asking questions related to sexual matters, they resort to not using contraceptives. According to Dominelli (2002) oppression is constructed through peoples' actions with and behaviours towards others. Thus, chasing teens away from clinics because of their age, is not only oppressive and unjust, but contributes to HIV/AIDS, STIs, unplanned pregnancies and high rates of teen parents in SA.

According to the Department of Health, Batho Pele Principle number three informs that citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration (Department of Health, 2001). Yet, in matters important to service users there is visible ill-treatment and inconsideration. It is important that the health care workers are provided with adequate information, and that there is monitoring of services offered to users. Although the judgmental attitudes of some health care workers are unacceptable and limiting to the objective of contraceptives, they cannot be disarticulated from social interactions and dominant ideas that exist in society. Dominant ideologies of sexuality and intercourse are usually associated with older and married people. This does not justify ill-treatment of service users, regardless of age or any other category. In other words, dominant ideas deserve to be challenged in order to reach equality.

2.7.5 Poverty

According to Tsoaledi (2015) teenage pregnancy can be a result of poverty because some girls are involved sexually with older men where monetary incentives and other goods are exchanged for sexual favours (very similar to sugar daddy phenomenon discussed in 2.7.2). Poverty is a large contributor to many causes of teen pregnancies (WHO, 2013). For example, poverty limits access to resources. For example, if someone does not have money to go to the clinic or hospital, that person will not be able to easily access available contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy. Lack of resources lead some teenage females to have sugar daddies, or teenage males to abuse alcohol, which contributes to risky sexual behaviour.

Parke (2015) asserts that pregnancy rates vary by race, socio-economic status, geographical location and education. In SA, Parke (2015) further asserts that most pregnancies occur among poor African girls in townships. This shows that the circumstance mostly affects certain categories of people. As much as poverty cannot be assumed as the main contributor, but it can be seen as the root of other causes discussed above. Nkwanyana (2011) asserts that there is a substantial body of evidence indicating that one of the most consistent risk factors for early pregnancy is lower socio-economic status and poverty. Several studies conducted in Africa indicate that teenage parents are more likely to have been brought up in disadvantaged social environments and come from poor families (Panday, et al 2009 cited in Nkwanyana

2011). This shows that poverty plays a significant role in teenage pregnancies and high rates of teen parents. Thus, tackling poverty in SA would possibly decrease rates of teen parents.

2.8 Abortion as a unplanned pregnancy prevention method

As stated by the constitution of South Africa, a person from the age of 12 years can independently consent to having her pregnancy terminated (Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 92 of 1996). This is one of the Statutes that raised many questions from the public as different people have different beliefs. Dominantly, it did not sit well with the public. Nevertheless, teens are accessing this service regardless of public moral panic, as reported by Jimmy Seepe –“So many abortions are being performed at hospitals and clinics across South Africa - between 2 500 and 3 000 every month...” (Health Systems Trust, 2015). The question that arises is: why society still witnesses a considerable number of teen parents if such a service is free and accessible? A possible assertion that might give insight to this question is asserted by Gilbert & Sewpaul (2014) when they say:

Abortion raises controversial ethical questions, often linked to religious and cultural beliefs, which influence attitudes toward and decisions about abortion (Adamczyk, 2009; Jelen & Wilcox, 2003). The influence of religion is not absolute; individual values and situational factors mediate the influence of religion on moral decision making. As the major world religions view abortion as murder, women who choose abortions might experience guilt, shame, self-hatred, and fear of God (Trybulski, 2005; Vukelic', Kapamadzija, & Kondic', 2010). Religious views are generally informed by the Kantian categorical imperative (CI), based on deontological or duty-based ethics that presume an eminently autonomous, rational being. The distinguishing feature of the CI is that moral worth is judged by the rightness or wrongness of an act itself (p.84).

What is illuminated in the above quote reminds us how a person will always be connected to their environment. This means that apart from legal acts and regulations, people conform to other laws which influences their decision-making. Hence, the substantial amount of teen parents' rates is also linked to that reality. However, the findings by Gilbert & Sewpaul (2014) with 15 women in the Durban metropolitan area concluded that financial constraints,

and women's concerns about their incapacity to afford the child, poverty, unemployment, child neglect and child abandonment were some of the main reasons to terminate pregnancy. These findings are linked with dominant features of poor South African communities where women bear the anxieties and fears of financial expenses that come with childbirth as if it is their absolute responsibility, the men, who are evenly accountable often disappear. Thus, no matter what the public panic is, it is a human right issue on the part of the women that are placed with responsibility for the pregnancy. "This is a discourse that privileges men into abandoning their partners and evading responsibility, leaving women to cope on their own. Women have internalized this and have come to accept responsibility for becoming pregnant, for making the abortion decision, and for coping with its consequences" (Gilbert & Sewpaul, 2014: p. 86). This shows, that even abortion is linked to injustices and oppression in society, especially in this regard, the gender inequalities that are persistent in societies. Therefore, it is important that this study finds the reasons of teen parents' childbirth.

2.9 Learner roles versus parental roles

The interest in topics related to teenage parents is influenced by the enquiry of most researchers, wanting to understand how school-going teenagers negotiate the roles of being a learner and being a parent at the same time. According to Erickson's psychosocial stages of development, the adolescent stage is characterised by finding identity versus role confusion, where teenagers test themselves in order to find out where they belong (McLeod, 2008). Therefore, the adolescent stage has its critical demands. However, the role of being a parent is another ball game; adults are sometimes frustrated and anxious about the role. This does not merely suggest that teenage parents would be incapable to balance their lives, or perhaps not succeed in playing both the roles at the same time. Hence, it was important for this study to understand how learners manage to be mothers and/or fathers to their children. Shefer et al. (2013), assert that the experience of being a parent while being a learner is influenced by broader social and school responses to teenage pregnancy, parenting and sexuality which can make the life of a teenager either manageable or imbalanced.

2.9.1 *Teen mothers and schooling*

According to Grant & Hallman (2008) of all teenage girls who fall pregnant only about a third stay in school during their pregnancy and return after childbirth. Although some girls return to school following childbirth, having a child can have a devastating effect on their schooling (Zondo, 2006; Nzama, 2004). This can be expected as transition to parenthood may be difficult for teenagers, due to the demand of mediating the roles of being a parent whilst a learner. Zondo (2006) asserts that teen mother's learning is burdened with problems, as they are expected to behave as ordinary girls in school, yet at the same time be mothers to their children. The intertwined, yet challenging roles that teen mothers have to fulfil usually interrupts their studies, and sometimes contributes to poor academic performance (Malahlela, 2012). The unfortunate part is that poor academic performance can infringe on other economic factors in future, where these young mothers may find themselves in unwanted positions of poor financial prospects, which may have negative consequences on their lives and their child/children (see more in section 2.11 of this chapter). Pillow cited in Chigona & Chetty (2008) found that many teen mothers become more determined to complete school for the sake of their babies. This suggests that in some instances children of teen mothers serve as a source of motivation and perseverance for a better life. Not everything is negative in being a teen mother while at school, though difficult, some mothers do manage to balance their lives. But we cannot assume this case for every teen mother.

2.9.2 *Teenage fathers and schooling*

Teen fathers have been conceptualised in different ways, but prominent descriptions appear as negative, uncertain and careless. According to Weber (2012) many studies report that teen fathers are usually involved in deviant behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse, fights and gang membership. According to a study conducted by Helen Glikman (2004) teenage fathers experience behavioural and academic difficulties and usually complete fewer grades. Thus, school-going teen fathers also experience academic difficulties, but this does not necessarily suggest that it is because they have children. Their academic difficulties may be linked to other things such as their deviant behaviours, for example if one abuses alcohol, it can result in unprotected sex, and often pupils who have behavioural problems do not academically

perform well. The issues outlined in literature about teenage fathers, unfortunately does not clearly inform us about how young men negotiate the role of being a learner while being a father, and generally their experiences as school-going teen fathers. Hence, a need for this study that attempted to understand the experiences of teen fathers in negotiating the two critical roles.

2.10 Teenage parents and social security

The National Economic Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) in United States which is an initiative intended to advocate for basic human rights standards for all its citizens, emphasises that social security is important for poverty alleviation, and that everyone, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability or language should have access without being discriminated (NESRI, 2015). What is described by the NESRI has not been the case with teenage parents; they have been described as people who want to make the top list for free housing and other welfare benefits (Weed et al., 2014). The stigma attached to social security grant in relation to teen parents suggests that young people only fall pregnant because they want to access certain resources offered by the government. Even so, this should alert us about the structural disadvantage that people face, which encourages them to fall pregnant in order to access certain resources. If there is any legitimacy to this claim should policy makers not be asking: why not improve access to resources before people decide to fall pregnant for access to resources? There are many debates about the relationship between social security grants and teenage pregnancy, and literature has proved that the relationship is limited and that there are widely held misconceptions about it (Weed et al., 2014; Warwick, 2008; Hölscher, Kasiram, & Sathiparsad, 2009).

According to Simpson & Raniga (2010) –“The decisions regarding choices and access to social grants ... are ultimately dependent on the particular political and ideological positions of that country” (p.1). This means that access to resources and decisions around who deserves to be catered and cared for is reliant on certain conceptualisations and politics of a country, in this case South Africa. This suggests that if South Africa’s political and ideological position is destructive, it can contribute to uneven distribution of resources, which can result in exclusion of certain ‘categories’ of people. Unequal distribution occurs when different ideas

and opinions emerge, which encourages definitions to be formed around certain categories of people. For example, who defines responsibility and blame in the case of a teenage parent? People have different ideas and understanding about certain concepts, which sometimes can negatively affect the welfare and worth of certain peoples.

The –general public perception that dependency on state grants encourages laziness and erodes –ubuntu” which in South Africa refers to helping and caring without reward” can negatively affect the welfare of people (Hölscher, Kasiram & Sathiparsad, 2009: p. 19). This is because different people, located in different structures have diverse and conflicting ideas about the welfare of people, and have different ways of labelling or defining others. For example, President Zuma has the perception that teenage mothers are accessing the CSG in order to go to hair salons, and his proposed intervention is placing them in a designated place where they are forced to learn (News24, 2015). On the other hand, Scott Dunlop, a journalist from Parent24 perceives President Zuma’s call as a –dystopian vision” of teen parenthood, which is incorrect (Parent24, 2015). This alerts us to the role that wider factors play in young people’s lives, which limit their potential. Hence, there is a need for a paradigm shift and critical analysis to dominant ideas around the conceptualisations of teenage parents.

One cannot ignore the challenges posed by economic inequalities and poverty that threaten many lives of South Africans. As stated in a Declaration of Principles for a Basic Income Grant, that over half the population of South Africa lives in poverty (South African Council of Churches, 2001). The Declaration of Principles for a Basic Income Grant (BIG) were stipulated as the following:

- **Universal Coverage:** It should be available to everyone, from cradle to grave, and should not be subject to a means test.
- **Relationship to existing grants:** It should expand the social security net. No individual should receive less in social and assistance grants than before the introduction of the Basic Income Grant.
- **Amount:** The grant should be no less than R100 per person per month on introduction and should be inflation indexed.
- **Delivery Mechanisms:** Payments should be facilitated through Public Institutions. Using community Post Banks would have the additional benefit of enhancing community access to much-needed banking services.

- **Financing:** A substantial portion of the cost of the grant should be recovered progressively through the tax system. This would demonstrate *solidarity* by all South Africans in efforts to eliminate poverty. The remaining cost should be borne by the fiscus. A range of new measures should be introduced to increase revenue so that the additional cost can be accommodated without squeezing out other social expenditure.

(South African Council of Churches, 2001)

In considering of the above-mentioned principles by BIG supporters, it is clear that it would provide sustainable assistance to citizens of SA. This assistance would fight the macroeconomic inequalities allowing South Africa's underprivileged individuals and families to improve their lives as this would enable them to meet their basic needs. Although we have not yet enjoyed the fruits of this the Basic Income Grant campaign after 14 years of the proposal, it still has valuable potential in meeting the basic needs of the poor. Even in the context of teenage parents who are described as culprits of welfare benefits, if these allegations were to be true, they are probably the very reason Basic Income Grant should be implemented. In fact, in order to escape poverty and adjust income inequalities, every citizen of South Africa should have a basic income (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997; Sewpaul; 2005).

2.11 Dominant constructions of motherhood and school-going teen mothers

Clark (2009) asserts that identity and role constructions assume characteristics which set standards and normalise social groupings and categories. Therefore, identity constructions influence the way in which certain categories of people should act or behave. "While much of our lives involve the enactment of socially constructed cultural representations which take gender specific forms, motherhood stands out as a construct imbued with extraordinary ideological and cultural significance (Clark, 2009: p.1)." These constructions shape how society perceives women, and expectations of their roles.

According to Holgate et al. (2006), the dominant interpretations of motherhood are based on patriarchal ideology about reproduction. This means that definitions of women are usually limited to the biological ability of females to be pregnant and give birth to children. Coltrane

& Adams (2008) identify three myths of motherhood; ‘all women need to be mothers, all mothers need their children, all children need their mothers’ (p.134). This testifies to the dominant, generalised idea that all women desire a child, which is caged in the reproductive ability of women. This idea shows homogenisation of women and ignorance about infertility or a woman that does not want to have children. It therefore selects the role of a mother in relation to children, yet men also desire children. Dominant ideas about motherhood organise roles and expect certain behaviours and activities from mothers, limiting them to the role of nurturing and caregiving. Ideas such as these are not only oppressive to women as they set boundaries and select characteristics on the basis of gender, but also deny recognition of men who also provide nurturance and care to their children.

Dominant constructions stretch to policy and legal frameworks. For example, in SA the Children’s Act no. 38 of 2005, section 19 clearly stipulates that the biological mother of a child, whether married or unmarried has full parental responsibilities toward the child (Children’s Act of 2005). This suggests that ‘mothers’ are in the best position to be responsible for a child. This shows structures and recognised institutions define women according to their biological trait of reproducing, even when it does not guarantee the best care and nurturance for the child. If it did, there would not be cases of children being removed from their mothers.

Weber (2012) states that having a child outside of marriage and at a young age is generally considered a mistake, therefore teenage mothers are in a tough position because they have not followed the expected life path. School-going teenage mothers are in an even more precarious position because a school is an institution of the society. To substantiate this, Zondo (2006) asserts that societal values and beliefs prevail amongst the teachers and learners because the school is usually a reflection of the accepted norms and ideologies of the community as a whole. Though the school is expected to promote fairness amongst learners, we must be mindful of the fact that people, including learners and teachers, have different beliefs and views regarding pregnancy and motherhood. Thus, teenage mothers possibly face a lot of negative reactions from the school community and society at large because of dominant ideologies and beliefs that people are accustomed to.

2.12 Dominant constructions of fatherhood and school-going teen fathers

Society not only constructs motherhood, but fatherhood as well. Koenig-Visagie (2013) asserts that the male identity revolves around ideas of masculinity. The dominant ideas of fatherhood have been linked to the role of a provider, breadwinner and the assumption of a mature adult that is responsible for his wife and children (Ratele, 2012). This means men have been conceptualised, in their role of father, as being accountable and protective, making their wives and children dependant on them (men). According to Dewar & Parker (2003) a general family man's primary commitment will be, with his pay cheque rather than full-time child-care. This dominant construction of fatherhood can be problematic for teen fathers, as they may not be able to secure employment and provide for their children while at school. As a result, by being unable to provide for their children, as expected, they could feel less of a man. To substantiate this, some studies on teen fatherhood in SA show that as much as the young men want to be involved with their children, sometimes the mothers and maternal family of the child do not allow easy access, because of the teen father's inability to meet the expectations of a 'father', who is supposed to be the provider (Morrell, 2005). There has been a growing interest in understanding teen fatherhood, where the dominant ideas and definitions are re-evaluated (Dewar & Parker, 2003). However, dominant constructions of fatherhood remain persistent.

In SA, many of the African (race) fathers have been described as distant, authoritative and violent (Bhana, 2009). This means that many African men have been disqualified as good fathers, who play a role in their children's lives and development. Although this construction may be negative, and does not apply to all African fathers, statistics of father absenteeism among the African population is still rated high (Makofane, 2015). This alerts to the fact that race, gender and other social criteria such as socio-economic status intersect in important ways (Sewpaul, 2013). While Ratele (2012) asserts that South African studies are contesting the negative dominant constructions of fatherhood, where studies document several ways in which African fathers do play a role in their children's lives, there are still many absent fathers which influence negative constructions of fatherhood in African societies.

2.13 Challenges and consequences experienced by teenage parents

Becoming a parent while one is still a teenager produces many educational, social, financial, physical and psychological challenges. This part of the literature review specifically focuses on the psychosocial and economic factors as these relate to one of the specific objectives of this study.

2.13.1 Psychosocial

Psychosocial factors can be defined as circumstances that are characteristic of the relationship between the environment and the individual (Theorell, 2007). This means that psychosocial factors consist of psychological attributes such as depression or hopelessness that may be found at the personal (individual) level, while the social aspect is found on the environmental level, which can be linked with structural conditions which can affect social interaction among the people in the environment. According to Nzama (2004) school-going teenage mothers usually have doubts about their feminine attractiveness, and may experience low self-image, feelings of inferiority, and they might seek attention. This behavior may be associated with feelings of not belonging, because of their difference and probably the unwelcoming attitudes from some friends, family members, community members and teachers at school. This can definitely affect the teen's psychological well-being, and it can also decrease positive interaction with others. Thus for some teenage parents, isolating themselves can be a mechanism of dealing with the negative assumptions and judgments of others towards them.

Teenage parents are also faced with the challenge of having to take tough decisions, for example the initial reaction to expecting a baby. They might decide whether to have an abortion, which can produce intense feelings of guilt and distress. According to Ngcobo (2009) even when teenagers decide to have the baby, they are still left with the task to decide whether to keep the baby or consider adoption. Therefore, teen parents can be faced with anxieties and fears that affect their functioning and well-being. Frustrations for any individual, including teen parents means imbalance in life which can influence reckless decision-making, and can probably compromise the education and socialisation of school-going teen parents.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter that teenagers are at a stage where their identity is contrasted with role confusion, using the Erikson's psychosocial stages of development (McLeod, 2008). As a result, the quick, usually unplanned transformation to parenthood comes with its challenges that might add more confusion. Furthermore, identity confusion can interfere with the teen's ability to form a connection with the baby during pregnancy and after delivery (McAnarney & Hendee cited in Ngcobo, 2009). This means that the teen parent may see the baby as problem and hindrance to individual desires, more feelings of being restricted than free like other teens who are not parents. Trad cited in Ngcobo (2009) declares that teen parents may unconsciously deprive their children independence, feeling that the baby invaded upon their own independence. This shows how the self-image can be affected, where these teens can feel different from the rest of teens who do not have babies, which in turn can cause them stress, and even more harm on the teen's baby.

