



**TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT RECEIVED BY TEENAGE MOTHERS
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE LOCKDOWN IN MAKHADO
MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT**

By

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requirement for the Masters in Nursing**

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ABSTRACT

Background: In the wake of the Coronavirus disease lockdown, schools, creches and higher education institutions worldwide closed their doors, disrupting teaching and learning. All learners, including teenage mothers were forced to study from home due to a shift from traditional classrooms to online learning platforms, increasing the probability of school dropouts. Home learning became overwhelming to teenage mothers as they had to balance motherhood and learning while studying from home. The sudden shift worsened education inequality, thus negatively impacting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 3; namely, Good Health and Wellbeing since quality education promotes health. Learners from poor provinces such as Limpopo, specifically those living in rural areas such as the Makhado municipality, face obstacles such as poor connectivity and limited access to the internet.

Purpose: The purpose of the study, therefore, is to explore and describe teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Vhembe district, Makhado municipality, Limpopo province.

Research methodology: The study employed qualitative, participatory action research (PAR) through community engagement since the latter is community driven, ensuring that teenage mothers and stakeholders are included in an enquiry that seeks to promote social justice. The participatory arts-based action research created a safe space for the teenage mothers to share their stories. Data were generated from 11 participants through unstructured individual and group interviews.

Findings: The study revealed that teenage mothers were supported by families, community members and teachers during the coronavirus school closures and rotational classes. However, the support was not adequate and consistent to promote the continuity of teaching and learning. The teenage mothers were further supported emotionally thus promoting their self-concept. Remote learning has proven to be a challenge to most teenage mothers due to the inaccessibility of online resources. It was difficult for teenage mothers to balance motherhood and learning

due to frequent interruptions such as taking care of the baby resulting in poor concentration.

Conclusion: The teenage mothers were socially, emotionally and financially supported by their families and some teachers, however, the support provided was insufficient and inconsistent to promote continuity of teaching and learning, resulting in teenage mothers not having access to quality education. Due to the frequent interruptions by crying babies, teenage mothers had difficulty balancing motherhood and learning.

Keywords: Teenage mothers, learning support, emotional support, child rearing

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACPF: African Child Policy Forum

ADEA: Association for the Development of Education in Africa

APHRC: African Population and Health Research Centre

AU/CIEFFA: African Union/Center International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique

COVID-19: Corona virus disease

DBE: Department of Basic Education

ECDC: Early Childhood Development Centre

ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

EGPAF: Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundations

HSSREC: Humanities and Committee Social Sciences Research Ethics

GPE: Global Partners for Education

ICASA: Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

IDP: Integrated Development Planning

NACOSA: Networking HIV & AIDS Community of Southern Africa

NWT: Northwest Territories

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAR: Participatory Action Research

TM: Teenage Mothers

SA: South Africa

SLT: Social Learning Theory

SCT: Social Cognitive Theory

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SSA: State Security Agency

UN: United Nations

UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

WHO: World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

STUDY OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The Corona virus disease-19, popularly known as COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by the novel corona virus, officially named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2) was first reported in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019 (WHO, 2020). The virus subsequently spread all over the world (Liu & Shih, 2020). The spread of COVID-19 send shockwaves worldwide causing a public health crisis (OECD, 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the virus as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Various countries were forced into a lockdown to minimize the spread of COVID-19; however the pandemic evolved from being a direct health emergency to a systemic crisis with many people being affected in several ways (Simon *et al.*, 2021). In response to COVID-19 crisis, several countries worldwide closed schools, early childhood development centre's (ECDC's), colleges and universities to try and limit the spread of the virus (OECD, 2020). Teaching and learning shifted from face to face to online platforms to ensure continuity of learning; however this was only possible to students with access to internet connectivity (Pillay, 2021). Furthermore, the closing of schools increased the exposure to violence and exploitation thus rising sexual exploitation of girls and teenage pregnancies (UNESCO, 2021).

The WHO acknowledges that even though teenage pregnancies are a global problem affecting both developing and developed countries, teenage pregnancies are more likely to occur in poor, marginalized communities with lack of education and job opportunities. The birth rates are higher in more rural provinces such as Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal with rates nearer to 60-70 per 1 000 teenagers (Barron *et al.*, 2022). Additionally these teen mothers are still learners and are expected to accomplish both learning and child rearing roles concurrently. These might be overwhelming experiences for teenage mothers leading to poor attendance and academic performance (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). The lockdown worsened the situation as teen mothers had to be responsible for their learning and care for their

children as ECD facilities were closed. This study presents an overview that was undertaken in order to explore the teaching and learning support made available to teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Vhembe district, Makhado municipality, Limpopo province.

1.2. Background

The WHO declared the novel corona virus outbreak a public health emergency on the 30th of January 2020 (Joseph, 2020), with Africa recording its first case on the 14th of February 2020 in Egypt (OECD, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic led to the implementation of lockdown by various countries to curb the spread of the virus. Preventative measures such as physical and social distancing, hand washing, quarantining and the mandatory wearing of masks in public were introduced to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (UNICEF, 2020). Schools and institutions of higher education were forced to close in many countries, impacting on teaching and learning (UNICEF, 2021). This was done to protect the well-being of the students. The continuity of teaching and learning was sustained by remote learning resources and online platforms (OECD, 2020). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2021), the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education system worldwide, with the most vulnerable students being the most affected. South Africa was not excluded, reporting its first case in March 2020. A state of disaster was subsequently declared by President Ramaphosa, leading to the closure of schools and ECDs in South Africa (Landa *et al.*, 2021). Teaching and learning was significantly disrupted across the country.

Donnelly *et al.* (2021) reported that schools in 45 countries in Europe and the central Asia region were closed during the peak of COVID-19, affecting 185 million students. According to the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) over 120 million school girls in Africa were out of school exposing them to abuse, exploitation, sexual and physical violence (ACPF, 2020). The closure of schools came with adverse consequences such as poor nutrition, interrupted learning, increased rates in dropouts, rise in early marriages and teenage pregnancies (UNESCO, 2021). COVID-19 has impacted health service delivery intensely as health services which were not deemed essential were forced to shut down and fears of contracting COVID-19 prevented girls and

women from accessing family planning (Aly *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, sexual and reproductive health was disrupted which partly led to unplanned pregnancies related to missed contraceptives. The interruptions associated with the COVID-19 reinforced pre-pandemic susceptibilities to teenage pregnancy and child marriages.