It is always a concern when a school-going teenager enters parenthood because of the time and care the baby requires. One cannot run away from the fact that babies are high-maintenance beings that need full-time care (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Thus having a baby can be time consuming, influencing certain changes and adjustments to lifestyle of individuals. Unfortunately, school-going teenagers do not have the time required to take care of the child, mainly because of educational demands, which reasons why some of the teen parents dropout after childbirth. Therefore, the time used to take care of the child may compromise the teen's education. Although there are cases of school-going teen parents who receive support from their family or partners and community in order to raise a child (Bunting & McAuley, 2004; Malahlela, 2009), it is not clear in literature whether having a baby as a teenage father is also as time consuming as the teenage mother, but drawing from the earlier discussions of dominant constructions of fatherhood, the role of teen fathers may be more limited and less time consuming than that of teen mothers. Since most men are not expected to be fully responsible for the baby (nurture and care), but rather expected to fulfil financial needs of the baby.

Many communities, especially African, view having a baby out-of-wedlock as a disgrace, making communities stigmatise young people (usually females) who seem to be sexually active outside marriage (Nzama, 2004). This can affect the teen parent's psychosocial well-being in the sense that he or she may feel unsatisfied with the self and the decision of having the child, as negative attitudes towards the teen parent may be demeaning, making him or her not to feel belonging. Smith (2012) also raises an important circumstance when he asserts

that most teen fathers may eventually marry another woman either than the mother of the child. Meaning that for teen fathers that marry another woman, the mother of the child may become a stressor that lowers the quality of the marriage. According to Heath and McKenry cited in Smith (2012) even for teen fathers who do not get married and assume minimal responsibility for the child, they may also experience negative psychological consequences. Therefore, there are unwelcoming consequences for both fathers and mothers that enter parenthood during their teen years.

Earlier in this chapter I briefly discussed how culture and religion influences certain ideologies and normalisation of pregnancy and parenting, this too comes with certain predicaments in the life of teenage parents. According to Ngcobo (2009) in some churches, teen parents find themselves rushed into marriage in order to prevent stigmatisation. The unanticipated marriages would most probably be for serving the expectations of the church, rather than the individual's choice. This may consequently impact negatively on the marriage since the decision would have been highly influenced about what others wanted to see and not what they wanted for themselves. It rather takes that individual agency, which is unfortunately difficult to resist as the teens may also feel that they have done wrong (sinned as according to church), and hope marriage may eliminate judgements and negative attitudes. In cases such as these, it is connected to securing a space for belonging, rather than opting for what the person desires.

Teenage parents are not only in the position of dealing with negative attitudes from the society's beliefs, but there are also medical risks. WHO has raised the concern that teenage mothers' bodies are not ready to reproduce, hence may cause infant mortality and other health issues (WHO, 2013). According McAnarney and Hendee cited in Ngcobo (2009) pregnancy can affect the physical development, particularly the reproductive development of a teenager. This is because the bodies of teenagers may not be fully ready to carry a child, which put pregnant teenagers at various medical risks.

When teens are parents, it means stress on the parents of the teenagers too. As a result, there can be experienced tension in the family, where the relationship between parents of teenagers and their children (who have children) is strained. To support this claim, Nzama (2004) asserts that most parents react negatively, expressing disappointment and anger towards their children who enter parenthood in their teen years while at school. Therefore, the consequences of teenagers becoming parents also affects the psychology of their own parents

as parents experience embarrassment and shame about their child. Also, teen parents experience the fear and embarrassment of having a baby at a young age, as it is usually not aligned with society's expectations (Richter, Norris & Ginsburg, 2006). This means that teen parents can experience depression, where they may perceive themselves as less competent and shameful (Malahlela, 2009). This shows that there are quite painful and harmful consequences not only on the teen parents but also on the teenager's parents.

2.13.2 Economic

Economic factors are those that look at the financial state or position of what or who is being observed. According to Nzama (2004) many teen parents are confronted with challenges that include school interruption, limited employment opportunities and persistent poverty. This is because of what was explained earlier under section 2.8 in this chapter, where the role of being a learner while a parent can interfere negatively with the teen's education, resulting to poor academic performance and drop-outs. This is because without having anyone to look after the baby (or having the money to afford the nanny), teen parents may feel that they must work rather than complete their schooling and perhaps plan their own and the child's future due to the obligatory feeling and self-imposed pressure to earn money (Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Without proper education or completing high school, there is higher probability of not being able to secure employment. As a result, teen parents who do not complete their schooling are at risk of facing poverty that may persist, in the sense that even their children may not get the preferred opportunities for successful learning and development. According to Morrell (2005) some teen fathers opt for part-time employment in order to meet the financial requirements of the child. This suggests that school-going boys who are not fathers have more time on their education and self-care, since there is nothing that pushes them to look for part-time employment. Thus there may be experienced economic difficulties for both teen mothers and fathers, which can infringe on their education.

The socio-economic status of the family has the power to determine successful parenting and learning or not. If teen parents come from economically disadvantaged families and cannot afford child-minding services for the baby, the teen parent, usually teen mothers are burdened with having to compromise school time and required assignments to take care of the baby.

Chigona & Chetty (2008; 2007) assert that when all the relatives are unavailable to look after the baby, the teen mother would not be able to complete homework or be absent from school. To even substantiate further, in a study conducted by Chigona & Chetty (2008), a parent (mother) participant said that she looks after the baby when her child has to go to school but sometimes when she had to go to work, her child had to take care of the baby herself and stay home, because she did not have money to hire a babysitter or send the baby to a crèche. This shows how the economic status of the family can either facilitate or hinder education of teen parents. In other words, if the parent had the money to hire a babysitter or take the child to an early child development agency, the teen parent would be able to go to school and not miss out on school work.

According Nzama (2004) in most African communities, there are accepted customs and rituals which allow for cleansing of the mother and child as well as the payment for damages. This means despite the reaction of parents, most face the challenge of having to raise money to proceed with the rituals. For a teenage mother, it may be a matter of awaiting the payment from the child's father, and if not, they may feel less of themselves and unworthy. As for the teenage father, it may be an economic obstacle, where if the father's family does have the amount required for damages will not be able pay, also leaving the young man feeling less of himself as he would have failed to meet his expected duty, regardless of being a scholar. This shows that some customs and rituals also play a significant role in tempering with the psychosocial well-being of teen parents but also takes enough significance as an economic strain. Therefore, we realise the potential problems that may arise when a school-going teen enters parenthood, it does not only affect him or her, but affects families and infringes on the future of the teen parent.

2.14 Summary

This chapter has raised and begun to explore a number of issues that constitutes teen parents. Included within, I began with the global overview of teenage parents, focusing on indicators of teen parents such as pregnancy rates in the world. I continued to provide the impression of teen parents in an African context, also looking at teen pregnancy rates and some of the prominent driving forces, such as culture and rituals that are found in the continent, which to some degree pose as fuelling to high rates of teen parents. I narrowed down the discussion to

specifically South African context, providing statistics and briefly indicating on some of the measures that SA has tested to combat teen pregnancies. I focused on KZN with the purpose of giving the impression teen pregnancies and teen parents have in the province since it is this study's location. I moved on to discuss on the SA national education policy which is indicated as an initiative by SA government to protect and promote equality of all pupils enrolled in schools including those that are pregnant, however there were concerns regarding the contradiction of the policy as well as the question on the inclusion of school-going teenage fathers. Further, I formed an important discussion on the general conceptualisations and definitions of both teenage fathers and mothers, explaining how their positions are contested and identified by the public.

Additionally, I took the discussion on the topic on some of the causes to high teen parents and pregnancies in SA. Further, I formed a discussion on the learner roles which is contrasted with the parental roles that teen parents have to negotiate or mediate in order to find a balance in their lives; I focused on both teenage fathers and mothers. Also an important aspect that was discussed in the above discussion was social security and its relation to teen parents, since it is salient according to literature, that some of the definitions formed by the public and structures of society marries the CSG provided in SA as a fuelling factor to high rates of teenage parents. Since the definitions and public conceptualisations of teenage parents cannot be discussed or understood in separation from dominant constructions of parenthood, I then discussed the dominant constructions of both fatherhood and motherhood, and how it affects the face of teenage parents. Moreover, I discussed the challenges and consequences experienced by teenage parents, in which there are various, but this literature particularly focused on the psychosocial and economic factors as it is aligned with one of the objectives of this study. Certainly the chapter has raised many multifaceted issues around teen parents, and enlightened about some of the structural causes of teen parents and pregnancies, which I hope prompts the questioning of assumptions and taken-for-granted ideology. The following chapter will illuminate the method and tools used to conduct the actual research.

CHAPTER THREE

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research studies play an important role in the expansion of knowledge, and they hold potential to pave the way for change and action. With research studies there can be possible contributions towards policy developments and amendments in project/s and/or programme/s planning, implementation and evaluation. However, for these studies to be credible, they require a wide-range of fieldwork using various data collection methods, which are dependent on specific research methods relevant to the particular study goals and philosophy motivating the research. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures used when conducting research. This chapter discusses the research paradigm, design and sampling methods that were used in this study. Further, it explains the data collection and analysis methods that were employed. Moreover, it details the trustworthiness of the data, limitations that were apparent as well as the ethical issues that were considered throughout the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Since the nature of this research study is social science, it was important to select a relevant research paradigm in order to enhance the study's ability to produce trustworthy results and further insights into the designated study area. Johnson & Christensen (2010) describe a research paradigm as a perspective about research that is grounded on a set of shared research concepts, values, norms and practices about doing research. This study adopted a qualitative paradigm. This paradigm is characterised by its nature of intangibility as it focuses on perceptions, feelings and behaviours of the sample studied (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). The aim of using the qualitative paradigm was to enable me to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives, feelings and experiences of teenage parents. Qualitative methods were essential for providing complex textual descriptions based on the objectives and questions of the study. According Davies (2007) the qualitative paradigm aims to understand how participants derive

meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behaviour. Hence, the study was designed to understand teenage parent's meaning from their stories about teenage motherhood and fatherhood. In executing this study, I was conscious of the fundamentals of the qualitative research paradigm as it examined the depth and breadth of teenage parents' narratives with the aim to learn more from them. Babbie et al. (2006) assert that qualitative research methods allow researchers to study actions of people from their own interpretations and perspectives. Applying qualitative methods did not only allow for in-depth information but produced thick descriptions of data from the teenage parents as I offered them a platform via individual and focus group sessions to share their feelings, thoughts, behaviours and experiences.

3.3 Research Design

Terre Blanche et al. (2006) define a research design as "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research" (p. 33). This means that a research design is an outline or a plan of how one intends to conduct a research study bearing in mind the questions and objectives that underpin the study. This study used a descriptive and exploratory research design. Exploratory, descriptive design allows the researcher to provide rich descriptions of the situation and events by interpreting and observing patterns that exist as well as their implications (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The study is on one hand descriptive in the sense that it described the phenomena precisely through narrative-type descriptions (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). As a result, the analysis and representation of findings were dependant on the spoken words, and emotions of teenage parents that I observed when they were telling their stories and expressing their subjective views (see chapter four of the dissertation). As teenage parents shared real life events and experiences, the descriptive design facilitated the study's ability to investigate "from real world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfold naturally" (Patton, 2002: p.39). It was therefore important to use this design in this study since the aim was to uncover personal truths and descriptions from the teenage parents, derived from their lived experiences. However, on the other hand, most studies concentrate on teen mothers' experiences (see studies conducted by Nzama 2004; Singh, 2005; Mangino, 2008; Gregson, 2010; Nkwanyana, 2011 and Raniga & Mathe, 2011) but do not particularly focus on both

males and females, in which the current study brings insight into. Thus, it made the use of exploratory design, which according to van Wyk (2012) is ~~the~~ most useful (and appropriate) research design for those projects that are addressing a subject about which there are high levels of uncertainty ... (i.e. very little existing research on the subject matter)” (p.8).

3.4 Sampling and sampling method

Sampling refers to the process used to select the portion of the population for the research study (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In line with the qualitative nature of this study, two non-probability sampling methods were employed known as convenience and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling also referred to as accidental sampling is about using participants who are easy to reach. The sample is selected on the basis of its availability and participants' willingness to be part of the research (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). Teenage mothers were a more accessible sample in this study as they were easily identified by Miss N who was a Life Orientation (LO) teacher and Miss Z who was a Learner Support Agent (LSA) at the school. Miss Z and Miss N had previously been involved in a group work programme with teen mothers in 2014. Hence, they knew most of teen mothers on a personal level as well as their class grades. They gathered a list of teen mothers and on my request, they approached them about their interest in participating in this study.

The assistance of Miss Z and Miss N smoothed part of the sampling process and made it easier to get teenage mothers that were willing to participate in this research study. The use of convenience sampling was also necessitated by the availability and easy access to the research location. The school was purposely selected because it was a convenient site for me from which to find participants as it was around Durban, where I also reside. Most importantly it was because of high rates of teen parents in the school. It was again a convenient site for me because I was familiar with the organisational operation and the school policies since I had practiced in this school during my fourth year field practice education. The relationship and familiarity with the majority of the school staff facilitated the process of selecting the sample for the study as educators were eager to assist me in identifying participants.

Due to anticipated limited access to teenage fathers I had to make use of snowball sampling, which is also recognised as chain referral sampling. Babbie (2015) asserts that snowball sampling is often a necessary technique in research on populations that are difficult to locate. The process of attaining a snowball sample is achieved through first collecting data from one or few members of the available participants, then the researcher asks the members for more information to locate other members of the desired population until the sample size is met (Babbie, 2015). Identifying teenage fathers was a difficult task, but they represented an important part of the study sample and their experiences were equally significant as those of teenage mothers in this study. I applied the snowball sampling method by speaking to Miss N who knew other educators who had some information about teenage fathers in the school. Miss B who is a grade 12 teacher identified two learners who were in her class that were teenage fathers. I requested Miss B to gain the permission of the two learners before linking me with them.

On the introductory meeting that I held with the two teenage fathers, I enquired from them if they knew any other teenage fathers. I also informed them that they would have to gain the permission of the person before linking me with them. However, they said they did not know anyone apart from themselves. From my observation on the introduction meeting with the two teenage fathers, I observed uncomfortable body language which led me to ask them whether they were comfortable to talk to me about this topic. Though their first response was 'yes', their body language and tone of voice was not convincing. I then asked them how they would feel if they participated in the study but be interviewed by a male interviewer. Their facial expressions and sighs signaled relief after communicating that option to them and they voiced out that if that were possible they would be happy talk to a male figure. I did not probe into their decision, as I did not want them to feel pressured. I understood that some of the questions the study explored may be sensitive which may cause them to be more reserved when responding to a female interviewer, which may result to narrow or limited data.

According to Mack, Macqueen, Guest & Namey (2005) "[qualitative research methodologies] are typically flexible and can be modified if ...initial strategies do not result in the desired number of recruits" (p.5). Due to anticipating an equal number of participants in terms of gender (five teen mothers and five teen fathers), I ended up consulting with a colleague who facilitated a teenage father's group work programme in the school in 2014, who provided me with a list of names from the group. The school principal and the

administrator assisted in identifying the teenage father's contact details from their stored information of learners since they were no longer at the school as they matriculated in 2014. Miss N was the one that made initial contact to the teen fathers identified. With her help, I was able to find two more participants that were willing to participate in the study which added to the two that were currently school-going teen fathers and made a total number of four teenage fathers. With all efforts, unfortunately I did not reach the desired number of five teenage fathers and therefore had to work with the four. I personally interviewed the two teen fathers from the group work programme since they did not show any signs of discomfort and consented to the option of talking to me. Their reaction towards me as a female may have been influenced by the fact that their group facilitator was also female.

The characteristics of the required sample were initially school-going teenage males and females, who are biological parents to their child/children. Due to the limited number of teenage fathers, I deviated from the initial proposal of getting all current school-going teenage parents and made the decision to include those that recently matriculated who became fathers when they were still attending this school. I proceeded in view of Mack et al's (2005) support that a "...criteria for selection can...be changed if certain data collection activities or subpopulations of people prove not to be useful in answering some of the questions" (p.9). The identified characteristics were vital for the rich descriptions of teenage parents' experiences, which was the main aim of this study. The sample size was nine participants. The ages of participants were between 18-22 years for both females and males. Seven of the participants were currently enrolled in the secondary school, and the other two had matriculated in 2014. Since this was about teenage parents, those that were no longer in their teen years were still a relevant sample as they shared their experiences based on when they were school-going teenage parents (teenage parent as defined in Chapter One). For the two participants that had recently matriculated, the requirement was that they must have had their children/child in their teen years and school-going at that time (teenager as defined in Chapter One).

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative research methods allow researchers to have close and depth contact with participants and collect information regarding their personal truths and perceptions. They are therefore useful techniques when the researcher seeks to understand human actions from the reality described by participants. Quoting Myers, Levy (2006) asserts that “...access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Such interpretive research...focuses on the full capacity of human sense making as the situation emerges” (p.369). In consideration of what Meyers asserts, this study made use of two methodological tools, semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group session which aimed at presenting a setting where participants could express their feelings, thoughts and experiences.

With the interest of understanding teenage parents in a natural setting and from a subjective perspective, I had extensive interaction with teen parents in the venues that they selected. Eight interviews took place within the school premises at Bester and only one interview was conducted at Bridge City Mall (as requested by the participant). I met the participants several times before the formal interviews, which were tape recorded and transcribed, except for two participants that did not consent to be audio-recorded. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. The data collection methods employed in this study assisted in gaining an insight into the teenage parents' lives from their own perspectives.

A semi-structured interview is a technique that is used to collect qualitative data by setting up an interview that allows each respondent enough time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject (Patton, 2002). I did this by having one-on-one conversations with the participants in order to listen to their explanations, suggestions and experiences about teen parenthood. These interviews were arranged with considered convenience of teen parents in venues preferred by them. These interviews were conversational in nature, although they were guided by specific questions (See Appendix One), sometimes probing (not too extensive) was required for thicker descriptions. These interviews were done with critical observation of emotions, participants verbally communicated some feelings, and others were unspoken expressions. Mouton (2012) asserts that in qualitative interviews the importance of giving interviewee voice should always be highly emphasised. Hence, the individual in-depth

interviews made use of open-ended questions in order to gain descriptive information about the participants' parenting experiences and perspectives. For the purpose of producing rich written data in the analysis (Chapter Four), seven out of nine interviews were audio-recorded as participants consented before the interview was conducted. In the other two interviews, two teen fathers did not consent to having the interviews audio-recorded. Although the purpose of the recording was explained, they still refused. The recordings and field notes were transcribed verbatim and the resulting texts were analysed using the thematic steps of analysing data which will later be explained in this chapter.

As with the experience of Sewpaul (1995), I found that teen fathers tended to be more subtle and reticent than teen mothers during the interviews. According to Leduc (2009) "How information is collected and analysed and who is collecting it is important because it influences the quality, authenticity, and value of the information itself" (p.3). With that guiding my methods of data collection, Nkosinathi (male) whom I recruited as my research assistant interviewed the two teenage fathers that opted for a male interviewer. After training Nkosinathi on interviewing skills and going through the questions under investigation, he successfully conducted the two individual interviews. Nkosinathi was a convenient research assistant because he was in the process of completing a research module in his final year of social work degree. Thus, he was aware of some of the ethical issues to be considered during the interviews and had skills of interviewing. To further substantiate my choice of recruiting a male research assistant, Sewpaul (1995:p.35) quoting Denzin et al. asserts that "gender filters knowledge...as the interview takes place within the cultural boundaries of paternalistic social system in which masculine identities are differentiated from feminine ones."

In addition to the individual interviews, towards the end of the data collection phase, a focus group interview was held, with the permission from the participants. A focus group is described by Babbie (2014) as a group interview that consists of five to 15 people who are brought together to engage in a guided discussion of topics relevant to the phenomenon under study. The focus group interview was used to obtain opinions at another level, and group agreement and disagreement, which resulted to rich information and more exploration on teen parents' experiences. Though the focus group was not planned to be exclusive to teen mothers, unfortunately all the teen fathers did not consent to be part of the focus group for their own reasons. I did not ask for explanation of their choices but one teen father did say that he did not want to be in a discussion group with teen mothers. As a result, the focus

group consisted only seven teenage mothers in which the other two teen mothers were not part of the individual interviews but were invited by their friends who were participating on the focus group session. The session took roughly 90 minutes with a lively discussion and was followed by light lunch that quite excited the participants.

For Babbie (2013) –group dynamics frequently bring out aspects of the topic that would have not been anticipated by the researcher and would have not emerged from interviews with individuals” (p.330). Hence, the data produced and insights brought by the interaction between participants showed the significance of a focus group session in this study. Mouton (2012) also supports the use of group interviews as a source of validation and a way of bringing the researcher closer to the truth by adding interpretative data. Additionally, during the data collection phase I regularly reviewed literature, laws and policies that exist which were relevant to the study in order to facilitate greater understanding and interpretation of the data that emerged. This included documentation such as recent newspaper articles and media reports (see Chapter Two), which are integrated with the data collected in the presentation of findings as a form of verification check (Mouton, 2012) in Chapter Four. The use of in-depth individual interviews and the focus group session allowed me to pay attention to the participants’ views and experiences, which enriched this study.

For the study to yield thick descriptions, it is of paramount importance for the researcher and participant/s to understand one another. Without understanding one another, the participants may be limited in their responses and the researcher may miss important details, raised by the participants that may have required exploration in order to get richer details. According to Nzuzi (2012) language can be a barrier between the researcher and participants. Conveniently, all of my participants were IsiZulu speaking and I also speak IsiZulu as a result language was rather a bridge to establish rapport rather than a drawback. The use of IsiZulu in our interactions created a safe environment for participants to express themselves more spontaneously. In most times during the interviews I was able to identify cues that are native to IsiZulu people which non-IsiZulu speakers may have misinterpreted. For example, Zulu people sometimes say ‘shame’ when they are making an emphasis and not exactly meaning pity or disappointment (which is what the English word actually means), even during the interviews the participants mentioned ‘shame’ when they were expressing themselves. Because of the level of understanding we had, the transcribing of the recorded interviews was easy because I understood the participants’ language

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The data were analysed using the thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data. Guest, McQueen & Namey (2011) assert that “thematic analysis...focuses on identifying and describing...implicit ideas. Codes developed for ...themes are then applied...to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes ... looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships” (p.193). It therefore minimally organises and describes the data in richer detail and interprets various aspects of the topic under study (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001). This form of analysis was applicable to this study because of its nature in identifying the interests of the participants through examining patterns present within the textual records. The following elucidates the steps that guided me in arriving at the identified themes that are used to discuss findings in Chapter four.

3.6.1 Steps of analysing thematic analysis

3.6.1.1 Familiarisation and immersion

This first step is characterised by comprehensive engagement with the data collected. According Terre Blanche et al. (2006) in this stage it is critical that the researcher immerses and pays attention to field notes and interview transcripts. They add on to say that if this is done thoroughly “by the time you finished (immersing yourself) you should know your data well enough...what sorts of interpretations are likely to be supported by the data and what not” (Terre Blanche et al.: 2006, p.141). On concluding the interviews, including the focus group session, I transcribed the data. I listened carefully to the recordings in order to check if the data transcribed was exactly what the participants had actually said. I then immersed myself in the information gathered, made notes and brainstormed ideas to facilitate my interpretation. When I was reading the transcripts I highlighted repeated concerns raised by participants, which I used to guide the development of themes. By doing this I was able to know where to find certain information without having to waste much time. I also used

literature on teen parenthood and the theoretical framework guiding the study which gave my ideas and themes that emerged a clearer direction.

3.6.1.2 Inducing themes

This part of analysing data can be referred to a bottom-up approach (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006), which involved looking at the material found and working out the organising principles that underlie the material. I looked for repeated contents as emphasis on certain experiences are a sign of concern for the participants and therefore a point of discussion for me as the researcher. As recommended by Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999), I used simple English language in labelling the themes as transcribed data was presented in English. Avoiding abstract theoretical language assisted me in gaining more insight on the information provided by the participants. During this step of analysing the data I did not merely focus on the summary of the contents but I engaged critically with the information given where processes, tensions and contradictions were also taken into consideration. This facilitated a deeper analysis and making a richer interpretation that is directly connected to the data collected.

3.6.1.3 Coding

This is a method used to mark different sections of data as being relevant to one or more themes (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I coded phrases, sentences and paragraphs in identifying textual bits that contained information that was relevant to the themes under consideration. I used different colours and representative capital letters for the themes concerned, for example I would write the capital letter C next to a sentence or paragraph that was convincing that the participant is challenged by the experience being shared, and highlighted the phrase or sentence/s in the colour purple. I broke down the data into labelled and meaningful pieces in order to be able to cluster those bits of coded material together and the emerged themes. According to King & Horrocks (2010) this stage is about identifying the transcript data that is likely to be helpful in addressing the research question. This step was mainly describing what was of interest in my participants rather than interpreting its meaning.

3.6.1.4 Elaboration

To elaborate is to capture the finer nuances of meaning not captured by the original coding system (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This step gave me a fresh view on the data and allowed me to compare sections of transcripts that appeared to go together which allowed me to explore themes (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Since experiences followed a sequence when the participants were sharing their narratives, I used inducing themes and coding which broke that sequence to avoid scattered information in one section. This is also done for the benefit of expounding on the identified themes as elaboration allows for an in-depth exploration of those themes. I re-looked at the data and matched events, phrases and sections that seemed to belong together under one theme. Thus, elaboration allowed me to form a structure that gave account on what is really going on in the data collected.

3.6.1.5 Interpreting and checking

This stage was the final phase of analysing the data collected. This stage involved going back to the data collected and checking for the last time whether I had not left out any important statement/s or comment/s that belong to certain identified theme/s or/and look out for themes that were supposed to have been identified but missed. Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) recommend that the researcher goes ~~through~~ the interpretation with a fine-tooth comb and try to fix weak points. See if you can find examples that contradict at some point or another interpretation” (p.326). In this step I was able to fix my weak points within the data analysis and polished what required refinement. Interpreting and checking helped me to reflect on my own role or personal involvement through the collection of data and the interpretation of it.

3.7 Trustworthiness

According to King & Horrocks (2010) ~~many~~ researchers argue that qualitative research requires agreed quality criteria, but that these should be different from those of quantitative research” (p160). I totally contend with what King & Horrocks assert, as qualitative research is very different from quantitative research, more like totally opposite. While quantitative

research is interested in the presentation of facts and numbers, qualitative research concentrates on voice, emotions and is based on subjectivity of the being which is something that one cannot calculate. One of the most influential attempts to devise alternative criteria has been the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). In this, they suggested four criteria as direct alternatives to the main criteria in quantitative research” (King & Horrocks: 2010, p.160). This alternative is known as trustworthiness. It is a quality checking criteria for qualitative research. Under trustworthiness there are four pillars that are used to examine qualitative research’s believability or quality which are namely; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) credibility of the research can be achieved if the research findings are convincing and believable. King & Horrocks (2010) add that “credibility refers to the extent to which the researcher’s interpretation is endorsed by those whom the research was conducted” (p.161). This means that findings or descriptions provided by the researcher must match the participant’s experiences and what they shared during interviews. In other words, if the participants were to read the findings of the research they must be able to recognise what they shared even when the data has been interpreted, more like the interpretation should not distort the meaning of what was communicated by participants. In this study I ensured this by identifying events that occurred in the lives of the teenage parents, through immersing in the data collected and describing it from what exactly was shared by them. The process of describing and interpreting the data was guided by relevant literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study, which facilitated appropriate analysis.

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is about producing rich or thick descriptions of the situation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). “The term ‘thick description’...refers to the notion that qualitative research should provide detailed descriptions of the phenomena they study and their context” (King & Horrocks, 2010: p.164). Therefore, transferability is based on the researcher’s ability to provide adequate and detailed explanations that another person could access to an extent to

which the findings can be drawn from one context and transfer to another. I ensured transferability of data through first applying knowledge and understanding of interviewing skills that are regarded as highly important as means “to create an environment of openness and trust within which the interviewee is able to express herself or himself authentically” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:p.297). I tried to open a space for participants to feel comfortable, and I allowed the participants to reflect and provide depth answers. Though this was experienced differently in terms of gender, I still attempted for that informal type of discussion during interviews. What also facilitated thick descriptions were my reflections after interviews, as sometimes I would feel that there were answers that I could have probed more to get richer descriptions from participants. The self-awareness and constructive criticism made me cautious in my next interviews. Again, with the use of credible literature and academic philosophy guiding this study, the research findings can be transferred or used in different contexts of other studies especially pursuing the same phenomena of teen parenthood.

The chosen sample was purposely selected on the basis that they had lived the experience in order to give the findings more trustworthiness. I was cautious about research participants that were knowledgeable and attached to their experiences which is my particular interest in this study. Thus, there was a strict selection in terms of the characteristics of the sample. I did not accept pregnant teens or teen males who were expecting babies to be part of the study because they had not experienced the role of being a mother or father while school-going. According to Nkani (2012) participants posit thicker data when they had personally experienced and know the situation very well making the findings transferable.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is achieved through rich and detailed descriptions which show that certain actions and opinions are rooted in and developed out of contextual interaction (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; King & Horrocks, 2010) I ensured dependability by using overlapping methods of data collection such as the focus group session and individual interviews. Although the teen fathers were not part of the focus group session as preferred by them, the seven teen mothers, who consented to be part of the group session, engaged in dialogue expressing agreements and disagreements, which produced rich data. I had established

rapport and gained trust with the participants, which allowed for open communication and sharing. The focus group allowed for further validation of data, and thicker descriptions, which can be transferable. This provided clear descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation, its context and the methodology followed to conduct the study.

3.7.4 *Conformability*

The concept of conformability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity (Shenton, 2004). King & Horrock (2010) suggest that researchers should sufficiently demonstrate details of the process of their data analysis and collection so that it communicates reasonable conclusions to the reader. I ensured this concept by keeping evidence that the experiences and ideas of the participants belong to them (not too contaminated with my subjectivity and the editing of language). In order to guard against too much subjectivity, I kept journals through the process of my data collection in order to be reflective and encourage myself to identify my own biases. I have kept all consented audio-taped evidence, field notes and transcripts which serve as proof that the perceptions and experiences of informants are true. I used different sources of literature (such as newspapers, academic articles, books, journals etc.) against which I analysed and interpreted the data to encourage objectivity.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

There are few studies if any at all that do not encounter shortcomings that place certain restrictions on the research findings and conclusions. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study in order to make readers aware of what limitations were experienced and how they could be prevented in future research studies. This study is limited in that it only attempts to understand teenage parents in a secondary school yet statistics show that learners from the primary school are also becoming parents. The views and experiences, which this research draws conclusions from, may differ from those experienced by parents who are in primary schools. The difference could perhaps be the standard level of education and the differences in friendships and context. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalized, nor can their experiences be assumed to be the same. I recommend further

research that could be comparative in order to give more depth and knowledge in school-going parents for both primary and secondary level.

The sample size of the study is small and therefore cannot be generalised. In the focus group the members were not equivalent to the number of individual interviews that were held. The teen fathers did not consent to be part of the focus group. Though I am not against their decision, it was moderately a limitation to the study. The particular interest in a focus group was to have both genders explore the same topics in order to get greater perspectives from observing agreements and disagreements present in discussions and compare gendered ideas. Also, the intention of acquiring an equal number of females and males was not successful as there were 5 teenage mothers (excluding the two teen mothers that joined the focus group session) and four teenage fathers in individual interviews.

I have the impression that the data gathered from male participants could have been richer than what I collected. Most of the male participants tended to be reticent during interviews including the ones that were interviewed by Nkosinathi. The data presented by females was much richer and explained thoroughly than those of males. Thus, assumingly the gender difference may have been an influence of the conclusions and with the interviews that were conducted by Nkosinathi I think that there was little time for rapport building. I recommend that if a female researcher observes discomfort in male participants (especially if it is a sensitive study), the researcher could still find a male peer researcher. However, this must be done after having regular meetings to form rapport in order for the study to produce rich descriptions, which is what qualitative research is devoted to. This must be done with distinct training on interviewing skills and understanding of the study as well as questions under investigation.

3.9 Ethical Issues

The main aim of research ethics is to ensure that participants are not exposed to harmful activities to serve the interests of the research and that participants' feelings are respected at all times. All research ethical guidelines put participants' feelings as of paramount importance especially among people who have experienced stressful life circumstances or living in particularly vulnerable life circumstances such as teen parents in this study.

According to Miller, Birch, Mauthner & Jessop (2012) –Ethics concern the morality of human conduct. In relation to social research, it refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout research process” (p.14). Thus, the purpose of ethics in research is to ensure that the research is conducted responsibly. A research proposal that described the study and its methodology together with a gatekeeper’s letter from the Department of Education (DOE) (See Appendix Three) was officially presented in the School of Applied Human Sciences in the Discipline Social Work, and was approved by the Higher Degrees Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (See Appendix Four).

In research it is vital to ensure autonomy and prevent or minimise social stigmatisation. The first step was to take enough caution in giving participants the opportunity to make an informed decision to be part of the study. The participants were given (and verbally explained) the consent forms a week prior the scheduled interviews. Since my research participants were 18 years old and above, consent for their participation was independent. South African law deems people 18 years and above as responsible and mature enough to consent for themselves to participate in research activities (Boezaart, 2009). On each selected day of the interview they were asked to sign if they were still willing to participate in the study. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns.

In order to ensure that autonomy of participants was protected, the informed consent form was written in both English and IsiZulu which are the languages that respondents understood. They were also given the opportunity to select their preferred language of communication both during interviews and in the written consent form. The consent form specified the nature and purposes of the research and included my identity, university, supervisor, chairperson of the Ethics committee and our contact details (See Appendix Two). The consent was unambiguous, it was made clear that their participation is voluntary and participants were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. At times during interviews respondents indicated discomfort in answering some questions, I always reminded them about their rights and support them when they did not want to give certain information. Confidentiality and anonymity was emphasised and confirmed with participants. Any limits on confidentiality were clarified such as in the focus group as it was out of my control. I discussed with the group about the importance of confidentiality and support amongst all of them as a group. I

made them aware about the focus group, their responsibilities as members and the potential consequences of disclosing matters discussed in the group outside the group. This information was communicated before the participants signed any consent, in order for them to know exactly what they were agreeing to.

To further encourage autonomy of participants, the respondents were given a platform where they determined what activities they wanted or did not want to participate in. For example, if participants preferred to participate only in the individual interview and did not want to be part of the focus group I respected their decision in order to uphold their autonomy. If the participant did not agree with something on the consent form, we amended it on the day of the interview and scratched out the part they were not comfortable or in agreement with before starting the interview. For example, when I verbally confirmed their consent to what was on the form, they said they did not want to be audio recorded. If I had assumed that they were comfortable with recording or being part of the focus group, perhaps I was going to harm them because they were not comfortable with these two research tools but still wanted to be part of the research. Thus, the use of consent forms and verbal consent served as a way for the participants to make a choice to participate freely without having feelings of being forced or anxiety of getting in trouble if they chose to withdraw. There was no access to confidential information without prior consent of participants. I took caution in that participants were not required to commit an act which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret. The use of methodology was cautious about any use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant or any form of deception that they were not employed at any stage of data collection phases.

This study explored a sensitive topic so participants may have been exposed to questions which may have been experienced as stressful or upsetting. While the questions that were asked during the individual interviews and the focus group were not certainly or categorically stressful but some participants may have potentially experienced them as distressing. This is mainly because some of the questions required participants to relate their life experiences, which may have been remembered as traumatic events. I was sensitive to the ethical requisites in working with people who experienced life stressful events, hence I took every reasonable step to ensure no harm. I made sure that questions posed to the participants were

simple, easy to understand and age appropriate. I also minimised extensive probing that may have potentially caused harm or upset the participants.

In continuing to promote ‘no harm’ I took the advantage of using skills as a social worker in offering onsite support and counselling when it was necessary. Further, as advised by the Ethics Committee I made the learners aware about the student social workers that were within the school premises who were available during the data collection phase. I also emphasised the role of their learner support agent (LSA) who provides counselling to learners on a full-time basis if ever they felt like talking to someone. Additionally, there was a LO teacher who was extremely involved in dealing with learner issues and their families. The LO teacher also provided counselling services and was dedicated to the school’s Welfare committee and general social development that participants could consult if they felt like they needed to. Furthermore, the student social workers, LO teacher and the LSA worked closely with the Department of Social Development at Inanda and KwaMashu E service offices as well as ChildLine thus referrals could have been made easily when it was necessary.

In the subsequent presentation my research findings in this completed dissertation and oral presentations, I used pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. I avoided other information that could easily identify my research participants such as learners’ grade letters (grade 10 B). Such information is not anywhere specified in the research findings. Since the school is an organisation it was important to protect its anonymity, hence the school name is not anywhere mentioned in this dissertation or oral presentations. Due to that geographical information, combined with the type of organisation can easily give away identity; I broadly discussed the location without being exactly specific to the physical address of the school (see Chapter One under location section).

The research data will be kept at the UKZN social work department and will be destroyed after a period of 5 years where unauthorised persons are restricted from accessing any of the data. The recordings obtained from the interviews were deleted from the recording device.

It is important that feedback is communicated to participants and any other stakeholder after the study has been completed. For participants, there was a group conversation after the data had been collected where the findings, verbally, were communicated to them in their preferred language. In addition, feedback was also given to participants through providing a

simple summary report of the key research findings. When writing the summary report I kept it simple and wrote it in both IsiZulu and English in order to avoid confusion. This included avoiding academic terminology in order to facilitate more understanding among the participants and accessibility. The acceptance of the offer of research results by study participants was voluntary and it was an informed decision as I could not force participants to have these conversations or accept the summary report if it was against their will. Additionally, a copy of this dissertation was submitted to the school as requested by the school principal as well as the Head office of Department of Education as per request on the gatekeeper letter.