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, teenage pregnancy was already a major public health concern globally (Okeke *et al.*, 2022). According to the WHO (2020), an estimated 21 million girls aged between 15-19 become pregnant in developing countries annually. Unexpectedly, in 2020, Brazil reported a reduction of 8.4% in adolescent pregnancy in comparison to 2019 (Monteiro *et al.*, 2023). A 28% rise in the number of teenage pregnancies was reported in Uganda by Makerere University School of Public Health during the first lockdown in 2020 (Ojulu, 2021). A Kenyan study reported 10.9% incidents of teenage pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 5.2% prior the pandemic (Zulaika *et al.*, 2021). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) indicated that South Africa recorded nearly 35 000 teenage pregnancies in 2020 (Stats SA, 2020). In Gauteng, the most populated province of South Africa, children born to teenage mothers increased by 60% during the start of the COVID-19 (Save the Children, 2021). These are concerning findings indicating the impact of the lockdown on teenage girls. Moreover, most of these girls are still expected to study while child-rearing. Reflectively, the remote learning and online platforms that were introduced to maintain the continuity of teaching and learning instigated many challenges for both parents and learners.

Amongst the challenges that the schools closure brought were poor nutrition, confusion and stress for teachers, gaps in childcare and parents being unprepared for home and distance schooling (UNESCO, 2020). Teachers in remote areas of Indonesia experienced limited interaction with the learners as a result of poor connectivity, and electricity that is available for a limited time. Furthermore, most parents were unable to afford learning gadgets due to poverty (Ujianti, 2020). Evidence indicates that the closure of schools gave rise to learning losses and an increase in inequality in some of Europe's highest-income countries (Donnelly *et al.*, 2021). Studies done in Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom indicates learning losses were higher among students whose parents have less education as compared to their counterparts (Donnelly *et al.*, 2021).

In middle income Europe and Central Asian countries, 13 million school children were missing out on the school meals meaning loss of income for those families (Shmis *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, over 26 million girls missed out schools meals in Africa (ACPF, 2020). This resulted in many learners from underprivileged communities starving, which contributed to the delay in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number two, which aims to eradicate poverty. Students in poor rural areas did not have access to the internet due to poor network coverage (Mdepa, 2020). Furthermore, students from rural areas with poor backgrounds did not have access to internet connectivity, computers and other gadgets to access online learning (Daar & Nasar, 2020).

Only 2% of rural households had access to television in Ethiopia meaning that the majority of the learners are excluded from TV-based learning (ACPF, 2020). According to a report from Kenya, 97% of learners had challenge in gaining access to learning materials and 16% of girls did not come back to school when schools opened in January 2021. Furthermore, most learners and teachers in rural areas lacked facilities and expertise to implement remote teaching and learning (Olaitan, 2020). With Only 10.6% of the South African population having internet connectivity at home, online learning did not ensure equity in education (Pillay, 2021) thus hindering the achievement of SDG number four (4) which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Since education promotes good health, sexual and reproductive health, child and mental health, SDG 3 is directly impacted. Moreover, SDG4 is a foundational goal that facilitates the achievement of most SDGs, including SDG 3 (Lawrence *et al.*, 2020). Molek and Bellizzi (2022) posits that health and education are important social determinants of development that needs urgent attention. The South African Integrated School Health Policy (ISHP, 2012) proposes that educated individuals could serve as models of healthy behaviour for their families and the wider communities, thereby broadening the impact on the health system. Therefore, this means that education can never be separated from health. According to UNICEF (2018), when girls are educated, their children are more likely to survive and to be healthier. Among these learners, there were teenage mothers who were expected to juggle learning and childrearing simultaneously as the ECDs were also closed.

In most cases balancing motherhood and education concurrently may be overwhelming (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). Distractions such as household chores and the presence of other people made it difficult for learners to concentrate and focus while at home (Duby *et al.*, 2022). A study conducted in Ghana by Alhassan *et al.* (2023) found that the dual roles of teenage mothers impose a great deal of stress, trauma, unhappiness and other psychological effects. Okeke *et al.* (2022) revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic compounded chronic stress related to teen child-rearing. The teaching and learning of teenage mothers was severely impacted as compared to that of other teenage girls. The risk of not performing well and dropping out of school was high due to the fact that multitasking might be overpowering as teen mothers were also expected to do household chores. Additionally, the lack of support from the fathers of the kids and Isolation from peers might also lead to the girls dropping out of school (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). Despite the many challenges that were encountered, governments from different countries tried to come up with measures to mitigate the challenges brought by COVID-19.

Governments developed strategies to mitigate the learning challenges. For example, China's government offered psychological counselling to relieve the anxiety and irritability associated with COVID-19 prevention and control measures (Ding & Zhang, 2022). Azzi-Huck and Shmis (2020) also indicated that China managed to continue with education during school's closure through distance learning and the internet. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supported home tutoring initiative for students who were about to write examinations in Chad. Bulgaria created over 800.000 accounts for all teachers and parents and publishers were mobilized to open digital books and learning material for grades 1 to 10 (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020). Curricular Prioritisation bundle was launched in Chile to better guide schools in steering distance, blended and face to face learning (OECD, 2021). Moreover, lessons offered through radio and TV managed to keep many students from dropping out entirely. (Alcazar *et al.*, 2020) indicated that 546 million dollars was allocated to developing countries to fund the education sector. Egypt, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Poland offered poor households and affected individuals' financial support (Kitamura *et al.*, 2022).

In the Western Cape, a province in SA, an additional R30 million and R23 million was allocated for food parcels and cooked meal schemes respectively to fill the gap

left by the suspension of the school feeding schemes (Seekings, 2020). As a result, struggling citizens were able to get some relief. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) trimmed the curriculum to house the reviewed number of available teaching days, and lessons were broadcast on TV and the nutritional programme was continued during the COVID-19 pandemic (DBE, 2020). The South African departments of technologies and DBE and communications collaborated with national TV and radio broadcasters to launch COVID-19 learner support to promote access to education. Additionally teachers were delegated to post lesson plans and assignments which were made accessible online (Duby *et al.*, 2022).

Norwegian parents reported increased involvement and gaining more knowledge about their children during home-schooling and two-fifths of pupils and teachers agreed becoming better at using digital tools during home-schooling (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Northwest Territories (NWT) created kid help phone for children and youth who are under the age of 25 to provide remote counselling services (NWT education bulletin, 2020). Evidence indicates that 58% of parents in England managed to home-school their children at the beginning of the lockdown (Howard *et al.*, 2021). Tunisia created a free online platform called monprof.tn that allowed teachers to develop exercises for learners' thus promoting access to learning (Alcazar *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, 77% of Chile teachers trained on ICT usage for teaching and learning and may be able to support student learning through digital technology (OECD, 2020). In Madagascar, the Global Partners for Education (GPE) donated \$15 million focusing on ensuring continuity of learning and reopening of schools post the pandemic (Alcazar *et al.*, 2020). The South African minister of basic education revealed that the department utilised radio stations and various TV channels with the total reach of over 35 million people through the assistance of learner Support Programme (Zubane *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the department launched complementary WhatsApp portal to provide the teachers with information about educational materials. Teachers shared videos and learning materials with parents through WhatsApp groups and Facebook (Jantjies, 2020). However, the measures taken to mitigate the impact of the lockdown have proven not to be effective in certain countries.

Undoubtedly, online teaching and learning was the best option to continue teaching and learning during the lockdown. Nevertheless, not all learners were able to access teaching and learning. Learners in Kazakhstan had difficulties with internet infrastructure (Kitamura *et al.*, 2022). In England, the shortage of internet infrastructure to support online teaching gave rise to many teachers being unprepared to provide remote teaching (Howard *et al.*, 2021). Comparatively, privileged learners with access to technology and funds benefited more than the less privileged ones. Many countries in Sub-Saharan African countries, specifically in rural areas, still have limited access to the internet mostly due to its cost. Additionally, access to TV broadcasts might be hindered by the shortage of electricity (Lethuillier & Nkengke, 2020). Furthermore, radio and TV lessons lack interactivity and the attendance of learners cannot be supervised (Alcazar *et al.*, 2020). Online learning did not guarantee equity in education in developing countries such as in South Africa, wherein only few learners have access to the internet (Pillay, 2021). Moreover, the efforts of the South African government to make virtual learning accessible to all were poorly coordinated and not exclusively relevant to the curriculum (Duby *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the shortage of electricity and power cuts worsened the situation (Ujianti, 2020). Some learners lacked enthusiasm and discipline to attend to learning activities as they perceived the lockdown as a break.

1.3. Context of the study

South Africa, like most countries in the world, was undesirably affected by the Covid-19 lockdown. As a result, schools, ECDC's and institutions of higher learning were instructed to close throughout the country as one of the measures to curb the spread of infections. An estimated 71.6% of learners were attending pre-school or schools in 2020 (Stats SA, 2020). Therefore, many learners, including TM's were forced to stay at home while learning remotely. Limpopo learners were also not excluded as they were expected to utilize online platforms to access teaching and learning. Learners who came from the deep rural areas where network coverage is a privilege were mostly affected (Mdepa, 2020).

Only 4.9% of Limpopo learners managed to participate in remote learning. Moreover, only 1.6% of households in Limpopo have access to the internet in their homes. The prevalence of people without any formal education is more common in Limpopo as compared to other provinces in SA (Stats SA, 2021). According to the Vhembe IDP (2021), the Vhembe district is one of the five districts in Limpopo and is predominantly rural with 70% of the population living below the food poverty line and most households are headed by females. Furthermore, 21.59% and 8.98% females never attended school in the Vhembe District municipality and Makhado municipality respectively. Therefore, the study will focus on the northern part of the Limpopo province, the Vhembe district, Makhado local municipality.

1.4. Problem statement

The COVID-19 pandemic caught the whole world by surprise and the measures implemented were based on trial and error as not much was known about the virus. Based on the above background, the executed interventions such as lockdown necessitated the closure of schools, crèches, colleges and universities (OECD, 2020). Teaching and learning shifted from face to face to online platforms ensuring continuity of teaching and learning. However, these exacerbated the educational gap between privileged and underprivileged learners (Pillay, 2021). The online teaching and learning was only accessible to privileged learners with access to online resources while underprivileged learners were left behind as teaching and learning had to stop due to the unavailability of online resources (Mdepa, 2020). Therefore, online teaching and learning did not ensure equity in education in SA. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) alluded that only 40% of households in Limpopo have access to mobile internet and 1.6% of households have access to internet at home (ICASA, 2021). These proves that the shifting of teaching and learning from face to face to online platforms became more complex for Limpopo learners especially those from rural areas.

Teenage pregnancy is a major concern in rural provinces such as Limpopo. Limpopo has the second highest rates of teenage pregnancy in South Africa reporting 5 954 cases among teenagers aged 10-17 in 2020 (Risenga & Mboweni, 2023). Teenage pregnancy has detrimental effects on the education and future plans of teenagers.

Having to balance motherhood and education appears to be an overwhelming experience for teenage mothers (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). Child rearing needs such as attending well-baby clinics for scheduled immunizations and growth monitoring force teenagers to miss school attendance, thus affecting their academic performance (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). Remote learning exacerbated concerns about balancing learning, childrearing and house chores. A study conducted by Lethole (2019) in the Vhembe district found that teenage pregnancy led to poor attendance at school and absenteeism, which in turn resulted in school dropouts.

While access to schooling for pregnant and parenting girls is guaranteed in South Africa, however, the nature and extent of their support by schools has not been sufficiently investigated (Mathebula *et al.*, 2022). In South Africa, the developed Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP, 2012) was signed into law by the former Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and the Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshega to strengthen and support learning because health and education influence each other. The policy spells that:

“Strengthening of school health services represents one of the key components of the health sector’s efforts to re-engineer and strengthen primary health care delivery, whilst within the education sector provision of school health services is a key component of the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme which aims to realise the educational rights of all children, including those who are most vulnerable, through schools becoming inclusive centres of learning, care and support” (Department of Health and Basic Education, 2012 pp, 3).

This aligns with the WHO (2023) which stated that school health programmes should ensure inclusive services such as physical, mental, cognitive and social care of the learner. More so, as alluded by Shriwise *et al.* (2015) and the WHO (2023), the causes of health inequalities lies mostly outside the health sector. In the case of teenage mothers, as indicated by the literature, their health is affected by environmental factors. According to the WHO (2023), education is amongst the most important social determinants of health which affects health equality and must be prioritized. Therefore, achieving universal health care for all requires a multisectoral approach to achieve equal and quality health care for all. According to the

knowledge of the researcher, little is known about how teenage mothers in rural areas of Makhado in the Vhembe District were supported during the lockdown period to balance learning and parenting. In view of these, the study seeks to present health-related issues resulting from teenage parenting which may be implicated by teaching and learning in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe District, Limpopo province during the pandemic.

1.5. Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore and describe teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo SA.

1.5.1. Research questions and objectives

The study sought to answer the questions:

- 1) What learning support did teenage mothers receive during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality?
- 2) What were the learning conditions the teenage mothers were exposed to during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality?

Objectives of the study

- 1) To describe the teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality.
- 2) To describe the learning conditions the teenage mothers were exposed to during the COVID-19 lockdown in Makhado municipality.

1.6. Operational definitions

Teenage mothers

A teenage mother is a girl in her teen years, that is 11-19 years and has a child (UNESCO, 2017). According to Rice cited in Magwabeni (2017), a teenage mother is defined as a female person between the ages of 13-19 years of age who has a child. In this study, a teenage mother is a girl aged 13-19, mothering a child and enrolled for schooling in 2020/2021.

Learning conditions

The learning conditions are conditions that should be experienced by students in carrying out learning activities (Asnita & Wayong, 2022) and factors beyond the influence of the instructional designer that impacts upon the effects of the methods of instruction. In this study, the learning conditions are the psychological, social and the physical setting in which learning takes place and which has an influence on learning success.

COVID-19

Corona virus is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (WHO, 2020).