3.10 Summary

Methodology suggests more than simply the research process and the kind of tools and procedures used when conducting research. It is also guided by theories that underlie the research methods. In this chapter I discussed the research methods employed in this study with an aim to bring attentiveness to the study context and its execution. I detailed the processes and various steps taken in both collecting and analysing the data. This is an important chapter because it details transferability of methods, whereby other researchers in a similar or different setting can use some of the research tools that were explained.

I began by discussing the selected research paradigm (qualitative paradigm) that guided the study and clarified its relevance using applicable literature. I moved on to explicate the selected research design (descriptive) and provided sufficient motivation for this particular study. Further, I described the sampling methods that I used and provided their concrete purposes for this study. Data collection and analysis methods were also explained in detail in order to make the readers aware of the exact processes and steps that I followed as well as the reasons behind the actions taken. Moving on, I discussed and described how this study built its authenticity and quality using the four pillars (transferability, dependability, conformability and credibility) under the theme trustworthiness. Furthermore, in the chapter I detailed the limitations that I found in the process of executing this study. The utmost purpose for this was to raise awareness to readers about the limitations that could be expected when conducting studies such as this one in future and also suggest alternatives to those studies. Finally and most importantly, I discussed the ethical issues that were considered in this study.

I particularly and comprehensively discussed this part of the chapter because it concerns research participants, and it was of paramount importance to explain how I tried to prevent harm. These ethical considerations were prerequisites in conducting this study and precautionary in every step of this study. The following chapter discusses the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

As guided by the qualitative paradigm, which is in its nature suitable for understanding, explaining and interpreting human behaviour (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012), this chapter presents the findings of this study drawing on the similarities and differences among teen parents that emerged in the data collected. It lends voice to teen parents and interprets these voices using the literature discussed in Chapter Two and the theoretical framework in Chapter One, which are benchmarks for relating the findings since they provide a background and context for the research problem, objectives and questions. Thematic content analysis was the technique used to develop themes. According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) themes should ascend naturally from the data and at the same time must be in conjunction with the study's questions and objectives. In order to enhance the understanding of the context of the findings, this chapter begins with a presentation of participants' profiles followed by their brief biographical outline in a table format. It then moves on to discuss the identified themes which are inspired by the thoughts and experiences shared by teen parents with due attention to the objectives, literature and theoretical framework guiding the study. These themes are discussed as interrupted schooling induced by teen parenthood; financial challenges faced by teen parents _Money is a problem when you are a young parent'; Positive experiences of parenting; teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth; Child Support Grant _serving as a motivation for pregnancy and childbirth? '; and managing conflicting roles of being a learner and a parent.

4.2 Participants' profiles

Please Note: The following names are pseudonyms for the purposes of anonymity

4.2.1 Meet the teen mothers:

Lowlow was a 19-year-old mother whose daughter was two years of age. The father of the baby was a 24-year-old man employed as a car assistant designer, in a car manufacturing company. At the time of the study, they had been in a relationship for six years. The father of her daughter offered her material and emotional support. She had four siblings, two sisters and two brothers. She is one of triplets in the family. Both her parents were deceased, and her brother (one of the triplets) was shot dead by local gangsters. She was living with her twin brother and her daughter at the time of the study. Her relationship with her older sister was strained when she had a baby as her sister was angry at her for falling pregnant. Her other sister, who was second in the sibling line was supportive and played the role of a bread winner to her siblings. In addition to the substantial amount offered by her sister, she survived on the Child Support Grant (CSG) and the money provided by her baby's father. Her major challenges were financial constraints as sometimes the money was not enough to provide for the household and her daughter's needs. During her pregnancy she did not consider abortion as she had mixed feelings about it. She cited ancestral beliefs, and the views of people around her against abortion as influential in her decision.

Amoh was a 19-year-old mother whose daughter was one year and seven months of age. The father of the baby was a 23-year-old man who was employed. They were in a relationship and had been partners for more than two years. The father of the baby paid *inhlawulo* (money paid to the girl's family as a Zulu cultural requirement when a girl falls pregnant out of wedlock). Her mother passed away and she lived with her father until she fell pregnant. She was chased away by her father after she disclosed the pregnancy and went to live with her paternal grandmother who was employed as a domestic worker. She lived in a three bedroomed house with seven people, excluding her daughter and herself. The only income that sustained her family was from her grandmother's job and two CSGs while the rest of family members were unemployed. One of the major challenges that she experienced was financial instability as well as tension among the family induced by her having a baby. Though she received the CSG, the amount was never enough to meet the baby's needs and it was never was it a motivation for her pregnancy. She considered abortion at the time of her pregnancy as an option that would make her situation better and ease the negative reactions

from her family. Her decision not to abort was influenced by her sister's emotional support as well as her grandmother who allowed her to live with her.

Candy was an 18-year-old mother whose son was four months old. At the time of study, she was still in a relationship with a 25-year-old man who was the father of the baby. The father of the baby was working. She felt that her relationship strengthened when the father of the baby paid *inhlawulo* as that gave her hope that their relationship was serious and heading in the desired direction of marriage. The father of the child offered financial support for the baby. She lived with her unemployed mother, and her three siblings who were all employed. Her baby was in her mother's care during school hours. Her major challenges were associated with financial problems, specifically for her baby. Though the father of the baby offered financial support, it was minimal and therefore did not meet all of the baby's needs for the month. At the time of the study, she was not in possession of a South African identity document and therefore could not apply for the CSG although she was eligible. She had strong beliefs in the Zulu traditions that if she aborted the child it was going to haunt her in future, thus motivating her decision against abortion.

Penny was a 20-year-old single mother whose son was two years and four months old. She separated with the baby's father before her son was even born and did not receive any support from him or his family. She reported not to know the occupation of her baby's father. Her mother passed away and her father's whereabouts were unknown. She headed a household where she lived with her 10 year old nephew who was on chronic medication (illness was not disclosed) and whose mother passed away. She received a Foster Care Grant for her nephew, which was R880 at the time of the study which was their only income excluding the CSG of R330 for her baby. She used this income for household responsibilities, school needs, health needs (both herself and her nephew) as well as her son's needs. Her major challenges were financial hardships that she had go through as a school-going single mother as well as lack of family support. Her motivation for her childbirth was her thoughts of her mother's resilience and survival when she gave birth to her as things were also tough back then but her mother did not abort her.

Nelly was an 18-year-old teenage mother whose daughter was four months old. The baby's father was 20 years old and was enrolled in the same secondary school completing Grade 12. She separated from the baby's father during her pregnancy as he denied paternity. Nelly's

partner (father of her daughter) could have been a participant in the study but he refused. Through interviewing Nelly, I realised that he was non-supportive. He had fathered two other children except Nelly's daughter. She lived with her single mother and sister. Her mother was unemployed and cared for the baby when Nelly was at school. Her family lived on her sister's income as she was the only one employed. Apart from the financial challenges that she experienced and lack of support from the baby's father. Her motivation to keep the baby was the support she received at home and she was scared of committing a sin as people had told her. At the time of the study she did not have the money to go to the hospital to fetch her baby's birth certificate and as a result could not apply for CSG though she was eligible.

4.2.2 Meet the teen fathers:

Mzi was a 19-year-old father whose daughter was one year old. He was in a committed relationship with the mother of the baby, Noma and aspired to get married to her. The mother of the baby was undertaking her 1st year at a South African University. His daughter lived at her mother's house under the full-time care of his girlfriend and her family. He visited his baby often, as some of his sisters would fetch the baby over weekends. He provided financial support to the baby as he was working part-time as a salesman. He was also studying for a Bachelor of Education, part-time at University of South Africa. He lived with his mom and three siblings. His mom was employed and the other two siblings were in primary school. His mother was the pillar of his strength and financially assisted him especially when he was in Grade 12. His major challenge was his daughter's poor health and he believed that it interrupted his performance in Grade 12. Besides the late notification of the pregnancy, he believed abortion to be no different to murder and as a result did not consider that option. His baby received a CSG which was payable to the mother of the child as she was the primary caregiver.

Mzwa was a 22 year father whose daughter was 2 years and nine months of age. He fathered a baby when he was 19 years old, completing Grade 11. He was in a committed relationship with the mother of the baby who was 17 years old at the time of the interview and he had been together with her since 2013. With his part-time job as a waiter he has was able to pay *inhlawulo*. At the time of the study he had applied at Durban University of Technology for a diploma in Dentistry. He was raised by his single mother who offered him support when he

had a baby as a scholar. He lived with his mother and two siblings. Having his daughter was one of the best things that happened to him though the role presented many financial challenges but with the help of his hard working mother he survived. Although he admitted to the challenges he experienced as a school-going teen father, abortion was against his beliefs.

Sya was a 19-year-old father whose son was three months old. He was in a relationship with his baby's mother. The baby lived at the baby's mother's home. The baby's mother was 17 years old and was doing Grade 11. He lived with both his parents. Though his parents were angry when they received the news that their son was having a baby, they were financially and emotionally supportive to him and his baby. He felt he was a burden to his parents, as he could not provide for the baby's needs. His son was not registered for a CSG as the mother was under 18 years. He reported not to have spoken about abortion with the baby's mother.

Senzo was an 18-year-old father whose son was three months old. He was in a relationship with a 15-year-old mother but he was neither committed nor planning to marry her. He lived with both his parents, who were employed and one sibling. Although his parents were disappointed and angry when they found out that he had impregnated a young girl, he received good emotional and financial support for both his needs and that of the baby. He was a relative of one of the teachers at the school and identified the teacher's interference in his life as a challenge. The baby lived with the mother's family and was not in receipt of the CSG as she was under age of eligibility.

As can be seen from the participants' profiles presented above, each teenage parent had her/his unique story to tell, however there were some similarities across their narratives. The disadvantaged family background is frequently indicated in many profiles. The study's location Inanda, with the demographics presented in Chapter one, reflects some of the structural disadvantages, including high unemployment rates and poverty which influenced the way of life and experiences of the participants. Across the profile descriptions it is evident that many teen parents came from economically deprived homes, especially with overwhelming parenting responsibilities. Some of the profiles suggest a high possibility of inter-generational poverty cycles, such as Penny who related her experiences with that of her own mother who also struggled when she was raising her. Another example is Nelly, although she was eligible for the CSG she did not have money for transport to the hospital to fetch a certified document of the child's birth. Her experience showed an uncondusive

economic environment that she lived in, which cannot be separated from the broad economic inequalities and lack of access to basic resources required for a better living. In fact, many of the challenges experienced by the participants emanated from the broader inequality, poverty and other socio-economic ills which threatened the quality of their lives. Some of these profiles reflect gender disparities that mark many South African families, where children are raised by a single parent (usually a mother) and the father is either deceased, unknown or chooses not to take responsibility for the child. Seven of the participants experienced growing up without a father figure whether it was due to death or absenteeism while there were only two participants who lived with both their parents. As noted from the profiles, many of the participants did not encourage the idea of abortion mainly because of traditional/cultural beliefs and dominant attitudes from people around them concerning abortion. Each participant, related both negative and positive experiences as teen parents, which are discussed as themes in this chapter.

The following section presents a brief demographic outline of the participants. This provides contextual information which is pertinent to the study and its participants and serves as a form of reference for the reader as they appear in the subsequent sections.

Please Note: Participants highlighted in bold only participated in a focus group interview as previously explained in Chapter three (under 3.4 Sampling and sampling method) of this dissertation. As a result, the discussion of their profiles was limited.

Table 1: Brief demographic outline of participants

Number of participant	Names (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Age of the child	Grade	Relationship with the partner	Age of the partner	Occupation/Grade of partner
1	Amoh	female	19	1 year 7 months	10	Relationship	23	Employed
2	Bonnie	female	18	1 year	10	Separated	21	Unemployed, dropped out of school
3	Candy	female	18	4 months	10	Relationship	25	Employed
4	Lowlow	female	19	2 years	10	Relationship	24	Car assistant designer
5	Mzwa	male	22	2 years	Completed	Relationship	17	Grade 11

				9 months	Grade 12			
6	Mzi	male	19	1 year	Completed Grade 12	Relationship	18	1 st year University
7	Nelly	female	18	4 months	10	Separated	20	Grade 12
8	Penny	female	20	2 years 4 months	10	Separated	28	Unknown
9	Sally	female	20	2 years and 5 months	10	Separated	25	Part-time job in building company
10	Senzo	male	18	3 months	10	Relationship	16	Grade 10
11	Sya	male	19	3 months	12	Relationship	17	Grade 10

As indicated in the above table, the age range of the participants was from 18 to 22 years. The average age of the participants was 19 years while the average age of their children was 1 year 4 months. There was a total of four males and seven females (including the two females that only participated in the focus group interview). Eight participants were enrolled in grade 10 while the other one was doing grade 12. The other two participants had completed grade 12 in 2014, therefore it was their first year out of school. Four participants (which were all teen mothers) were separated from their partners (father's baby) and the rest seven participants reported that they were still in a relationship with their partners (the mother or father of the baby). The average age for all partners was 24 years. However, if divided according to gender of the participants, the average age for females' partners was 24 years and for males' partners it was 17 years. This indicated that females' partners were older than the males' partners. The female partner's average age reflect what was discussed in literature review where various authors indicated that some of the school-going teenage mothers were impregnated by older men who were usually working (Luke, 2005; Heumann, 2011; Molapo, 2011). This is typically represented in this study's sample as most of the females' partners were employed while all of the males' partners were still at school. The following section discusses the themes that emerged from the teen parents' experiences and perspectives during the individual interviews and the one group interview.

4.3 EMERGED THEMES

4.3.1 Interrupted schooling induced by teen parenthood

According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, it is anticipated that a 17/18 year old enrolled in school would have completed grade 12 by that age. However, many of my participants were enrolled in Grade 10, that which is expected for a 15/16 year old who has been consistent in his or her progress. The majority of the teen parents' class grades indicated a delay in their schooling as many of them were enrolled in grade 10 yet none of them were 15/16 years old. As confirmed in literature, it is therefore convincing that joining parenthood as a school-going teenager disrupts consistent academic progress (Singh, 2005; Zondo, 2006). Paying attention to the age and class grades demonstrated in table one as well as their assertions during interviews showed interruption in their education. Some of the school-going mothers shared that they dropped out of school to take care of their babies and came back after one or two years. Sally, a 20 year old school-going mother described how hard it was for her at the age of 17 years to attend school when she was pregnant, *“I would miss my clinic dates (antenatal care) because I was coming to school and my mom just said I should just quit because it wasn't working. I was also just lazy to wake up in the morning. I just dropped out of school and...came back after two years.”*

Sally also shared in the group that her mother said she would only look after the baby when he could walk, which meant that she had to give birth and stay at home for another year apart from the year when she was pregnant. In Sally's words, *“My mom just said I should go back to school when the baby can walk so I can feel what being a mother is like”*. Literature confirms that the experience of being a parent while being a learner is influenced by social responses to teenage pregnancy, parenting and sexuality which either results in a learner's life being manageable or imbalanced (Shefer et al, 2013). From Sally's description, it seems that her mother's response to her pregnancy and parenting was about teaching her the role of being a mother. Sally's mother's reason for not looking after her baby was that she wanted her to *“feel what being a mother”* was like. Sally's description of her mother's reaction reflected that her mother's primary concern was the responsibility that her daughter needed to take as a mother, which required full-time nurturing and caring for the baby, and not necessarily her lack of concern about her daughter's lost years at school. This reflects some

of the dominant ideologies of motherhood which assume certain characteristics which construct gender roles (Clark, 2009). The dominant ideas about motherhood categorise gender roles and set standards of certain behaviours and activities from mothers, which are very different from fathers. Sally's mother's reaction can be interpreted further and be contextualised in most poor communities in South Africa such as Inanda, where the misrecognition and irresponsibility of fathers has been so normalised that the liability of the child is only placed on the mother of the child. Again, in such communities, men can also end up adopting the dominant normalities that are gender based and they may feel that it is not their role to provide nurturance and care for their children.

During the individual interviews, Penny who was a 20-year-old single mother shared with me that she repeated grade 10 three times because of the parenting responsibilities that she had. She recounted that she first dropped-out of school when she was pregnant and went back the following year, and towards the end of that year her son was hospitalised for three months, as a result she lost out on school work and could not write her final exams. The following year she decided not to go back to school and give care and nurturance to her son which meant a loss of three years in her education. Literature shows that though some girls go back to school after childbirth, having a child can have an overwhelming effect on their schooling that is burdened with problems (Zondo, 2006; Nzama, 2004). Penny's experience also indicates a lack of support from the father of the baby, in fact, total absenteeism (as they separated before the baby was born) which is something that is prevalent in disadvantaged South African communities which places a burden on the mother of the child. Such situations exacerbate gender inequalities and accommodate the discourse of fathers' lack of involvement in the lives of their children. The danger in this is that such practices have been so normalised in a way that it is easily accepted and not attempted to be challenged even when it is necessary, because a child is the responsibility of both parent whether separated or in a relationship. This was also reflected by Candy when she explained how she argued with her baby's father about bringing the money during the week when she was at school but she quickly reserved and questioned her demands and said, *—..I sometimes think that I am too demanding and putting pressure because it is his money and he is not obliged to bring the money, he does it for the love of his kid.* Candy's introspection reflects guilt in requesting her baby's father to take responsibility and consider her situation as a school-going mother. Candy asserted that her partner (father of the baby) was *—not obliged to bring the money* and the question that would arise in such instances is: who is obliged if he is not? This reflection

indicates that parenting responsibilities have been placed on the mother's shoulders that even when the other party is unaccountable in his role and warrants complaints, it is easily refuted because of the dominant discourses towards parenthood which categorise certain activities for different gender groups. Despite the provider role being dominantly attributed to men (Osthus & Sewpaul, 2014), women seem to be normalizing the non-provision of support so much so that they are grateful when the men do provide some support, and feel guilty when they make claims to rightful entitlements.

The new responsibilities that confront learners when they become parents can be overwhelming and can lead to school drop-outs, as it can be witnessed by the experiences of some of my participants. Amoh, a 19-year-old teenage mother described how she missed the whole year of school because of parenting responsibilities. —. *our neighbour is in my age and we used to attend the same school (and the same class grade). She is currently doing her matric this year and I am doing grade 10 but I am supposed to be in matric too. But last year I didn't study for the whole year taking care of Snalo (her baby)*". According to Malahlela (2012) school-going teen mothers are confronted with challenges that interrupt their education. Amoh further described how at times she felt overwhelmed by the duties she had to complete and her mind sometimes got distracted because of all the worries she had about her baby:

Sometimes things get slow in terms of studying. Ehh (sighs), I get stressed about my baby when she is sick and I have to come to school stressed. The mind is processing very slow and I don't understand what is going on. You (referring to herself) feel very sad. And yeah two things don't work out at the same time. You have to think about one thing at a time.