Lockdown

The lockdown was a set of measures aimed at reducing the transmission of COVID-19 that were mandatory, applied indiscriminately to a general population and involved some restrictions on the established pattern of social and economic life (Haider *et al.*, 2020).

Support

Support is to provide strength, help or encouragement to someone or something (Oxford South African school dictionary, 2019). In this study, support means teaching and learning assistance or encouragement provided to teenage mothers who were enrolled for schooling in 2020/2021.

1.7. The significance of the study

This study aims to present health-related issues resulting from teen parenting which may be implicated by teaching and learning. Thus, the findings of the study will contribute to the following stakeholders:

1.7.1. Nursing practice

The findings will provide guidance to improve access to health care that encourages learning and minimize schooling disruptions amongst teenage mothers.

1.7.2. Nursing research

The findings of the study will serve as a baseline for researching on strategies to enhance support for teenage mothers during future crisis and disasters.

1.7.3. Nursing education

The findings of the study will assist the nursing education institutions in formulating interventions and strategies to support teenage mothers to cope with school work and mothering thus reducing dropout rates.

1.7.4. Policy development

The study's findings may assist policymakers in formulating interventions and strategies to support teenage mothers during and after crisis emergencies, disasters and pandemics. The identified unfulfilled needs of the teenage mothers will assist policymakers to come up with measures to close the gaps thus promoting equality and equity.

1.8. Research methodology

This section presents the research design, setting, population and targeted population, sampling, sampling procedure and recruitment.

1.8.1. Research design

Research design refers to the experimental arrangement or plan used to examine the question or hypotheses of interest (Kazdin, 2017). The study embraced a

qualitative, critical participatory action research through community engagement approach. The community engagement approach allowed the researcher to establish a collaborative partnership with the community members thus promoting democracy and inclusion (Leavy, 2017). Acknowledging the community driven nature of participatory action research (PAR), the inclusion of people who are most affected by an enquiry, such as teenage mothers and stakeholders will promote social justice. The researcher employed the qualitative approach to explore the teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the lockdown in the Makhado municipality. See Chapter 3, Section 3.3

1.8.2. Research setting

The study was conducted in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province, South Africa. The researcher used the study setting because the chief approached the researcher's supervisor for assistance with the increased rates of teenage mothers' dropouts in the community. Limpopo Province is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa with high birth rates among teenagers (Nkosi, 2022). Limpopo recorded 18 893 births in 15-19-year-old girls in 2021 (Barron *et al.*, 2022). Only 0.6% and 38.9% of rural communities have access to the internet at home and mobile devices respectively in Limpopo (Stats SA 2018). According to Stats SA (2020), 19.7% of households are child-headed in Limpopo. The Vhembe IDP (2021) indicated poor telecommunication networks as one of the critical challenges in the Vhembe district. The Vhembe district has an estimated 1,393,948 of the population and it is mostly rural with 51% of households headed by females. Bassey *et al.* (2018) mentioned that unstable parenting experiences and family background are common and subject girls to susceptibilities of early pregnancies in the Vhembe district. The Makhado municipality is the second largest municipality in the Vhembe district with 116 371 households. About 90 800 people never attended school and 92 828 receive social grants in the Makhado municipality (Vhembe IDP, 2021).

1.8.3. Population and target population

According to Fain (2017), a population is an entire set of subjects, objects, events or elements being studied. The targeted population in this study was teenage mothers registered for schooling in the academic year 2020-2021 in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. See Chapter 3, Section 3.5 for details.

1.8.4. Sampling, sampling procedure and recruitment

Leavy (2017) refers to sampling as the process by which a number of individual cases are selected from a larger population. Sampling will permit the researcher to apply the findings based on a sample of persons to the larger population from which persons were drawn (Bordens & Abbott, 2018). The researcher used non-probability sampling; purposive and snowball sampling whereby community leaders and community members of the Makhado municipality including teenage mothers were involved to recruit teenage mothers within the partaking community. To ensure fair recruitment, an open invitation through community gatherings and posters were made. See Chapter 3, Section 3.6 for details.

1.8.5. Data generation methods and process

Data generation is the process of selecting subjects and gathering data from them (Gray & Grove, 2021). Data were generated through individual and focus group discussions. Individual interviews will offer a degree of depth and detail on each participant while the power of the focus group is the variety of different viewpoints and experiences that participants divulge during the interactive discussions (Flick, 2018). The researcher and the participants will continually reflect on and evaluate the generated data throughout the process. By using participatory arts-based methods, the researcher will capture the complex texture of teenage mothers' lived experiences and explore the connections between nature and culture (Lopez *et al.*, 2018). The researcher encouraged the teenage mothers to express themselves through drawing, drama, images, role plays or any other audiovisual digital material (Leavy, 2017). The researcher observed both verbal and non-verbal communication

and took field notes during the interviews. The researcher and the participants agreed on time and dates for scheduled interviews. See Chapter 3, Section 3.7

1.8.6. Data analysis

Eldridge (2017) noted that data analysis integrates observation and language to cultivate an in-depth description of the results. The data were generated and analyzed concurrently as PAR recognizes the need for people being studied to participate in all phases of the study (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). The researcher adopted Braun and Clarke's framework of thematic analysis, a method of qualitative data analysis as cited in Kiger *et al* (2020). See Chapter 3, Section 3.8.

1.8.7. Measures to ensure trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was accomplished by applying Lincoln and Guba strategies as cited in Nowell *et al.* (2017). The strategies are: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. Detailed information on these strategies is presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.8.

1.8.8. Ethical considerations

The ethical approval and permission in this study was obtained from the following authorities: The University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). The local community leaders where the study was conducted were also consulted. The researcher obtained informed written consent (Appendix C) for participants over the age of 18 and assent (Appendix D) for participants under the age of 18 before taking part in the study. The parents of the participants under the age of 18 were requested to provide informed written consent (Appendix B) for their children to participate. The researcher also adhered to the principles of confidentiality and anonymity, beneficence, respect and justice, fair recruitment of participants and social value of the research. Details are presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.9.

1.8 Division of chapters

Chapter 1

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including the background of the study. The context of the study, research problem and aim of the study, the research questions and research objectives are also explored. This chapter presents the research methodology, including research design, research setting, population, recruitment of the participants, data generation methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations that were adhered to during the study and the outline of the chapters including the chapter summary.

Chapter 2

This chapter provides the literature review on teenage pregnancy and motherhood, challenges faced by teenage mothers, the psycho-social and economic impact of COVID-19 on society, the impact of COVID-19 in Africa and support systems available for teenage mothers. The theoretical framework that underpinned the study is also presented herein.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the research methodology that was employed to explore the learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The research paradigm, design, setting as well as population of the study were presented. The chapter also presents the methods used to recruit the participants, data generation, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

The demographic data of the participants as well as thematic data analysis were presented in this chapter. Two (2) superordinate themes, six (6) themes and ten (10) sub-themes that emerged from the data were presented in this chapter. Lastly, the discussions of the findings also contained herein.