The above quote demonstrates how teen parents are sometimes challenged with the role of parenting when they are school-going. The demands of being a parent sometimes overwhelms them and unfortunately impacts their concentration, which can and often does lead to poor academic performance. The outcome is spending a far longer period in high school than expected (Malahlela, 2012). The challenge of poor academic performance interlinks with economic prospects, where these young parents may find themselves trapped in poor financial circumstances, which will likely have negative consequences on their lives and their child/children. The concern is not located within the circle of the teen parents'

babies, and the teen parents themselves, but interlinks with the whole family, community and the country.

It is not only teen mothers who experienced interruption in their schooling because of parenting responsibilities. Mzi, a 19-year-old teenage father who was known as one of the bright sparks at the school described how challenging and stressful it was to see his child sick and how that may have influenced his academic performance in his final matriculation exams. He described the following:

When she was just three months or so she got sick. I'm not sure what she was diagnosed with but it was serious and had to do with breathing problems. I was stressed and it was just a bad experience. You know I had just been introduced to another level of responsibility and this just came up. We also had exams coming up and it was just worrying and stressing and maybe that's why I didn't even do very well in my final exams (lifts shoulders and shakes his head indicating dissatisfaction and sadness).

What Mzi shared in the above quote reflects how the experience of seeing his child unhealthy strained his mind and infringed on his academic performance. He was well known for performing at a merit level in his grades, and his poor performance in the final matriculation exam had a devastating effect on him. This confirms the literature that asserts that teen parenthood produces negative consequences on education (Nzama, 2004; Zondo, 2006; UNFPA 2013; WHO; 2014). These consequences can unfortunately interfere with tertiary education where a learner is not accepted at university because of the low level of performance.

Policies such as the one in DoE permit pregnant teenagers to attend school (Nkani, 2012; DoE, 2007), and some learners continue schooling for the full duration of their pregnancies. Candy, for example, said, *“Even when I was 9 months pregnant I used to come to school and write my exams.”* However, parenthood does interrupt teen mothers' schooling. When Candy described her experience as a school-going teenage mother she said the following:

I was a scout girl, and when I fell pregnant I had to quit. Mr N (school teacher) advised that I should come back to the group next year. I decided to come back this year because there were going to be competitions and I wanted to help others since I am more experienced than the rest of the group members. When I had to come to school to study at night with the group, I would have to beg my mother to stay with

the baby. Sometimes I would not go to the camps if I could not find someone to take care of my baby while I was away. When I didn't have a baby I used to go anytime to the camps and be involved in many school activities. But now, I have to wake up very early in the morning and prepare for the baby, and then myself and I end up getting to school late.

Candy's description shows how being a parent changed and actually interrupted her daily routines as an active learner. She described how she had to cancel her extra-curricular activities that she used to be involved in before she had a baby. Indisputably, being a mother did not only transform her life but affected her academic development and made her different from the other learners who did not have babies. Candy's experience is parallel to what Zondo (2006) asserts about teen mothers who are expected, and sometimes expect themselves to behave as ordinary girls in school. Yet the role of being a mother has demands that often conflicts with that of being a learner. Having a baby also meant that Candy was different from the rest of the learners who did not have parenting responsibilities, which located her in a position of the 'other' who cannot fulfil certain activities in school because of the added responsibility. The major change in her routine may have influenced her relations with other girls that did not have children as it became a constant reminder of how different she was from other girls who did not have children.

Many of the teen parents' experiences in relation to school discussed so far indicate that Panday et al (2009) is correct about parenthood inducing major change, with significant implications particularly at a time when an individual is still at school, let alone being unemployed. Similar to Mzi, Nelly who was an 18-year-old mother described the experience of having a sick baby and how that affected her exam preparations:

Something that disturbs me is that Melo (her baby), you see these days she sometimes gets sick, she would have flu and what not. When I feed her, she would cough until she vomits and as we are starting final exams it becomes a problem. I don't get much time to study.

It is clear from Nelly's description that she sometimes experiences situations that interfere with her studies which is similar to that of other teen parents that participated in this study. These experiences can make one ponder about the future of teen parents, whether they would be able to complete high school and enrol in tertiary institutions to further develop themselves in order to increase their chances of employability or will they follow the

perceived unbearable future asserted by WHO (2013; 2014) and contribute to a further entrenchment of poverty and negatively affect their children's future. Thus a possible cycle of poverty and deprivation. Though this only considers the traditional practices of success, where a better life is perceived for people that have followed the routine of being educated and later have children. However, it does not generalise or predict the future of these teen parents as they had different aspirations and ambitions which might land them with a better life.

From the gathered data, I was convinced that the interruption with schooling of teen fathers was experienced at a minimal level than that experienced by teen mothers. Sya, a 19-year-old father, said that it was not such a big issue for him to be a parent while he was a learner because the baby was the responsibility of his parents. When I asked Mzwa how he negotiated his role of being a parent and a learner at the same time he said the following:

Well for me it was not much of a problem maybe her mother would complain more about this (laughs). Since I have said that she (his daughter) does not live with me...The only thing that I had to do was to work on weekends and obviously I would do my school work late at night. But I was able to finish all my school work because she did not stay with me. I can say I coped quite well although I was different from the other guys who were not working part-time but I managed to pass too.

From the above quote Mzwa first asserts that his daughter's mother would have complained more about the clashing of the two roles because their daughter stayed with her. He is referring to the full-time nurturance and care that a baby needs, which he was not part of because of normalised discourses and practices that view the mother as a primary caregiver and overlooks the father. Cultural practices and views towards parenthood often do not permit a child born out of wedlock to live at the father's home. What is also reflected in the above quote is the conformation of gendered parental roles, as Mzwa mentioned that he had to work during weekends in order to provide for his daughter. Though he used to complete his school tasks late at night because of the part-time job and parental responsibilities, which shows some sort of school interruption but it did not extend to a point of dropping out of school, as compared with many of the teen mothers in this study. Nevertheless, it is evident across many of the experiences of the participants that when school-going teenagers become parents they are obligated to restructure their lives if they are to serve the best interests of

their children. Considering that many of the teen parents' children were either babies or toddlers presented particular challenges to their schooling as the children required constant attention, which affected their role of a learner.

Below Candy and Lowlow express how being a parent caused disruption in their schooling. Candy said the following:

...I could not write for my second term exams last year in June. The principal called me but it was already end of August so it was just late. I couldn't even see if I would be able to cover. I then stayed at home and came back this year.

Parenting responsibilities can be overwhelming for a school-going teenager. Without doubt there is a battle between being a mother and a school child at the same time. Lowlow below describes how she values her role as a learner and tries to negotiate it with being a mother to her daughter:

I study during weekends. I join a study group with my cousin and we would cross-night studying. Sometimes I don't sleep because Syamthanda would have woken up already when we close the study, so I would have to prepare for her. I would end up sleeping at around 11 am with her. Though I do study, sometimes it's really hard especially when she is not feeling well. She has asthma. When she has an attack, I have to make sure that I quickly hire a car to take to the hospital. It becomes even more difficult if I am writing exams. Sometimes I take her to her paternal grandmother because she is also working and cannot stay with her full-time. It's difficult when she is sick and I am writing exams. It's hard!

It is about not getting enough time to sleep, which is something that is essential for a good psychological functioning, especially in the case of a learner. She expressed how difficult her situation was at times, when the health needs of the baby had to be met. Though she said that she finds a balance in her role of being a mother and a learner at the same time, it robbed of her rest and the general life trajectory that would be expected for a 19-year-old school-going girl.

4.3.2 Financial challenges faced by teen parents ‘Money is a problem when you are a young parent’

Parenting invites new responsibilities which include meeting the material needs of the baby. Providing the material needs of a baby means using money. The financial responsibility that comes with the baby is sometimes experienced as challenging for employed and older individuals. Thus, it would not be unanticipated that a school-going teenage parent would be likely to face even greater financial challenges. According to Nzama (2004) and Briggs, Brownell & Roos (2007) many teen parents face financial challenges, similarly, many teen parents spoke about their financial challenges:

Ehh financially (sighs and looks down), I can say there is money but it's not enough... a baby needs nappies every month, needs to go to the doctor and clothes... now and then. Her father brings R800 or R700 every month...I can say it's not enough. Baby's stuff are expensive. For Snalo (her baby), the big tin of milk only lasts three weeks, three weeks! On the fourth week, the milk would have been finished. I don't even want to mention nappies. I have to buy 2 jumbo packs or 3 sometimes. I get stressed thinking what (will happen) if she doesn't have milk. I worry about what she will eat when there is no money. (Amoh)

I don't yet have the means to buy him food, currently his father buys him... We sometimes fight about money with his father. Sometimes he brings the money when he feels like he wants to... Sometimes I ask my mom to buy Bah (her son) milk if it gets finished before the month ends.... (Candy)

It becomes difficult when the baby runs out of nappies before month-end. Sometimes her milk gets finished...I now have to lend money from people in order to get through the month ... (Lowlow)

Indisputably, the above scenarios depict that teen parents sometimes fail to meet the basic needs of their children. It reflects economic constraints in managing the baby's needs as expected for school going teens. It also indicates dependency pointing to the issue that if the party that a teen parent depends on (for Candy and Amoh it is their partners) does not cooperate or is not able to provide the amount of money that can meet the baby's needs, those needs can end up not being met.

When I asked the group what they found to be a negative experience for them as young mothers, some of the participants shared the following:

It's negative in the sense that when a child is sick, you get stressed and you don't even have money to take the child there (medical facility). You ask people to give you money, it's just not nice. (Penny)

I can say it's negative because when you a young parent, you also have needs. You also still need cosmetics, clothes and where do you get the money to buy for your own child? (Amoh)

The previous responses indicate anxiety, which is a psychological concern for somebody who is school-going. Anxiety is induced by the overwhelming financial maintenance and responsibilities that are accompanied by parenthood. Amoh revealed that the responsibility is not only towards her baby but herself too. Bearing in mind that Amoh does not have parents and they are a big family at home which depend on social grants and money earned by her grandmother suggest financial challenges. Conceivably, in more advantaged families, parents and family would be expected to provide for a 19-year-old who is still in school (even if that child is a teen parent) but the converse is experienced in Amoh's case since she is concerned about her own basic needs that have to be met. This indicates that the socio-economic status of the family impacts on the coping strategies of the teen parent.

During a focus group session, a lot of interesting information and thoughts that were not anticipated emerged. Sally felt that the negative experience about being a mother was that people look down upon her and her family because the baby's father had not paid the damages. She said:

It's even worse when you have a child that has not been paid for inhlawulo. At the same time it's not like you would have wanted that but sometimes the baby's father does not have that amount of money to pay. (Sally)

Sally raised a parallel issue to what Nzama (2004) and Nkani (2013) recognised when they asserted that most teenage parents face the challenge of having to raise money to proceed with cultural rituals. Furthermore, she said that her baby's father was an orphan with no formal employment and therefore did not have enough money or anyone to help him. This indicates that having a baby while a teenager comes with financial responsibilities which do not only include the baby but the cultural requirements that need money from the baby's

father or his family. As for the teenage fathers, it may be a financial difficulty if the father's family does not have the required amount. For example, Mzi who was raised by a single parent was not able to pay *inhlawulo* for his baby as he did not have the means to. Lowlow was also concerned about the prices of the rituals and the strain it placed on their boyfriends as young girls. She said, *—They just say it so easily as if a cow is cheap. A cow is expensive! Inhlawulo it's not just a cow, it goes with two goats and money. People just make it sound as if it is so easy. It's not.*

There were differences spotted on the experiences of teen parents when it came to financial challenges. Some teen fathers did not express any particular financial challenges. In their words they expressed the following when they were asked about what financial challenges they were facing:

The money is there, my parents can take care of everything. (Sya)

I don't have any financial challenges because my parents take care of my baby...I'm not in need or poor. (Senzo)

Sya and Senzo's experience reflects good relation and support from their parents as well as affordability. There is also an indication of diverted responsibility towards their parents in their responses. What is similar between Sya and Senzo is that they both had parents living in the same house and they did not complain about the income in their households. This meant that their households were more financially stable in comparison to the rest of the participants that experienced high rates of unemployment in their homes, or surviving on CSG and other grants or having a single parent or even without any parents. Typically, this reflected that the family's financial standing affects the quality of lives of teen parents and their survival strategies are linked to the family's financial state. This cannot simply be understood as a deficiency in teen parent's families as this would be adopting a blame the person approach (Mullaly, 2010). However, an attempt can be made to contextualise these issues in a structural dimension of the economy where there is unequal income distributions and unequal opportunities. Gender inequality can also be taken into consideration where most of the single working and unemployed women raise children on their own without any assistance from the biological fathers of their children. This not only leaves accountability and utmost responsibility to one parent (usually the mother) but it also affects the child's development and attitude towards life and choices.

According to Morrell (2005) some teen fathers opt for part-time employment in order to meet the financial requirements of the child. When Mzwa was narrating some of his experiences as a teen parent he said, *“I had to sacrifice my time and weekends to work part-time jobs when I was in grade 12. I must say it was not easy...”* Mzwa’s experience relates to the findings of Chigona & Chetty (2008) where they discovered that teen parents may feel that they must work and start planning their own and the child’s future due to the self-imposed pressure to earn money and the indispensable pressure to meet the demands of being a provider. Securing part-time employment while at school, especially in the final year can compromise academic performance. Again poor academic performance during the final year of secondary schooling can hinder tertiary education opportunities which are vital for future income security and employability opportunities.

The following citations from data collected further illustrate how the socio-economic status of the family plays a significant role in the teen parent’s life. Amoh shared me what she called how *‘real problems’* started when she gave birth to her daughter:

...Where I was living the (financial) situation was not alright. It was a three roomed house and we were just too many. My granny was stressed about the fact that I was bringing another child and I was also an extra mouth to feed.

(Amoh)

Besides the stress that was prompted by Amoh’s home situation, she was also concerned with the insufficient household income. The money was not enough to make a satisfying living. Amoh added that her grandmother demanded that her partner pay *inhlawulo*, which was a sum of money that she shared, which improved the relationship between herself and her grandmother. This reveals how in poor communities and in disadvantaged homes people can take *‘inhlawulo’* as opportunity to get a once off income, besides the fact that it is cultural requirement, seeing that such money can assist with household responsibilities.

Lowlow recalled a time when her sister did not send enough money for the household expenses including food, and the baby did not have basic needs as the father of the baby was away in another province for employment purposes. She said:

It was hard yho! (Big sigh) It was really hard. There was absolutely nothing. No food. No nappies. Nothing. I remember I had to stay at home for about three days and miss school. The baby’s fees had not been paid at the crèche. I just didn’t know and I couldn’t do anything.

The above financial challenge experienced recalled by Lowlow interlinks with school interruption where she had to miss school because the baby could not be accepted at a day care institution. The way she expressed the situation showed that she had no control over it and had to sacrifice her schooling in order to take care of her baby. At the same time she was at her wits end, as she was really worried and did not know what to do. This is similar to the findings by Chigona & Chetty (2008) where a teen parent who was a participant in their study had to take care of the baby herself and stay home, because she did not have money to hire a babysitter or send the baby to a crèche. A child having no napkins or food raises questions about the amount that the father contributes to the child. What can also be considered is that because Lowlow did not have parents and her sister, who was her main source of financial support, could not bring enough money that month, it is possible that she used the baby's money to cover the household expenses which was unfortunately not enough to take her through the month. This reveals some of the economic constraints and inequality where citizens cannot afford basic needs such as food and also shows possible lack of information about possible welfare assistance that could have assisted Lowlow at the time of need. Experiences such as this one, warn us about poverty levels and how the economic development of teen parents can be hindered.

Some of the financial challenges are linked to the considerations of Seamark & Lings (2004) that teen parents cannot be only understood as perpetrators of a cycle of deprivation as problems related to poverty are interlinked to the family background of the teen parent than to the age at which she starts childbearing. Thus, one can look at teen parents' situations in relation to broader disadvantage versus privilege. This raises question that if their homes were privileged, would they have dropped out of school, missed school or even complained about money for meeting the basic needs of the children? Literature confirms that more teen pregnancies are found in developing countries than in developed countries, and more children in developing countries are prone to child mortality when compared to developed countries (WHO, 2013; 2014; UNFPA, 2013). This reflects some of the global economic inequalities that affect the future of people residing in developing countries, and more specifically the experiences of teen parents.

4.3.3 Positive experiences of parenting

While having children as teen parents can present a challenging experience to their schooling, and affect other aspects of their well-being especially in the presence of poverty and other uncomfortable conditions, it can fill teen parents' lives with meaning and happiness. Some of the findings of this study were similar to the conclusions of Cater & Coleman (2006) and Anwar & Stanistreet (2014) that parenthood could offer teenage parents a chance to change their lives for the better. Noticeably, many participants expressed increased optimism about future endeavours rather than regret. Many participants especially the teen mothers perceived their bad experiences as a stepping stone to a better life and a process of learning about life. Their experiences have been grouped into three sub-themes (personal growth, increased sense of responsibility and developing a sense of purpose and hope)

4.3.3.1 Personal growth

Although most of the participants had not planned to enter into the role of parenthood, and have faced various challenges, they had some positive attitudes born out of the experience. Some teen parents expressed a sense of personal growth and shared the following:

...you (referring to herself) are able to grow and think of alternatives. You become mature, though you are a child but you can now take care of another person. You can now think that oh I need to plan one and two. I need to wash my baby's clothes, you know it's not like before where I was just responsible for myself. (Amoh)

You (referring to herself) grow intellectually. (Candy)

You (referring to herself) become a better planner when you are parent. When you have a child even if you are not old you must be straight and your ways must be right. It also doesn't mean that you must sleep around and you must take care of yourself. (Sally)

...I have experienced loving someone unconditionally and working hard to make her happy. I have experienced growing up in just a second, just after my child was born.

I had to provide and be a dad. I have just experienced being a grown-up yeah.
(Mzwa)

The above quotes show that personal development is a lifelong process which can emanate from challenging experiences such as those of teen parents. Their sense of growth was linked to their lived experience of being school-going parents which showed enhanced feelings about themselves and improved problem-solving abilities. These assertions challenge the dominant pessimistic attitudes and perceptions on teen parents. Mullaly (2010) warns against seeing deficiency in individuals and recommends resistance of problems, and determination of resilience. Focusing on some of the teen parents' positive experiences could result to opportunities that could transform their lives for the better. The kind of expressed personal growth signals a room for these teen parents to learn from their mistakes, and while taking that responsibility, help them to set goals and to reach their full potential.

4.3.3.2 Increased self-awareness and responsibility

In the data collected there was a notable increase in self-responsibility, where teen parents expressed having gained momentum from the experience of being young parents. In a focus group, when I asked the teen mothers what were the positive experiences for them in being a parent to their children some shared the following:

...I learnt a lot. I now use my own money to travel to school. I make money by plating people's hair. I even pay for my own school fees. I must know how much I spend and how much I save. (Sally)

It has made me grow. I now understand that I have a responsibility for myself and my baby. It also made me realise the importance of school since many people do not go back to school after their pregnancy. I have also learned to compare right and wrong things and the best thing is that I can teach somebody that does not know between right and wrong. (Amoh)

It has taught me to be a good mother and the things I used to do when I didn't have a child changed when I had a child. It has also taught me to give attention to my child. It has taught to be more responsible. If I am away from home for whatever

reason I make sure I come back in time because I understand I have a responsibility.
(Lowlow)

It has also made me grow. The things I have to prepare and all that has taught me to be a more responsible person. I clean and cook and do everything to make sure my baby is well taken care of. (Penny)

As can be seen from the above quotes, some of the teen mothers showed not only improvement in personal responsibility but parental responsibility to their children. Increased self-awareness can help one make responsible decisions in future which is desirable for youth, and in this context, the teen parents. These experiences show positive developments in the teen mothers' lives which is similar to the findings of the study conducted by Seamark and Lings (2004) in the United States of America, where she discovered that teen parents had positive experiences of motherhood, which inspired their ambitions and goals. Thus, one can reject some of the dominant discourses on teen parenthood that are filled with notions of hopelessness, helplessness and a doomed future.

4.3.3.3 *Sense of purpose and hope*

In the literature review it was explained that many teen parents become more determined to complete school for the sake of their babies (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). In the findings, teen parents (both mothers and fathers) conveyed a message of being motivated to turn their lives around to provide for their children and be better parents than they were at that stage. Speaking about their aspirations for themselves and their children, participants shared that:

I just want to...get educated and teach my baby not to repeat the mistakes that I did.
(Senzo)

Get my degree, find a job and maybe get married (laughs). I just want her to be healthy and be a father to her that I never had the experience of, yeah. (Mzi)

Since I am completing my matric this year, there are so many things that I want to do for my boy ey. I want him to live a good life... (Sya)

I want to get a good job and provide for my baby girl. I also want to get a house and obviously a car, yeah, also support my mother. I want my child to be happy and I would like her to experience both parent's love. I don't want her to experience

anything that I did. I want her to grow and learn, you know, I want to be a proud dad (smiles). (Mzwa)

These quotes illuminate how these young fathers aspire towards success, and how they view education as an important vehicle to reach their goals. They all speak about getting education as a priority and the rest can follow. These aspirations are not only reflected by teen fathers. The teen mothers also shared some of their ambitions:

For now it is to finish matric first. I can then look for a job and get further education. There are so many things, now I'm not sure. I was thinking of becoming a nurse or do dramatic arts. (Amoh)

I have to do my work properly especially since I now have a baby. I do not see myself repeating a grade. I want to really study and I am committed to matriculating in 2017. I can see that this year I am doing very well and I will pass. I also want to commit myself next year and study hard. I can see that time is flying, and if I had stayed at home I would probably would have failed. I would have really regretted repeating grade 10 again... (Candy)

It's my aspiration to complete school, no matter what people say. I want to be able to leave Bester and move to a better place. Probably build my own house, and for my child to grow and be respectful. I just want her to learn and not focus on friends. (Lowlow)

It's my wish to complete school, get a good job and raise my child. Give her advices so that when she becomes a mother, she becomes a better mother than myself... I also wish that she does not get into my situation... (Nelly)

What I still want for now is to finish school and work. I want to take good care of him. I really wish to see him grow, having everything that he needs. (Penny)

Below are some of the self-assured expressions shared by two teen mothers when I asked them about how they thought of other people's influences on their role as school-going mothers:

I don't believe in a person's judgment. I am my own judge. I look at the future and where my decisions are going to lead me. People say I will be disturbed at school since I have a baby. Yes! I will be disturbed but I will continue and complete school,

get a matric certificate. I will continue and get a good job. If I don't get enough money for university, I can do plumbing or something to make my life better. I can't always ask for everything. I don't like that. I like being independent. (Lowlow)

What I tell myself is that my life won't be ruled by another person. When I do something I don't say that I am doing it for someone to give me praises or for someone to see that I am better. No! I am doing it for myself - for my life to be the best. Yes, I made a mistake and I accepted and dealt with that mistake. Whatever circumstances, I must know that I am satisfying myself and my baby. (Candy)

What the teen mothers shared is mirrored by the teen fathers. It indicates a sense of eagerness to learn and succeed as parents. The most important and significant thing about their aspirations is that they are taking responsibility for their situations and are willing to get educated and secure employment. It shows resilience and human agency (Dominelli, 2002; Mullally, 2010) which concerns taking the decision to make their situation more palatable. The common goal of being able to provide adequately for their children is commendable. In other words, though teen parents are bearing some challenging experiences in their schooling, the fact that they are still in school means that they have not tolerated the negative experiences to shape their lives but are anticipating progress and a better life for themselves and their children.

4.3.4 Teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth

One of the main objectives of this study was to understand teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth. One of the recurring themes in teen parents' responses concerned the use of contraceptives. In the literature review some of the causes of pregnancy in South Africa that concerned the use of contraceptives included poor access to contraceptives (Nkwanyana, 2011), myths about contraceptives (Panday et al, 2009) and judgmental attitudes of health care workers toward contraception (Ncube, 2009). When I asked the participants about some of their reasons for pregnancy (for the females) or impregnating (for the males), the following were their responses:

I won't lie, it is not using protection. (Mzwa)

I don't really have a valid reason...Probably not using a condom may have been a contributing factor. (Senzo)

You see, there was no mistake there. It just happened in another way. But it was not my intention to get her pregnant. I just did it thinking that I was going to be able to ejaculate outside. I thought I was going to be able to control myself, when the sperms were about to come then take out my penis... (Sya)

It's not using a condom when we were „having“ (sexual intercourse). It was a mistake. (Mzi)

...I was not on the injection and not using protection. (Lowlow)

There is no other thing than not using a condom. (Nelly)

From the above quotes it is clear that these teen parents had not planned for their pregnancies. Both teen fathers and teen mothers based their reasons for falling pregnant on mainly not using a condom as a contraceptive method. For Nelly, she based her reason on only the condom, whereas there are other contraceptive methods that she could have used such as the contraceptive injection that Lowlow referred to. Thus, lack of pregnancy prevention information may have also been a contributing factor to some of the teen parents' pregnancies. Just like Amoh who said, *“I didn't even know about injections. If I knew I was going to go there”*. Furthermore, in a conversation between Nelly and I, signs of limited information on contraceptives were reflected:

Me: *So you saw that Philani (father of the baby) did not use a condom when you were having sex?*

Nelly: (laughs and looks down) *Yes they told me. I didn't know*

Me: *But did you know about other contraceptives?*

Nelly: *Miss N (LO teacher) told me when I was already pregnant that I probably didn't use a condom. (Laughs) please let us pass this question. (Signs of being uncomfortable)*

Nelly's response did not only reflect her lack of knowledge about pregnancy prevention methods that were available but also showed sexual permissiveness without any questions or concerns about the consequences of their sexual behaviour. Similar to Amoh and Nelly, Lowlow had incorrect information about contraceptives. This is reflected in the following conversation between us:

Me: *Would you say that not using the protection or injection was due to lack of information or some other reasons?*

Lowlow: *I knew, but I didn't think that teenagers of my age were allowed. I thought that pills and injection were for people that were 20 years and above.*

Me: *So in other words you didn't have correct information?*

Lowlow: *Yes...*

The following is a conversation between Candy and I, which gave the impression that she had incorrect information or no information at all about pregnancy prevention at the time she conceived her baby:

Me: *...pregnancy reasons?*

Candy: *Ehh (Sighs). It's that I fell pregnant the first time (when she was still a virgin)...*

Me: *So it just happened, did you know what you did would result to Bandile (her son)?*

Candy: *I first didn't believe I was pregnant, and asked myself how it happened...*

Me: *What about any knowledge or awareness on contraceptives?*

Candy: *I had a clue about it but because I was still a virgin it was difficult to use a condom. I remember we used a condom but it busted then we took it out and just had it (sex) without it (condom).*

In the above quote, Candy sounded uncertain about the realities of sexual intercourse. She referred to having a 'clue' of contraceptives, which indicated doubtfulness about her knowledge of pregnancy prevention methods. She further confers that she questioned herself when she found out she was pregnant of 'how it happened' which supplements that she did not have information on pregnancy prevention. However, she was conscious when she engaged in unprotected sex and knew the consequences but may have been unaware of other pregnancy prevention methods such as the morning after pill. This can be linked to myths about contraceptives which authors such Panday et al. (2009) suggested to be one of the causes of teen parents. An example can be drawn from Lowlow's comment in the focus group when they were talking about contraceptives:

That thing (3-year contraceptive implant) is very dangerous. They say that it goes like this (demonstrating with her finger, drawing a route from her shoulder to her heart) till it reaches your heart and you can die.

In the above quotation, Lowlow referred to something that had not been proven and was based on hearsay about this contraceptive implant. This can make many teenagers sceptical and reluctant to access this form of contraceptive. However, accessing information is not an individual act alone. Consideration must be taken about raising awareness raised about contraception methods, and the kinds of people that are targeted. The blame cannot be solely on teens who listen and act on myths but also on those who are supposed to inform vulnerable people, such as teenagers about the facts of contraception.

During the group interview the conversation led to the following discussion after other teen parents commented about people they knew who fell pregnant while on contraceptives:

Amoh: Don't you get tested (getting tested for pregnancy) when you are getting injections (contraceptive injections)?

Lowlow: You get tested just that some (nurses) are lazy to do that. They just ask you if you have been on your period and you can just say yes.

Nelly: But a person uyasigezela isisu (to go on your menstrual periods while you are pregnant). I know because that happened to me.

Sally: Ahh, you just go the clinic to get injections and you are a child. It just does not look nice.

Candy: But nurses also discourage us, they say „you are so young and you already getting injected (contraceptive injection)?

Lowlow: Yoh! When they (nurses) see your card for attending antenatal care they say „you are pregnant but you don't even have an ID“

This discussion indicated similar findings to the studies conducted in South Africa by Ncube (2009) and Wood et al. (1998) where health care workers were found contributing to contraceptive inaccessibility of teenagers. This is because they are usually judged on their age and as going against the expected trajectory in their stage of life as teenagers. This, according to Dominelli (2002) is oppressive and is a form of categorisation on the basis of age.

Teen mothers have options such as pregnancy termination, which by law, is allowed in South Africa to a person as young as 12 years old (Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of

1996). Asking the participants what motivated their decisions of childbirth was relevant to the study's objectives. The following were the responses from some of the teen mothers:

I chose to keep the child because I thought I might also die (if she aborted). My family also gave me hope that they will be there for me. The baby's dad also talked me out of abortion and he said he would support the child. (Amoh)

...I also never thought of aborting him. I loved him from the beginning and I told myself he was mine. I also thought where I came from with my own mother and I saw that she has been through a lot with me. Then I asked myself why I would do that.

(Penny)

I just told myself that a mistake has happened and I couldn't make the mistake of aborting and it's a soul without fault. I also believe in Zulu tradition that if I abort, the child will come back and haunt me, and ask me for his name... I just couldn't abort... (Candy)

...It never got to me to abort the baby... Abortion is difficult, it's between you dying or the both of you (including the baby). Abortion is really hard because some people believe that ancestors fight with you if you have done it. All of those things came to my mind but it didn't come to me to even consider aborting... (Lowlow)

Similar to the response of teen mothers, some of the teen fathers shared the following with regards to their decision of childbirth:

Well I was never going to allow my baby to be aborted, never. It's not right. I told myself that I will rather work hard to provide for my baby than to kill her. It's a sin! (Mzwa)

Okay, first of all I only found out that Noma was pregnant when she was four months so it was not going to be possible (to abort) anyway. Besides that, I wouldn't have allowed that. It's murder and if she had done out of my will, I don't know maybe I was going to hate [her] for the rest of my life. No! It's just wrong. (Mzi)

The veiled difference between these teen mothers' and teen fathers' narratives is their position in explaining their reactions towards abortion. On the one hand, none of the teen mothers (except Amoh who was also 'talked out' of abortion by her partner) referred to communicating or discussing with their partners about abortion. Majority asserted sole

responsibility and accountability of the baby which links with Gilbert & Sewpaul (2014) when they assert that women end-up normalising being abandoned by their partners and tolerate the responsibility for falling pregnant and dealing with the consequences thereafter. Their narratives correspond with the dominant features of South African communities where it is uncommon for women to carryout parenting responsibilities single-handedly. On the other hand, the quoted narratives of teen fathers are similar to each other, Mzwa and Mzi both said I was never going to allow', though I might be interpreting too much from their expressions, still, their narratives make it sound as if they (alone) held the authority or position of deciding what was to be done with the baby. This also corresponds with dominant features of South Africa where patriarchy is still quite prominent, especially in the poor regions.

Nevertheless, the above responses from both teen mothers and teen fathers indicate tangled perceptions on abortion as a teenage pregnancy prevention method. Their responses are interlinked with their own cultural and/or religious beliefs as well as dominant attitudes of people around them about abortion as one of the prevention methods. Their reactions signpost an intolerance of abortion as teenage pregnancy prevention method. Even in all of their recommendations when they were explored, none of them referred to abortion as a prevention method. It conveyed a message that the whole idea of abortion was uncomfortable for them. This definitely is related to the cultural, religious or any other values and beliefs they rest on.

4.3.5 Child Support Grant 'serving as a motivation for childbirth'?

There have been various debates around the issue of high teen pregnancies in South Africa to an extent that teenagers have been suspected to intentionally fall pregnant in order to secure the Child Support Grant (CSG). According to Weed et al. (2014) teen parents have been described as people who want to climb to the top list for social welfare benefits. Though various research findings such as that of the WHO (2014) have not borne out these allegations and labelling of teen parents, they continue to be accused of falling pregnant in order to secure the CSG (News24, 2015). When the study's participants were asked if CSG, in any way served as served as a motivation for them to fall pregnant (for the females) or impregnate (for males), the following were some of the responses:

I didn't think about that (CSG). It just happened. I didn't even know how much it was. I also received grant (CSG) but I never even knew how much it was. It's not like that...How can you get pregnant for such a small amount of money? One jumbo (pack of napkins) is R200. You just can't..You only think of it when you see that it might help there and there. Even in class there are people who say we have children for grant money. (Amoh)

For me No! It just happened and I was not budgeting with the CSG. I just didn't use protection... (Mzwa)

The above quotes reflect the responses of all the participants including teen fathers. None of them said they intended pregnancy or impregnation for any reason, including the intention to receive the CSG. However, many of the participants commented that other teenagers were falling pregnant to access the CSG. The following were some of the comments made by participants about other teenagers:

...for other people maybe (they fall pregnant for CSG) because people are having like four children before even reaching the age of 20. I know of a girl here at school who is pregnant with her third child and I wonder what's wrong with her and maybe it's this CSG. (Mzwa)

Other people fall pregnant because they want CSG but it was not like that for me. The CSG does not help me in way. My child does not get it. (Sya)

But you can sometimes say so (that people fall pregnant for CSG). There are people that misuse it. My cousin, she is in matric. Every time when she goes to collect this money, she always brings something for herself not even a danone (yoghurt) for her baby. (Candy)

... It's like people are falling pregnant for it (CSG). Unplanned pregnancy can happen once but not many times. Others have children because they want to dress up and look nice. They take their children to grannies or whoever but don't take the money home. Yet it's not for you, it's for the baby's needs... others do their hair, nails and everything. Some get excited by that if they have three or more children, they get about R2000 or R3000. I think there is a relationship of teen pregnancy and grant because even media tells us a lot about different kinds of free contraceptives. Somebody who falls pregnant now, I say they wanted to because everything is clear.

Even a 9 year old knows that unsafe sex leads to diseases and pregnancy. But many just have children. It's like a competition now. (Lowlow)

The above shows some of the views expressed by participants of how ‘other’ teenagers fall pregnant for the CSG yet none of them planned for CSG. In particular, Lowlow’s comment is confined to other people that (excluding herself) fall pregnant to secure a CSG. Interestingly, she says ‘Somebody who falls pregnant now, I say they wanted to because everything is clear’ yet she also fell pregnant during the time when there was more awareness about pregnancy preventions methods. The above findings mirror with the findings of Hölscher, Kasiram, & Sathiparsad conducted in South Africa (2009) where many participants in their study suggested CSG as the cause of teen pregnancy. However, Hölscher et al. (2009) suggested that:

...it would be impossible to identify any one single cause that on its own would sufficiently explain the genesis of this problem [teen pregnancy]. Thus, social work practitioners will have to acknowledge the fact that the introduction of the Child Support Grant – a recent structural change to South African society – interacts with the deeply rooted patriarchal structures of South African society, and multiple layers of women’s disempowerment (Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 2002)... However, in as far as the CSG might indeed motivate young women to fall pregnant in order to access a monthly ‘income’ of R200, it would be an indictment of South African society and the lack of safety, security and social justice it affords some of its most vulnerable members, thus calling for structural social work interventions focused on providing opportunities for the overall development of women (Walker, 2005)’ (p. 18).

Nevertheless, this reflects how people have normalised the dominant discourses about CSG, that even teenagers who categorically assert that the CSG played no role whatsoever in them falling pregnant, adopt the dominant societal view that teenagers deliberately fall pregnant to access the SCG. Even so, if the accusations represent some of the income inequalities and relates to broader economic inequalities where people cannot meet basic needs. If it is indeed true that teenagers fall pregnant to receive a meager amount, that in no way can provide for the needs of a child, then this is an indictment on a society that fails them.

In contrast with the views expressed above, are the views of, Penny's and Zoe's reflected below:

I think it's small. Someone who would give birth for CSG would be insane. There is nothing like that. It's not something that can be a priority. Sometimes it's helpful because you are able to do things that you didn't think you would do when it's there. So it's helpful. It helps me because Cebo (her son) has to pay for crèche and has to have things to carry for his lunch at crèche. It even helps me with his clothes.
(Penny)

Ahh, I don't think so. In as much it helps but it's a very small amount. It won't finish all your problems. It helps but you cannot say people get pregnant because of it. There is no such thing. (Zoe)

In the above comments Penny and Zoe acknowledged that CSG assists them with some of their baby's expenses though it is 'small'. They dispelled the idea of teenagers falling pregnant to secure the CSG. In Penny's description she used the word 'insane' which, in her view, meant the CSG did not stand a chance of being a motivation for pregnancy especially considering the needs of a baby as well as the costs incurred. Penny further added that, *"This money is too little. People should study. A baby needs a lot of things. A baby needs money, it's even worse when the baby starts eating"*.