Chapter 5

This chapter provides the summary of the findings, the limitations of the study and the recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the teaching and learning support that teenage mothers received during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. The literature review was conducted to assist the researcher in gathering information about what has already been studied about the phenomenon under study. Based on the available data, the researcher established what was investigated and what findings were obtained. This chapter presents the review of the literature on transition to motherhood, teenage pregnancy and motherhood, challenges faced by teenage mothers, teenage motherhood and schooling, COVID-19 impact and support systems for teenage mothers. The second section includes the brief overview of theoretical framework.

2.2. Transition to motherhood

Being a teenage mother is one of the most difficult journeys to embark on and some of the teenagers are not yet able to take care of themselves. The motherhood journey of teenagers as young mothers become more complex as their minds are not in tune with the expectations of motherhood, the adaptation of being cared for, to the role of caring for their infant is challenging (Pillay *et al.*, 2018). Teenage mothers' experiences of transition to adulthood are harrowing. Moreover, these teenage mothers need to be mothered as they are still children (Bowen, 2019). Evidence suggests that teenage mothers, especially those under the age of 15, are not fully developed for biological reasons to sustain a healthy pregnancy and child-bearing (Risenga & Mboweni, 2023).

The physical changes that accompany pregnancy, childbearing and breastfeeding exacerbate the challenges of transition as teens are still dealing with the transition from childhood to adolescence (Mangeli *et al.*, 2017; Erfina *et al.*, 2019). In addition, teenage mothers face various developmental issues associated with the transition to adulthood and the simultaneous assumption of mothering responsibilities (Mukuna &

Aloka, 2021). Pregnancy and motherhood force girls and young women into adulthood. Research indicates that most teenagers describe caring for their children as the most challenging task (Erfina *et al.*, 2019). Girls who become mothers early are forced to assume a role that they are not emotionally or physically prepared for, which may negatively affect their mental health, mother-child relationships and their children's development (Molek & Bellizi, 2022).

2.3. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood

Even though teenage motherhood has been declining, however, it is still a global concern affecting many countries in the world (UNDESA, 2022). Approximately 14% of adolescent girls and young women give birth before the age of 18 worldwide (United Nations Children' Fund (UNICEF), 2021). According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 13.3 million babies were born to mothers under the age of 20 in 2021 worldwide. Additionally, the global adolescent birth rate was 41 per 1 000 adolescents aged between 15 and 19 (Barron *et al.*, 2022). In the United States of America (USA), compared to non-Hispanic white teens, Hispanic teens and non-Hispanic black teens had higher birth rates than non-Hispanic white teens (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

The study conducted in Gambia revealed 13.42% overall burden of pregnancy and early motherhood. However, these findings were lower than studies done in Pakistan (42.5%), Latin America (19.2%) and Nigeria (22.9%) (Terefe, 2022). Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the highest rates among all regions with 101 births per 1 000 girls aged 15-19 while Latin America and the Caribbean region was second highest with 53 births per 1 000 girls aged 15-19 (UNDESA, 2022). Eastern and Southern Africa recorded the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world with more than one in 5 adolescents giving birth before the age of 20 years (Groves & Ezeh, 2022). In Kenya, 151 433 cases of adolescent pregnancies were reported between January and May 2020 (Muriithi *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, around 20% of girls aged 15-19 are either pregnant or already teenage mothers (Muriithi & LuSava, 2022). The United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA, 2022) reported that pregnancy rates in Uganda increased by 6 percent between 2019 and 2021. Moreover, Ugandan girls aged 10-14 have experienced a 366 percent increase in pregnancy rates between

March and September 2020 (Nyakato *et al.*, 2021). Pregnancy rates among school learners in South Africa remain unacceptably high. (O' Regan, 2021).

The situation of early pregnancy and motherhood in South Africa is a matter of national concern. Around one-third of South African women have become pregnant during adolescence (Amoateng *et al.*, 2022). Media reports indicated that in 2019, the number of births by teenage mothers in all nine provinces was 124 628 (Maghina, 2019). The number of teenagers delivering in public health facilities in South Africa has increased by almost 50% between 2017 and 2021 (Barron *et al.*, 2022). According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2019), the rate of pregnancy increases significantly in grades 10-12 compared with grades 8 and 9. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2021), an estimated 3 899 teenagers aged 17 years and younger gave birth in 2020 while over 600 were girls aged 10-13. Furthermore, 36 000 babies were delivered to teenagers aged 10-19 in the beginning of 2021 in South Africa (O'Regan, 2021). In 2020/2021 KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of deliveries in the 15-19 year category with 34 467 births, followed by Gauteng and Limpopo with 19 316 and 18 893 births respectively (Stats SA, 2022). Save the Children (2021) noted a 60% increase in children born to teenage mothers since COVID-19 started in Gauteng province. Statistics revealed that teenage pregnancy rates are higher in rural provinces like the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo as well as urban provinces like Gauteng and the Western Cape (Barron *et al.*, 2022).

The Limpopo Province occupies the second highest position in teenage pregnancies in South Africa (Risenga & Mboweni, 2023). Limpopo province recorded 133 971 births by teenage mothers in the financial 2021/2022. Additionally, the Vhembe district where this study is conducted, reported the highest at 31 977, followed by Capricorn and Mopani at 29 564 and 29 050 respectively (Mathabatha, 2022). The findings by Bassey *et al.* (2018) suggested that socioeconomic and cultural factors in the upbringing of teenage girls in the Vhembe district leads to the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. These factors include parenting patterns, peer pressure, and traditional practices amongst others.

2.4. Challenges faced by teenage mothers

2.4.1. Psychosocial challenges

Teenage mothering affects both the teenage mothers and their children and eventually the whole of society. Anakpo and Kollamparambi (2021) revealed that children of TMs are at greater probability of dependence on child support grants thus limiting the child from getting a fair opportunity in life. Anakpo and Kollamparambil (2021) further revealed that it is common for teenage mothers to be unable to engage in productive economic activities, therefore limiting their ability to provide for their children. Furthermore, teenage mothers experience almost 50% in the last five years (Barron *et al.*, 2022). According to Statistic South Africa (Stats SA) (2021), an estimated 3 899 teenagers aged 17 years and younger gave birth in 2020 while over 600 were girls aged 10-13.

Furthermore, teenage mothers experience tiredness at night when they take care of their babies due to lack of sleep (Niboye, 2018, Mweemba *et al.*, 2019). World Vision (2020) reported that about one million girls across sub-Saharan Africa are at risk of being prevented from returning to school as a result of the COVID-19 school closure. Moreover, Muriithi *et al* (2022) stated that teenage mothers in Kenya are less probable to complete high school or university. Pregnant teenagers are more likely to drop out of school, which negatively impacts their educational and employment prospects (Barron *et al.*, 2022).

In Namibia, evidence shows that most teenage mothers conceal their pregnancy and are unprepared to face the challenges in the education system and eventually drop out of school (lita, 2021). When teenage mothers are dealing with difficulties relating to their children, such as being sick or taking the infant to the doctor, they may miss school frequently (Adangabe *et al.*, 2021). Ultimately, such difficulties affect teenage mothering considerably as it increases grade repetition. It is well documented that most teenage mothers in South Africa end up dropping out from school (Anakpo & Kollamparambil, 2021). Furthermore, the DBE (2021) reports that approximately 33% of pregnant girls do not return to school after giving birth. In schools, pregnant and parenting girls are stigmatized and discriminated against due to the visibility of their

sexual activity and that teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon associated with deviant teenage girls (UNESCO, 2017).

2.5. Psycho-social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the society

Many countries around the world implemented lockdown measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, adversely impacting the lives of both young and old. The study conducted in the United Kingdom revealed that young parents experienced challenges such as elevated levels of anxiety, uncertainty, loneliness and isolation during the pandemic imposed lockdown (Moltrecht *et al.*, 2022). Parents in the United States of America (USA) reported difficulties balancing responsibilities, motivation, accessibility, and learning outcomes (Garbe *et al.*, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, parents from less privileged households may face financial and job security issues and may not be in the best position to support their children (Di Pietro *et al.*, 2020).

During the COVID-19 crisis, research shows an increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among girls, teenage pregnancies and disruptions in social support systems, including for emotional wellbeing in Global Partnership for Education (GPE) countries. A study conducted in Saudi Arabia showed those younger health care workers and those living with family are likely to have higher levels of anxiety and stress. (Al Harbi *et al.*, 2023). The confinement of women, including teenage mothers, leads to an increase in unpaid care work, which has implications for their educational achievements (ECLAC/UNESCO, 2020). In the wake of the closure of schools, this imbalance became even worse, with teenage mothers taking on multiple responsibilities: caring for their children, house chores and distance learning.

Online teaching and learning was indisputably the best option to continue teaching and learning during lockdown, however not all learners benefited from it. The lockdown exposed students from less privileged backgrounds to a stressful home environment, including sharing limited space and a limited number of digital devices with family members (Di Pietro *et al.*, 2020). Evidence indicates that learners in Kazakhstan had problems with internet infrastructure such as internet interruptions

(Kitamura *et al.*, 2022). According to a study conducted in England, it indicates that the shortage of internet infrastructure to support online teaching gave rise to many teachers being unprepared to provide remote teaching (Howard *et al.*, 2021). Girls from rural Pakistan experienced more learning losses than boys across nearly all competencies and grades, and in England (United Kingdom), primary school girls were 1.3 months behind in reading compared to boys who were 0.6 months behind (UNICEF, 2022). During the pandemic, GPE partner countries faced challenges promoting and supporting school well-being of children, including insufficient resources to support the response and disruption in supply chains (Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Union/Centre International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (AU/CIEFFA), and African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC, 2021). Comparatively privileged learners with access to technology and funds benefited more than less privileged ones.

2.6. The Impact of COVID-19 in Africa

In many African countries, COVID-19 has exacerbated health system challenges, impacting routine immunizations, maternal and child health care and other health services. Africa's health systems were inadequately prepared for the pandemic, according to evidence (Tessema *et al.*, 2021). Turbulences in global supply chains and import tariffs posed a threat to numerous African states since they are reliant on the external world for pharmaceuticals supplies (United Nations, 2020). Liberia, Niger and Nigeria reported an increase in SGBV with 50%, 60% and 149% respectively (ADEA, AU/CIEFFA and APHRC, 2021). Even though it was eminent that Africa will miss the deadline Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target of eradicating severe poverty by 2030, the COVID-19 impact broaden the gap (Cilliers *et al.*, 2020).

Many countries in Sub-Saharan African countries, specifically in rural areas still have limited access to the internet mostly due to its cost. Additionally, access to TV broadcasts might be hindered by the shortage of electricity (Lethuillier & Nkengke, 2020). Furthermore radio and TV lessons lack interactivity and attendance of learners cannot be supervised (Alcazar *et al.*, 2020). In a study conducted by Hove

and Dube in Zimbabwe (2021), learners from privileged households were able to continue online learning during the lockdown, but those from underprivileged families were unable to access the internet. The COVID-19 lockdown exposed national inequalities of the South African government and worsened the already bad situations.

South African learners including teenage mothers from poor rural communities have found it challenging to access online learning platforms and resources (Landa *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, during a research study conducted by Dube (2020) in rural South Africa, it was found that learners in rural areas were unable to access digital learning because of the lack of connectivity, the shortage of technological devices for online learning and the closure of internet cafes during the lockdown. This aggravated an already desparate situation for rural learners. Therefore, educational inputs, processes and outcomes were significantly impacted. Online learning did not guarantee equity in education in developing countries such as SA, where only few learners have access to the internet (Pillay, 2021).

Moreover, the efforts of SA government to make virtual learning accessible to all were poorly coordinated and not exclusively relevant to the curriculum (Duby *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the shortage of electricity and power cuts worsened the situation (Ujianti, 2020). The lack of computer skills among rural teachers exacerbated the difficulties of moving to digital platforms, according to Dube (2020). As revealed in Iwara *et al* (2020), learners in the Vhembe district have less access to resources such as electricity and the internet than their counterparts in other parts of the country. In other words, the government places a higher priority on urban residents than rural ones. Consequently, the gap between privileged and underprivileged learners widened even further.

2.7. Support systems available to teenage mothers

2.7.1. Social support

Teenage motherhood is depicted as difficult and with teenage mothers often shown to be lost and vulnerable; they therefore require a holistic support as opposed to mature mothers (Bowen, 2019). Sriyasak *et al.* (2018) argues that the mother of a teenage mother is the primary source of caregiving and functions as a co-parent.

According to Mangeli *et al.* (2017), most teenagers do not receive adequate support from their spouses, family and friends and health care providers. Additionally, a study by Quaye and Attom (2019) in Ghana shows that most of the teenage mothers were taking care of their children themselves with little support from parents and family members and were abandoned by their partners after impregnating them. The support that they get from family members is predominately financial support. According to the study conducted in Rwanda, most teenage mothers lost sponsorship from parents after conceiving (Gatsinzi, 2022) while the study conducted in the Philippines indicate that many teenage mothers reported receiving strong support from their parents and siblings while they rarely received support from fathers of the children (Pueyo, 2022). Ramirez *et al.* (2021) indicated that teenage mothers do not receive support from teachers and school administrators. There are several organizations that support teenage mothers worldwide.