There is ample literature to support the fact that social security plays a huge role in alleviating poverty (South African Council of Churches, 2001; White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997; Sewpaul, 2005; World Bank Group & ILO, 2015) and there is strong advocacy in South Africa for a Basic Income Grant (BIG). If the argument that young women deliberately fall pregnant to secure a CSG, would it not make sense to give this woman a BIG so that she does not have to fall pregnant to secure some money for survival? It is important that we recognise economic forces in society that produce living conditions that results in deprivation and discrimination (Lundy, 2011). Grappling with surface issues such as teen pregnancies will not solve broader structural issues that affect poor communities in SA. The World Bank Group and the ILO joined forces in June 2015 to support the launch of universal social security, which is a key mechanism to ensure the fulfilment of socio-economic rights, arguing that, *"Social protection systems that are well-designed and implemented can powerfully shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and contribute to building social peace. They are an essential part of National Development*

Strategies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development with equitable social outcomes”.

4.3.6 Managing conflicting demands at once: Being a learner versus being a parent

One of the objectives of this study was to understand how teen mothers and fathers negotiated their roles as parents and as learners. Managing the conflicting demands of parenthood and those of being a learner appeared to be often linked to the sources of support the participants received. The literature illustrated that teen parents’ successful parenting does not only depend on the teenager’s behaviour but is also highly dependent on the kind of support systems they have (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; VanDenBerg, 2012). This means that either proper and/or lack of good support system (partner support, familial support, school-related support or peer support) influences the success or failure of parenting, and in minimising challenges faced by most teen parents. Many participants shared personal details about their familial relationships, partners, friends, community members and teachers and how that had an influence on being able to manage the two conflicting roles. Though many of the teen parents experienced challenges in their schooling, with their activities being disrupted but they were somehow managing as the interviews were conducted when they were still in school (except Mzi and Mzwa who completed matric the previous year).

This section deals with how the teen parents’ negotiated their conflicting roles of being a learner and a parent, which is also one of the objectives of this study. This attention was motivated by the interest of these teens to pursue their schooling while being parents. When I asked how she negotiated being a learner while a mother at the same time, Penny described the following:

I try because there is nothing that I can do because it's all my responsibility. I have to give him time as his mother and when I am at school I have to forget him and focus on school work. I have to find a balance somehow.

Before sharing the above, Penny had shared with me that she experienced being a single mother before the child was even born as in the above quote she says ‘it is all my responsibility’. When I enquired about assignments and extra lessons that are offered in the school as part of the curricular, she said that she completes them at home but if it happens that she doesn’t manage to finish then she takes it to school. She also shared that she cannot

attend extra lessons because there is no one to take care of the baby since her mother passed away. In her own words she said, *“I just cannot because I am usually with him at home and my mom is not there so it’s just me. That is just how I live”*. This shows the battle and compromise that comes as a result of parenthood while a learner. Though this was the presented situation, she deserves applaud for being able to resist the circumstances and actually work against the situation to further her education. Of particular relevance is Penny’s assertion, *“... when I am at school I have to forget him”* as a way of coping. She acknowledges the disconnectedness between the two roles, and one of her ways of coping was to disassociate one role from the other.

Also sharing how she managed her two demanding roles, Amoh shared that:

I can say that at home there are many girls so sometimes if I have an assignment Snalo (her baby) goes and stays with someone who is at home. They are helpful at home in taking care of my kid when I am not able to. She sometimes goes to her father’s place and stays there for a weekend.

Amoh’s manageable experience is linked to the support system that is available to her. She makes reference to her family members and her baby’s father’s family who are supportive and helpful when it comes to child minding and rearing. This is different from Penny who does not have parents or supportive siblings willing to help her, let alone the father of the baby who is not even part of the baby’s life. This reflects the dynamics of motherhood versus the demands of a learner, which make it difficult though not impossible to raise a child while being a learner.

The following conversation between Candy and I mirrors the experience of Amoh about having strong support systems, which make life of a teen mother more manageable:

Candy: (Sighs) *Sometimes it happens that I get home and his paternal aunt has taken him. I then get time to do my school work. If I am given a task that is due in short period of time, I usually call his father and ask him to ask his sister to fetch him. They usually take him. They even said that they are going to take him since I am going to be writing my final exams. If they brought him back before I complete the task (school work) I ask someone to look after him for the time being.*

Me: *So who do you ask?*

Candy: *My older sister. I can say we hold each other's hands (meaning mutual support). She helps me a lot... as well as my mother...*

Me: *It's good that you have people that are supportive, do you submit your assignments and write tests in due time?*

Candy: *Yes*

Me: *Well you did mention to me that you are doing quite well this year, which is a good thing to hear. Does this mean you try and get that balance in your life though you are a mother?*

Candy: *Yes because of the support I get*

Considering Candy's and Amoh's negotiation strategies, it is clear that a strong support system is essential for creating a more conducive situation for parents that are school-going. At the same time, Penny's experience indicates how the lack of support can make the life of a school-going teen mother difficult, and how it can interfere with the academic performance of the parent-learner. However, Lowlow who was without strong familial support spoke about how she managed both the roles of being a learner and a parent. This is reflected in her words below:

...I can manage. If I plan to study today, I know I will study today. I know that around 8PM she (her daughter) would be asleep. Then from there it's time for me to dedicate myself to my studies. I also know that I have to come back from school and wash my uniform, cook and do other household chores. I plan accordingly. I actually have a timetable and it's helpful especially since we are now approaching final exams.

Lowlow demonstrates a sense of self-efficacy and dedication to both of her roles suggesting managing the roles is not limited to strong familial support only. She reflects the strong commitment of teen parents who bear the experience. Furthermore, she added, *---I wake up early in the morning at 4:30 am or sometimes at 4:00 am because I want to cover the study period at 7:00 am. I prepare for her, bath and feed her (before she goes to school)...* Though this may be a challenging experience, she demonstrated problem-solving abilities and good organising skills. Also explaining how she tries to merge the two conflicting roles, Nelly explained, *---I prepare my school uniform the night before I come to school so that I am able to take care of her (her baby) in the morning. At least leave her bathed and fed. I*

have to be here (at school) at 7:05 morning for learning period and attend the assembly.” It also shows care and concern about both the roles that they play. Thus, more than a strong support system, what was also evident was that these two teen mothers were willing to plan according to a schedule that would not jeopardise either of their roles. Though they both expressed the difficulty in negotiating the roles, they still managed to adapt to a routine that would not compromise both their roles as mothers and as learners.

There was marked difference between the responses of teen mothers and teen fathers. When I asked the teen fathers how they managed the conflicting roles, the following were some of the responses:

Well for me it was not much of a hassle maybe her mother would complain more about this (laughs). Since I have said that she does not live with me so it was not much of a hassle. The only thing that I had to do was to work on weekends and obviously I would do my school work late at night. But I was able to finish all my work because she (his daughter) did not stay with me. I can say I coped quite well although I was different from the other guys who were not working part-time but I managed to pass too. (Mzwa)

I see the baby during weekends. I visit and just hold her because she is still very tiny. There is not much that I do. (Senzo)

I try to make a balance. At the moment since I am still a learner, the baby is the responsibility of my parents. (Sya)

I was lucky because Zeh (his daughter) stayed with her mom so for me it was not a matter of exactly finding a balance between the two roles. My mother also helped me with the needs of the baby when I did not work last year. Maybe I can just say I never really felt the strain of being a father while a learner at the same time. (Mzi)

What was similar among all the teen fathers was that none of them stayed with their children and therefore had opposite experiences when compared to the teen mothers who all lived with their children. This typically depicts some of the dominant features of society, which assume gender roles which influences parental responsibilities. At the same time the teen fathers cannot be blamed for being positioned in these roles as they are defined by society. Nevertheless, similar to some of the teen mothers is the support they had from their parents.

For example, Mzi and Sya described their experience to have been manageable because of the family support that they received.

4.4 Summary

In the above discussion a number of themes have emerged from the collected data. Certainly, teen parents face many challenges when they are parent-learners. The challenges they experienced were often linked with structural injustices that were explained in literature review as some of the reasons (unemployment, poverty etc.) women terminate pregnancies. The chapter began with a presentation of participants' profiles with the intention of making the reader aware of a brief context of each participant. In collaboration with participants' profiles, a biographical table was presented and then interpreted to make a clearer meaning to the reader. The themes that were discussed are interrupted schooling induced by teen parenthood; financial challenges faced by teen parents *_'Money is a problem when you are a young parent'*; positive experiences of parenting; teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth; Child Support Grant *_'serving as a motivation for pregnancy and childbirth? '*; and managing conflicting roles of being a learner and a parent. These themes illuminated the narratives of teen parents and gave insight to the experiences of school-going teen parents. The following chapter is the final section of this dissertation which details a summary, draws major conclusions and recommendations on the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

Teen pregnancies are an uncomfortable subject for many countries because of the experienced anxieties from the public that are concerned with developmental factors and moralities. While high rates of teen pregnancies unquestionably call for interventions, it is important to be careful not to focus on the shallow side of the issue but attempt to combat the root causes. In so doing, also, be cautious not to adopt the ‘blame the person approach’ where victims are problematised, such as what we observe in dominant discourses about teen parents. Nevertheless, entering into parenthood has a number of implications for teenage parents, the most noticeable being that of managing conflicting roles of being a learner and a parent at the same time. This study was designed to understand the lived experiences of teenage mothers and fathers in a designated secondary school in a Durban Township. The study was guided by a qualitative paradigm and adopted a descriptive and exploratory design. The data was collected using a focus group interview and semi-structured individual interviews. Most of the data was audio-recorded and where participants did not permit audio-recording field notes were written on site. After transcribing all data collected, it was analysed using thematic content analysis. The participants were identified through the use of convenience and snowball sampling. They were 11 participants who were all of black African race, two of these were only involved in a focus group interview, while four participated in the individual interviews only. This chapter provides the overall summary of the study. Moreover, it details the major conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Overall Summary

South Africa is rated as one of the countries with high rates of teenage pregnancies. There are various statistical reports that indicate high rates of teen pregnancies from the world, to Africa as well as South Africa (World Bank, 2014; United Nations cited in Panday et al,

2009; WHO, 2014). While literature reports have recently reported a downtrend in teen pregnancies (WHO, 2014), societies still witness teenage parents. The harsh reality is that teenage parents end-up occupying positions of being labelled as ‘problems’ and the ‘other’ who disturb the economy by inviting poverty and creating a vicious cycle of it (Holgate et al. 2006; Checkland & Wong, 1999; Salusky, 2013; Singh, 2005). However, there is substantial literature that shows that poverty could be a probable cause of many teen pregnancies (Mangino, 2008). Since teen pregnancies are reported to be higher amongst the impoverished and disadvantaged communities and countries than those that are well-off (WHO 2014; World Bank, 2014; UNFPA, 2013), that alone, signifies that there is a noteworthy connection between teen pregnancies and poverty as well as broader income disparities which link to structural inequalities persistent in societies. Unfortunately, we live in a world where statistics such as those of teen pregnancies cause public moral panics, often leading to discourses that encourage derisive public definitions and assumptions informed by lack of understanding of the structural causes of problems. Mullaly (2010) emphasises that inequalities, stemming, from oppression is a frequent explanatory cause of most social problems. Behind this brief problematic study context, the objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the experiences of teen parents as young mothers and fathers
2. To understand how teen mothers and fathers negotiate their roles as parents and as learners
3. To understand their reasons for pregnancy and childbirth
4. To understand the psycho-social and economic challenges that teen mothers and fathers face
5. To understand how dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood influence school-going teenagers’ roles as mothers and fathers

These objectives, which were intended at recognising and understanding teen parents’ feelings, thoughts and responses to situations, demonstrate the qualitative nature of the study. The findings in chapter four provide richly detailed experiences of teenage parents relating to these objectives.

Recalling the literature review discussed in Chapter Two, the picture shaped by the discussion showed complexity in understanding school-going teen parents, yet much interconnected. We realised that teen parents may not be the root of the problem, but a branch of a bigger problem stemming from various biases such as on the basis of gender, age,

location, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture and religion. Some of the causes discussed included gender inequality, child marriage, poverty, issues related to human rights and lack of use contraceptives that are intertwined. Most causes are interconnected with poverty and limited access to resources. As a result, it made the structural or anti-oppressive theory relevant to this study as discussed in Chapter One (see theoretical framework). Structural theory falls within the broader rubric of critical social work. It stresses the importance of socio-political analysis, where problems are politicised, and the promotion of cohesion among individuals and the public are emphasised, while being guided by the belief in human dignity and worth of all peoples (Allan, 2003; Dominelli, 2002; Mulally, 2010; Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014; Sewpaul et al, 2014). Literature review informed about constructions of fatherhood and motherhood which reproduce generational power relations, and oppressive behaviour between men and women. The dominant ideologies attached to genders are discriminatory (Sewpaul, 2013). Although there is some awareness about this domination, it is possible that it may have not reached the vast majority that need it most, particularly the uneducated and those residing in the rural areas. Though attempts have been made to alter these conceptualisations through literature, research and policies, in the best interests of equality, changing perceptions and dominant ideologies still proves to be challenging.

From the literature review, it was noticeable that gender was a critical aspect in understanding the dynamics of teen parents. The concept of gender influences the kind of challenges that are experienced by teenage mothers vis-a-vis that of teenage fathers and this was evident in some of the findings. It is without doubt that dominant constructions of parenthood from the different genders are influential in the teen's experiences. However, although the constructions are dominant, and many tend to join or follow the dominant definitions of gender roles, some people rebel against these dominant constructions, and set boundaries or redefine their own roles when entering parenthood. For example, some of the findings in the current study the did not imitate the realities of many disadvantaged SA families where situations point to father absenteeism or lack of support and sometimes even paternity denial. The literature review reasoned that teenage parents cannot only be limited to statistics, or be merely defined as 'problems or burdens' to society, but rather showed that the circumstance and experience of teen parenthood is affected by various factors in life, including their decision-making abilities which is dependent on their beliefs or perhaps society's beliefs. For instance, in the findings that related to the objective of understanding

teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth in the current study showed cultural and/or religious beliefs as well as dominant attitudes about abortion had influenced their decision not to abort or to even to consider it as an unintended pregnancy prevention method.

In consideration of the narratives shared by teenage mothers and teenage fathers in the data collected, six themes emerged. These were;

1. Interrupted schooling induced by teen parenthood
2. Financial challenges faced by teen parents _Money is a problem when you are a young parent'
3. Positive experiences of parenting
4. Teen parents' reasons for pregnancy and childbirth
5. Child Support Grant _serving as a motivation for pregnancy and childbirth? '
6. Managing conflicting roles of being a learner and a parent.

5.3 Main Conclusions: Summary of findings founded on objectives of the study

5.3.1 Objective One: To explore the experiences of teen parents as young mothers and fathers

This objective was intended to obtain first hand experiences of school-going teen parents. There were many similarities among teen parents' experiences, however, some of the findings consisted of different responses, which were influenced by gender, family structure, support systems and household incomes. The findings motivated the theme _interrupted schooling induced by teen parenting' which showed similarities in both the genders being delayed schooling. The majority of the teen mothers indicated a delay in their schooling. The delay in schooling was linked to the changes in everyday activities during pregnancy or after they had given birth, as it clashed with the learner responsibilities. Smooth schooling was often incapacitated by strained financial circumstances of their households, lack of familial and other support sources such as partners (father of the baby). These experiences linked to a South African research study that confirmed that successful and manageable parenting for school-going teens was decided by the kind of support they received (Chetty & Chigona, 2008). On the other hand, the majority of teen fathers did not indicate that their delay in schooling was induced by parenthood and none of them had dropped out of school due to

having a child or missed certain school activities because of parental responsibilities as was observed from the narratives of the teen mothers. A similar finding for both teen mothers and fathers, was that of positive experiences which included personal growth, and increased sense of responsibility as well as sense of purpose and hope which were similar to the comprehensions of Cater & Coleman (2006) and Anwar & Stanistreet (2014). However, what struck in their narratives was even though there were several positives with regards to their subjective experiences of parenthood, all of them talked about the shared difficulty that child rearing brought into their lives, and they did not recommend that teens enter into parenthood while they are still at school.

5.3.2 Objective Two: To explore how teen mothers and fathers negotiate their roles as parents and as learners

Understanding that being a parent demands an added responsibility to a school-going teenager, this objective enquired on the experiences of teen parents' coping mechanisms in trying to find a balance (if they did) between the double loads of schoolwork and childcare. The findings were linked with support they received. The support included familial support for many. The results are consistent with that of a study conducted in a neighbouring community of, Bhambayi, where Raniga & Mathe (2011) emphasised family as an "important institutional safety net..." in relation to problems associated with teen childbearing and unintended pregnancies (p.8). Findings in the current study demonstrated family as an important institution that can enhance the lives of school-going teens even after they have had a child/children. Other participants linked their balancing strategies to partner-support from narratives of some teen mothers (mostly was the baby's father), often concentrating on financial support they provided. Though many raised concerns on petite contribution made by the CSG, those that were in receipt of the CSG acknowledged it as a form of financial support. There were marked gender differences in responses relating to this objective. The males did not acknowledge the role of being a parent and a learner at the same time as having much significance on either their schooling or parenting. This may have been influenced by the fact that all of the males did not live with their children and the parental responsibility was shifted to the mother of the child. This difference mirrored the common feature of South African communities, where, when children are born out of wedlock, the mother bears full parental responsibilities. Such situations link to unequal parental

responsibility that is gradually cultured to a setting where girls or women conform to the norm of carrying the responsibility of a child or children single-handedly.

5.3.3 Objective Three: To explore their reasons for pregnancy and childbirth.

This objective developed from observed literature and media reports that suggest that teenagers were falling pregnant to receive the CSG. The findings of this study collaborate other findings by Holgate et al. (2006), Checkland & Wong (1999) and Salusky (2013) that condemn the claim of teenagers falling pregnant to secure CSG as none of the participants reported to have become pregnant or impregnated deliberately. Rather, the findings indicated some of the causes of teen pregnancies explained by various South African research such as Nkwanyana (2011), Panday et al. (2009) and Ncube (2009) were mainly related to the non-use of contraceptives. However, of serious concern is the finding the participants pin pointed ‘other’ teenagers, excluding themselves, indicating that ‘they’ fell pregnant in order to access the CSG. This finding displayed the dominant discourses about teen pregnancies as so powerful in that it has influenced the thoughts of victims themselves (victims of structural problems linked to poverty, income inequalities and economic marginalisation) to judgementally react to popular views about ‘other’ teenagers who are also likely to be bearing similar or worse circumstances experienced by the participants of this study. But the findings do raise broader structural concerns such as those recommended by Raniga & Mathe (2011) about “more distribution of wealth and income” (p. 9) especially if the allegation that people are falling pregnant for CSG is true. Findings that related to childbirth showed cultural and/or religious beliefs as well as dominant attitudes against abortion. It is also probable that there was a lack of knowledge about other options such as adoption had they ever wanted to give up parental responsibilities.