According to Mutizira and Mbili (2022), trained peer counselors and support groups have been used to provide a safe environment for adolescents to have a healthy conversation on sexual and reproductive health. United Nations Women has partnered with Imbuto Foundations and the National Agency for Child Development in Rwanda to promote the socioeconomic reintegration of survivors of gender-based violence, particularly teenage mothers (UN, 2021). Furthermore, UNICEF (2018) supported the Guyana national policy for the reintegration of adolescent mothers into formal school systems to promote access to education. The Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS foundation (EGPAF) (2019) supports access to and the utilization of prenatal care, including the prevention of mother-to-child HIV services and postnatal mother-baby services among adolescents in Kenya.

In Tanzania, the law requires that any case of pregnancy be reported in school and measures such as transferring the pregnant girl to another school are taken to avoid social stigma (Niboye, 2018). In SA, most teenage mothers receive social grants from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) thus providing financial assistance. Such grants provide support through basic necessities for teenage or young mothers and children. The DBE in South Africa designates that pregnant learners have a right to access health and social services available in schools (DBE, 2018). The findings of the study conducted in Limpopo, Makhado municipality, indicated that most teenage mothers lacked social support from their families and

partners (Magwabeni, 2017). According to the study conducted in four high schools in Limpopo, it revealed that pregnancy-monitoring teachers played a beneficial role to pregnant and parenting girls (Mathebula *et al*, 2022).

2.7.2. Learning support for pregnant and parenting teenagers

In light of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy among school girls and the fact that it is hindering the elimination of gender disparities in education in many countries, it was imperative that countries have a pregnancy policy detailing what schools need to do when dealing with pregnant students. In Libya and Morocco, pregnant teenagers are banned from school and they are not permitted back into school after giving birth resulting in the teenage mothers' low educational levels (HRWO, 2021). On the contrary, in other African countries such as Cameroon, teenage mothers are allowed back into school after giving birth. However, they end up dropping out of school to take care of their children due to lack of affordable child care, child services and family support (Sobngwi-Tambekou *et al.*, 2022).

Fortunately, teenage mothers in South Africa have the option of returning to school after the birth of their children as their reproductive rights are protected by law and policy (Naidoo *et al.*, 2019). The South African Constitution and the School Act No. 84 of 1996 stipulate that pregnant girls must not be denied access to education. ISHP (2012) was designed with the purpose of achieving good health and well-being, gender equality and quality education. However, teenage mothers had to contend with various exclusionary pressures and the lack of curriculum support in their schooling context (Naidoo *et al.*, 2019). Teenage mothers received limited support from the school to assist them in navigating barriers to curriculum access and quality education (Naidoo *et al.*, 2019).

A study by Mathebula *et al.* (2022) argues that despite South African schools providing the basic right to education for pregnant and parenting girls to continue with their education, they might not benefit academically due to weak school policy and practices. In contrast, a study conducted by Gomez and Omandam (2023) revealed that teachers in the Philippines arranged supplemental activities to close the achievement gaps and encouraged learners to keep good attendance records.

Students with positive and supportive relationships with teachers and peers are more likely to participate actively in class and school activities (Uslu & Gizir, 2017). In a school context, belonging can contribute to positive academic development and healthy well-being (Arslan & Duru, 2017).

2.8. Theoretical framework

Adom *et al.* (2018) defines a theoretical framework as a set of interconnected constructs, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying the relations between variables with the aim of explaining and predicting phenomena. Further, Grant and Osanloo (2014) define theoretical framework as the blueprint or guide for the entire study. The theoretical framework is a foundation and serves as a guide to a study (Adom *et al.*, 2018). Based on that background, this study adopted Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) to help guide the research.

2.8.1. Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT)

Albert Bandura was born in Canada on the 4th of December 1925. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of British Columbia in 1949. He later received a PhD. in 1952 from University of Iowa. He took a postdoctoral position at the Wichita Guidance Center in Wichita, Kansas. Bandura came under the influence of the behaviorist tradition and learning theory while at the University of Iowa. He wrote his first book together with his graduate student in 1959. He started teaching at Stanford University in 1953. He married Virginia Varns and was blessed with two daughters (Bandura, 2006).

Albert Bandura's SCT started as the social learning theory (SLT) in the 1960's. In 1986, it developed into SCT to emphasize the role of cognition in people's capabilities to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information and act. The theory clarifies psychosocial operative in terms of triadic reciprocal causation. According to SCT, learning takes place in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between people, their environment and their behaviour. The distinctive feature of SCT is its emphasis on social influence and social reinforcement, both external and internal. Taking into account the social environment in which individuals

perform the behaviour, SCT examines how individuals obtain and maintain behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

The theory is founded on four elements; namely, human agency, human capabilities, vicarious learning and self-efficacy. Human agency proposes that persons are proactively betrothed in their own development and that they are able to exercise control over their thoughts, feelings and actions. Human capabilities indicate that individuals own the capacity to symbolize, by extracting meaning from the environment, construct guides for action, gain knowledge by reflective thought, communicate with others over distance in time and space and store information. With vicarious learning, individuals can develop rules to guide their subsequent behaviour through observation of others' behaviour. Last element, self-efficacy beliefs are better predictors of people accomplishments than their previous attainments, knowledge or skills as such beliefs are associated with goal-related effort, persistence and resilience in the face of adversity (Bandura, 1986).

2.8.2. Significance and application of the theory in the context of the study

Based on the assumptions of SCT, this study investigated how teenage mothers were supported with teaching and learning during the COVID-19 lockdown and how the support helped them cope with teaching and learning. SCT utilises triadic reciprocal causation to clarify psychosocial functioning. SCT suggests that learning takes place in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between people, their environment and their behaviour (Bandura, 1986). The learning of teenage mothers is influenced by their interaction with parents, peers, teachers, community members, the environment they stay in and their behaviour. Relatively, teenage mothers receiving support from parents, peers, teachers and the community tend to have improved motivation, high self-efficacy and better learning outcomes, whereas, teenage mothers without sufficient support systems tend to lack motivation to learn and have low self-efficacy.

According to Magwabeni (2017), strong social support plays a major role in the success of teenage mothers. The external environment reinforcement also plays an important part in prompting the learning and behaviour of individuals (Bandura, 1989). Teenage mothers who stay in unfavourable environments such as

overcrowded, noisy households without access to learning resources might not be able to learn despite their high self-efficacy. A report by ECLAC/UNICEF (2020) in Latin America indicates that adolescents staying in overcrowded households have inadequate space to study and rest thus affecting their cognitive development and career path. According to SCT, individuals have the capacity for self-direction, self-organizing and self-regulating as they are not only followers and knowers (Bandura, 1986). Teenage mothers who possess low-efficacy skills tend to believe that they are incapable of learning on their own and avoid doing school work while at home or may not seek support with academic work from parents or teachers when the need arises.