5.3.4 Objective Four: To explore the psycho-social and economic challenges that teen mothers and fathers face

This objective gained its motivation from understanding the works of Erikson’s psychosocial stages of development where teenagers are described to be at a stage where their identity is contrasted with role confusion (McLeod, 2008). The findings of this study reflected on the

challenges with regards to finances being one of the noticeable issues that induced stress and anxiety of many teen parents, which linked to the second part of the objective as it concerned economic challenges. In fact, the findings demonstrated a direct link between financial challenges incurred by entering parenthood without an income, which in turn caused them stress and worry. These findings related to what is asserted by Briggs, Brownell & Roos (2007) that teen parents are more likely to come from economically disadvantaged families as majority of the participants strongly reflected on finances to have been a major concern. In the presentation of participants' profiles (see Chapter Four) the majority of the participants' family members were without jobs, hence a lack of significant income. This finding alerts to close relations between poverty and early childbearing, which is linked to broader economic inequalities and lack access to resources.

5.3.5 Objective Five: To explore how dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood influence school-going teenagers' roles as mothers and fathers

Although this objective has not been discussed as a particular emerged theme, it was a critical feature in most of the findings when they were interpreted. Many differences that were observed between teen mothers and teen fathers related to gender differences, and often demonstrated the reproduction of gender role constructions in parenthood. These findings signposted that teen mothers occupied the roles of being dependent on their partners, and all of them provided nurturance and reared their children which contributed to them to dropping out of school. Teen mothers' narratives indicated parental roles that is consistent with dominant constructions of motherhood. Dominant ideas about motherhood ascribe certain behaviours and activities to mothers that are bound to the roles of nurturing and caregiving (Coltrane & Adams, 2008; Clark, 2009). The presentation of participants' profiles showed that all of the teen mothers were living with their children which meant that they were closer to their children and fulfilled parental responsibilities more than their partners (fathers of the children).

Literature states that dominant ideas about fatherhood are linked to the role of a provider (Ratele, 2012; Koenig-Visagie; 2013; Osthus & Sewpaul, 2013). Teenage fathers' narratives did not indicate nurturing and caregiving to their children as with teen mothers. However, some of the teen fathers were determined to work part-time jobs in order to provide for their

children. Though this is a commendable trait, it signals the dominant features of society that define fathers' primary commitment to material provision rather than a full-time child-care. Bhana (2009) reported that many of the black South African fathers were distant and made high statistics of absent fathers. In contrast, the teen fathers' in this study did not reflect dominant societal norms about father absenteeism as they all were willing to contribute to their children's lives. This could have been the result of sample selection, as those teen fathers who were uninvolved with their partners and children might not have been willing to participate in the study. It could also reflect respondent bias.

5.4 Recommendations

Born out of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made for policy, practice and research:

5.4.1 Policy

A major concern was the financial challenges that were experienced by teen parents. These related to broader socio-economic inequalities, which produced unwelcome effects not only for teen parents, but their families and communities. In this regard, a recommendation is made that social security policies be developed in order to support the basic needs of all people. This recommendation is in line with the Basic Income Grant that is anticipated to expand the social security of people and provide sustainable assistance to all citizens of SA, including the designated group of this study. Such benefit would fight the macroeconomic inequalities (which are evident in the lives of teen parents in this study), and allow all people, especially underprivileged individuals and families to improve their lives as this would enable them to meet their basic needs.

Another recommendation under policy is motivated by the finding that teen parents had delayed their schooling because they had to undertake parental responsibilities. There is already a policy that permits pregnant girls to attend school but it is still limited in that it does not provide supportive plans after childbirth. Unfortunately, partly because of the lack of support at school, they drop out as the system does not favour them as learners who have children. For example, it is a school rule that a learner who has missed a test must produce a

medical certificate. A supportive plan would be allowing teen parents to produce their children's medical certificate, certifying she or he missed the test because of parental responsibilities. School policies must include provision for multi-disciplinary teams that can cater for the holistic needs of learners to ensure their retention of successful completion of schooling. Sewpaul, Ntini, et al (2014) have documented the invaluable roles that social workers play in schools, and the importance of adopting positive reframing of social problems and participatory methodologies.

5.4.2 Practice

For social workers:

- Intervention programmes should not only concentrate on efforts to delay childbirth, via sexuality education programmes, including contraceptive knowledge and access to contraceptives in non-judgmental ways, but should target socio-economic problems that exist around those who enter teen parenthood. As witnessed in the findings and literature, teen pregnancies are linked with social and financial issues. In so doing, the issue of high rates of teen parents and pregnancies can be addressed at both structural and personal levels.
- It is vital that the myths regarding contraceptives are dispelled and replaced with correct information, for both the people providing this information as well as for the people this information is targeted to. Social workers can play a pivotal role in ensuring this.
- Pregnancy prevention methods should be targeted to both teen fathers and teen mothers in order to dispel the reproduction and contraceptive myths. These intervention methods should not be done without first raising awareness among professionals themselves, with particular dialogues intended for identifying social workers' own biases and beliefs. This is important as motivated by findings born by this study which showed that teenagers were reluctant to access contraceptives because of health care workers' attitudes.
- Engage in strategies directed toward long-term social change, where structures that produce inequality and suffering of people such as teen parents can be continuously

addressed through scrutinising our planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies that guide our practice. In undertaking this, teenagers' perspectives should be treated with high regard.

- In raising awareness about pregnancy prevention methods, we must be willing engage teen parents in dialogue with their peers about their own lived experiences. The positive experiences of teen parents could provide courage and instil hope to teens facing similar conditions. Teen parents can become mentors to both teens that have or do not have children. Valuing teen parents' strengths and their survival strategies can facilitate empowerment and change, not only in them but in their children, families and society.
- Through the use of media, dominant discourses such as those that associate CSG and teen pregnancy can be challenged. In so doing, not only can we free teen parents of discrimination and injustice but can challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions about the relationship between CSG and teen pregnancies.
- Participatory programmes targeted at males and females which educate about gender equality, parenting responsibilities, human and parental rights can contribute to facilitating a better understanding of equal opportunity and awareness.
- Dialogue with teen parents' parents and other family members about teen parents' experiences. The aim of this would be to raise awareness and increase understanding among the teen parents' families about how important their roles are in shaping their child's/children's lives

For other professionals working with teen parents:

This recommendation is directed to anyone working closely with teen parents, such as doctors, teachers, nurses and other professionals to be equipped with the basic understanding of structural causes of teen pregnancies. In so doing, they treat teenagers with respect and non-judgmental attitudes, and are able to refer to appropriate services when necessary.

5.4.3 Research

This study is limited in that it only attempted to understand teenage parents in a secondary school yet statistics show that learners from primary schools are also becoming parents. The views and experiences, which this research draws conclusions from, may differ from those experienced by school-going parents who are in primary schools. Thus, I recommend further research that could be comparative in order to give more depth and knowledge in school-going parents for both primary and secondary level.

The study represented a limited sample size of 11 black African teen parents, which comprised of more females than males. Therefore, there was bias of the sample in terms of gender representation and because it was a small-sized sample, the study cannot be generalised. As a result, I recommend additional qualitative research that will look into diverse demographical profiles of participants, included within is race, gender and location across South Africa.

5.5 Conclusion

The study provided insight into the lived experiences of school-going teenagers. Major issues raised in the study mainly point to structural inequalities found in societies. The study repudiates the judgemental and limiting labels attached to teen parents, and attempted to depict the complexity of teen parenthood with consistent reflection on their narratives. The central premise of this study is impeccably illuminated by Lundy (2011) who asserts that “a structural approach to social work attempts to bridge the duality of personal and the social, the individual and the community, and offers social workers an understanding of diverse populations in the context of social structures and social processes that generally support and reproduce social problems” (p.57). What is apprehended in Lundy’s quote is that a person should not be seen as isolated from her/his environment as they are entangled. Thus interventions should be directed at the intersection of the individual and community that mutually inform and influence each other. Once diversity is understood and acknowledged, identifying and challenging sources of oppression and marginalisation would be less hard. The outcomes of our interventions will be founded on the principles we choose to guide us. Participatory approaches in dealing with issues of concern raised in this study could be one of

our trusted vehicles to a preferred destination where we hope to witness decreased numbers of teen pregnancies and teen parents.

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Appendices

7 Appendix One: Questions guide for individual interviews and focus group

Questions guide for individual interview

Please Note: The interviews were conversational in nature.

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Grade: _____ Age of baby: _____
 Age of baby's father/mother: _____ Occupation of partner: _____
 Status of relationship with partner: _____

ENGLISH	ISIZULU
What have been your experiences as a teenage parent?	Yini osuke wahlangabezana nayo njengo mzali osesemncane?
What is your role as a teenage parent?	Iyiphi indima yakho njengomzali osesemncane?
What is your role as a learner?	Iyiphi indima yakho njengomfundi?
How do you negotiate your role as a parent and as a learner?	Umisa kanjani ukudlala indima yomfundi kanye neyomzali ngesikhathi esisodwa?
How do thoughts of motherhood/fatherhood of others around you influence you as a school-going teenager?	Imicabango yabantu ngokuba umama/ubaba ikuthinta kanjani njengomfundi osesemncane?
What psychological, social and economic challenges have you faced as a teenage parent?	Iziphi izingqinamba ohlangabezana/ne nazo ngokomqondo, ngokokuphila nangokwemali njengomzali osesemncane?
What are your reasons for pregnancy and childbirth?	Iziphi izizathu zakho zokukhulelwa nokuzala umtwana?
What are your plans or aspirations for your child and yourself?	Iziphi izinhlelo noma izifiso zakho nomntwana wakho?

What do you think about the Child Support Grant?	Ucabangani ngemali yeSondlo Somtwana?
Do you think there is a relationship between Child Support Grant and teenage pregnancy? Why/Why Not	Uma ucabanga kukhona yini ukuhlobana phakathi kwe mali yeSondlo Somtwana nokukhulelwa kwabantu asebebancane?
What are your recommendations for teenage pregnancy and negative views of teen parents?	Imiphi imicabango noma izinyathelo ezingathathwa ngokukhulelwa kwabantu abasebancane nemibono emibi ngabazali abasebancane?

Questions guide for focus group interview.

Please Note: The interviews were conversational in nature.

<u>ENGLISH</u>	<u>ISIZULU</u>
Parenting- _Who is suitable to be a parent?‘	Ubuzali- _Uani ofaneleke ukuba ngumzali?‘
What are the attitudes of people around them as they are school-going teen parents?	Imiphi imicabango nokwenza yabantu abaphakathi kwenu njengoba niyizingane zesikole ezingabazali abasebancane?
Do they think being parents at a young age is positive or negative? Why/Why Not	Uma nicabanga ukuba abazali abase bancane kuyinto enhle noma embi? Kungani ucabanga lokhu.
What are their thoughts around the Child Support Grant?	Ithini imicabango yenu ngemali yeSondlo Somtwana?
What would be their recommendations in decreasing teenage pregnancy and negative views of teenage parents?	Imiphi imicabango noma izinyathelo ezingathathwa ngokukhulelwa kwabantu abasebancane nemibono emibi ngabazali abasebancane?

8 Appendix Two: Information sheet and Consent Form

English

Information sheet (learner participant)

Date: _____

Dear Learner

Research On: Understanding the lived experiences of teenage parents in a designated secondary school in a Durban Township.

Thank you for considering participation in the above named study. This study is part of my research project which I am conducting as a Master's student in the School of Applied Human Sciences (Social Work) at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My intention is to understand your experiences as a teenage parent.

You would be required to participate in a personal interview of about one hour and/or a focus group discussion, in which you would be responding to a number of questions I have prepared. All sessions will be audio-taped with your permission. The transcripts would be stored on my personal computer. It would be destroyed within five years upon completion of my study. Your participation in this study would be strictly confidential.

I need to advise you that participating in a research interview can be upsetting. Should you feel upset during or after the interview, you would be welcome to let me know immediately. I would be willing to assist you by being there for you at that time, and by referring you for further social work services if necessary.

Please note that your participation is voluntary. You would have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage you want. There will be no rewards for participation, nor would there be any negative consequences should you decide to withdraw.

I consent to the interview being audio-taped with your permission.

For any queries before, during and after the interview, you could contact me at **071 031 3330**. Alternatively, you could contact one of my research supervisor, Prof Vishanthie Sewpaul at **031 260 1241** or the Chair of the University Ethics Committee, Dr Shenuka Singh at **031-260 3587**.

If you are interested in participating, kindly complete the attached consent form.

Sincerely,

Thobeka Ntini

Consent form for learner participant

I, _____ agree to participate in the study on understanding the lived experiences of teenage parents in a designated secondary school in a Durban Township, conducted by Thobeka Ntini, Master’s Social Work student in the School of Applied Human Sciences (Social Work) at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I understand the purpose of the study.

I understand that I will be required to participate in a personal interview of about one hour. The interviews will be audio taped with my permission and transcribed. The transcripts will be stored on her personal computer. They will be destroyed within five years upon completion of her study. I also understand that:

- ✓ My participation is voluntary.
- ✓ I have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage I want.
- ✓ There will be no rewards for participation, nor will there be any negative consequences should I decide to withdraw.
- ✓ Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.
- ✓ I am welcome to let Thobeka Ntini know immediately should I feel upset during or after the interview to request support.

If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Field notes		

Would you like to be part of the focus group? Please TICK below

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

My signature below indicates my willingness and permission to participate.

Signed at _____ **(Place)** **on** _____ **(Date)**

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Print name)

IsiZulu

Iphepha lemiyalelo (umfundi)

Usuku: _____

Nkosazana/Nsizwa/Mfundi

Isihloko sophenyo: Ukuqondisisa izimpilo eziphilwe abazali abasebancane esikoleni esiphakeme, nesikhethekile elokishini laseThekwini,

Ngiyakubonga ngokuvuma ukuba yingxenye yaloluphenyo oludalulwe ngenhla. Lengxoxo iyingxenye yocwaningo engilenza ezifundweni zami ze Master's eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali. Inhloso yami ukuqonda izimpilo eziphilwe abazali abasebancane esikoleni esiphakeme, nesikhethekile elokishini laseThekwini.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi kuzofuneka ngibe ingxenye yengxoxo ehleliwe isikhathi esingange hora elilodwa lapho uzophendula imbuzo engiyihlelile. Ingxoxo izoqoshwa iphinde ibhalwe. Umbhalo uzogcinwa ekhompuyutheni yami. Izolahlwa eminyakeni emihlanu emuva kokuba ngiqede loluphenyo. Kuzobakhona ukufihleka kwesaziso sakho nokucophelela kwendaba esiyixoxile.

Ngiyadinga ukuba ngikwazise ukuthi ukuba ingxenye yalolu phenyo kungase kungakuphathi kahle. Uma uzizwa ucasuka phakathi nohlelo noma seluphelile, uvumelekile ukuba ungazise ngalesosikhathi. Ngizimisele ngokukusekela ngalesosikhathi, nokukuthumela ezindaweni ezisizayo zosonhlalakahle uma isidingo sikhona.

Yazi ukuthi uzikhethete futhi awuphoqelekile ukuba kulengxoxo. Unegunya lokuphuma kulengxoxo noma ingasiphi isikhathi. Yazi awukho umuklomelo ngokuba ingxenye yale ngxoxo, noma izingqinamba ezimbi uma uphumile.

Ngiyavuma ukuthi ingxoxo izoqoshwa ngokokuzwa ngemvume yomntwana wakho.

Uma enemibuzo ngaphambili, phakathi noma emuva kwe ngxoxo, ungaxhumana nami kwinombolo ethi **071 031 3330**. Uzokwazi futhi ukuthinta oyedwa wabagqugquzeli bami kuloluphenyo Profesa Vishanthie Sewpaul kwi nombolo ethi **031 260 1241** noma usiHlalo weNyuvesi kwezemithetho nemigomo nyophenyo u Dokotela Shenuka Singh ku **031-260 3587**.

Uma uthanda ukuba yinxenye yalolu phenyo,ngicela ugwalise incwadi yesivumelwano elandelayo.

Ozithobayo

Thobeka Ntini

Incwadi vesivumelwano (umfundi)

Mina, _____ ngiyavuma ukuba yingxenye yaloluphenyo lokuqondisisa izimpilo eziphilwe abazali abasebancane esikoleni esiphakeme esikhethekile elokishini laseThekwini, olwenziwa uThobeka Ntini, ofundela i-Master's yophiko lwezenhlalakahle eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali. Ngियाqonda ingqikithi yaloluphenyo.

Ngियाqonda ukuthi kuzofuneka ngibe ingxenye yengxoxo ehleliwe isikhathi esingange hora elilodwa. Ingxoxo izoqoshwa iphinde ibhalwe. Umbhalo uzogcinwa ekhompuyutheni yakhe. Izolahlwa eminyakeni emihlanu emuva kokuba eqede loluphenyo. Ngियाqonda ukuthi:

- ✓ Ngizikhethetele futhi angiphoqelekile ukuba kulengxoxo.
- ✓ Nginemvume yokuphuma kuloluphenyo noma ingasiphi isikhathi engisifisayo.
- ✓ Awukho umuklomelo ngokuba yingxenye yalengxoxo futhi angeke kubekhona okubi uma uzizwa engathi ufisa ukuyiyeka ingxoxo.
- ✓ Kuzobakhona ukufihleka kwesaziso sami nokucophelela kwendaba esiyixoxile.
- ✓ Ngivumela uThobeka Ntini ukumazisa ngalesosikhathi uma ngizizwa ngingaphathekile kahle phakathi noma ekupheleni kwengxoxo ehleliwe ukuze ngithole isesekelo.

Uma uvuma ukuthi ubeyingxenye yalolu phenyo, ngicela ufake uphawu lokuthi uyavuma noma awuvumi ukuqoshwa ngezindlela ezilandelayo:

	Uyavuma	Awuvumi
Ukuqoshwa ngokokubhala		
Ukuqoshwa ngokubhala amanothi		

Ungathanda ukuba kwingxenye yengxoxo unabanye abantu? Ngicela ubonakalise uphawu lwakho ngezansi

YEBO		CHA	
------	--	-----	--

Uphawu lami lokusayina olungezansi lukhombisa isivumelwano nemvume yokuba yingxenye yaloluphenyo.

Isayinwe kuphi (Indawo) _____

Usuku _____

_____ (Sayina)

_____ (Bhala Igama)



Ms T Ntini
PO Box 34554
HIBBERDENE
4220

Dear Ms Ntini

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE PARENTS IN A DESIGNATED SECONDARY SCHOOL IN A DURBAN TOWNSHIP”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 June 2015 to 31 July 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

J.G Zuma High School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 09 June 2015



23 December 2015

Ms Thobeka Ntini 211501327
School of Applied Human Science – Social Work
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Ntini,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0884/015M

Project title: Understanding the lived experiences of teenage parents in a designated secondary school in a Durban Township.

Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your revised application received 26 October 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the 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.

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

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor V Sewpaul
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

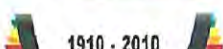
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