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter has examined literature related to transition to motherhood, teenage pregnancy and motherhood, challenges faced by teenage mothers, the psychosocial and economic impact of COVID-19 as well as the impact of COVID-19 in Africa. Moreover, it examined literature on the support systems that are available to teenage mothers. The theoretical framework that underpins this study was discussed. The next chapter will explain the methodology utilized for the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the teaching and learning support that teenage mothers received during the coronavirus disease lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. This was done to investigate how teenage mothers were supported with regards to teaching and learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. This chapter delivers in-depth discussions of the research methodology that was utilized to generate data for the study. It further describes the research setting in which the study was conducted, in the Makhado municipality, Molapo (Pseudonym) village. The population and the target group are also indicated. The sampling technique that was used is highlighted. This chapter also discusses data generation and the method of analysis that was employed in the study. Issues of trustworthiness are emphasized. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are also discussed.

3.2. Research paradigm

According to Brink *et al.* (2018), a paradigm is a set of assumptions about the basic diversities of entities in the world and how these entities interrelate as well as the methods used for constructing and testing theories about them. This study is situated within a constructivism paradigm which is reasonably connected to qualitative approach. Adom *et al.* (2016) argues that constructivists asserts that reality is subjective because it is from the individual perspective of participants engaged in the study and are thus multiple or varied. In the constructivism paradigm, participants' own constructions, narrations and descriptions of their lived experiences as well as the belief that knowledge is constructed between the researcher and the participants are emphasized (Tashakkori *et al.*, 2021). The research in this study was conducted using a constructivism paradigm to gain insights into how the teenage mothers experienced and interpreted the support they have received during the lockdown. The researcher, participants and community members of Molapo (Pseudonym)

village worked together when gathering data, analyzing it and implementing solutions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2021). Through community engagement, the researcher established a collaborative relationship with community members, promoting democracy and inclusion. Described by Kemmis *et al.* (2014), critical participatory action research combines a broader social analysis, a self-reflective collective self-study of practice and transformative action. In PAR, objectivity is not the goal, as it is in the positivist paradigm in which the researcher's self-interest plays an important role in research (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). Taking into account the community-driven nature of PAR, it was crucial for the researcher to depart from the positivist paradigm in order to include those who are most affected by the inquiry, such as teenage mothers and other stakeholders. This was done to emancipate both the teenage mothers and the community by encouraging free expression of thought, feelings, experiences and recommendations or solutions to the problems.

The critical engagement builds self-reliance and agency of community members. The PAR is argued to be the most productive form of research design for dealing with social problems (Omodan, 2020). In the same way, the aim of this study is to explore the teaching and learning support that teenage mothers received during the coronavirus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. In an effort to change the narratives of teenage mothers, the researcher wanted to examine how they were supported with teaching and learning during the coronavirus closure of schools in order to adequately prepare for future crises leading to school closures.

Teenage mothers face many educational challenges that have a negative impact on their education (Mathebula *et al.*, 2022). The researcher sought to promote inclusion and support of teenage mothers in line with SDG Goal Number 4 which aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Matjila & Van der Merwe, 2021). In essence, SDG goals are exclusive but interrelated for the attainment of the universal health care (WHO, 2023). Therefore, as it is expressed in the RSA school health policy (2012), the school health environment should be conducive for all learners to thrive and attain physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. In this case, SDG 3 cannot be isolated from other goals due to the fact that education is vital for the promotion of health and socio-economic status through decent jobs which leads to the elimination

of poverty and hunger (Lawrence *et al.*, 2020; Marmot *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the denial of access to education is ultimately a denial to health. The PAR and transformative paradigm are essential to transforming marginalized teenage mothers and their predicaments by making them co-researchers where they can share and construct knowledge. The researcher worked together with eleven (11) teenage mothers in examining how they were supported with their home learning during lockdown and came up with the solutions to promote inclusive education. The researcher sought to include the voices of the teenage mothers and mitigate the disparities.

3.3. Research design

Kazdin (2017) defines a research design as the experimental arrangement or plan employed to investigate the hypothesis of interest whereas a research design, according to Cohen *et al.* (2018), is the process of organizing the research and making it practicable so that the research questions can be answered based on evidence. This study adopted a qualitative, critical participatory action research through community engagement approach. The details are provided below.

3.3.1. Qualitative approach

In this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach because it is most suitable for this enquiry. According to Mhajan (2018), qualitative research is a form of social action that focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their experiences in order to understand the social reality of individuals. The researcher used in-depth interviews through arts to explore teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown.

3.3.2. Critical participatory action research

Described by Kemmis *et al.* (2014), critical participatory action research combines a PAR is a combination of participation and action to understand and address social problems (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). Lenette (2022) further describe participatory

art based research as a collaborative and participatory research which involves the use of art to generate, analyse and share knowledge. Art-based participatory research combines the tenets of participatory action to democratise the research process by using the arts as a methodological tool (Nunn, 2020). This study used drawings as part of its methodology and interviews to clarify the areas that were not clarified by the drawings. An arts-based approach was used in the study to enhance the constructive inclusion of teenage mothers' voices and to evoke emotion, cultivate empathy, capture the multisensory nature of their lived experiences and promote self-reflection and awareness of environmental change in teenage mothers (Mudau & Chiya, 2023). In order to express themselves more deeply, participants used drawings with captions and interacted with the researcher throughout the process.

The researcher opted to employ PAR in order to work together with the participants and stakeholders to identify a problem and develop researched-based solutions to enhance sustainable ownership. According to Trembly *et al.*, (2018), PAR is more beneficial when working with marginalized populations in order to promote social justice. In this case, the marginalized people are teenage mothers in the Molapo (Pseudonym) village, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district. Understanding the reality of teenage mothers as minors, learners and mothers was important, as well as how the community perceives them.

3.3.3. Community engagement approach

According to Nersisian *et al.* (2021), community-based approach is characterized by understanding the importance of shared reactions to adversity and of social cohesion in determining individual and social well-being. The community engagement approach was utilized in this study to enable the researcher to establish a collaborative partnership with the community members and to promote democracy and inclusion (Leavy, 2017). The participants and the community members were given responsibilities and acted as co-researchers throughout the research process hence ownership was promoted. One community leader acted as a research assistant throughout the enquiry. The dialogues provided safe spaces for teenage mothers to discuss pressing issues. The researcher allowed the participants to identify issues and control the decision making while acting as a facilitator. However,

the following challenges were encountered; some teenage mothers expected incentives to participate in the study, and some were reluctant to answer questions and were giving short answers.

3.4. Research setting

Gray and Grove (2021) refer to research setting as the location where a study is conducted. The study was conducted at Molapo (Pseudonym) village, Makhado municipality in the Vhembe district, Limpopo. The district is located in the Northern part of Limpopo Province and shares borders with Capricorn and Mopani District municipalities in the eastern and western directions, respectively (Vhembe IDP, 2021). The Vhembe District comprises four local municipalities; namely, Musina, Collins Chabane, Thulamela and Makhado Municipality. The District covers 21 407 square km of land with a total population of 1 393 949 people. The Makhado municipality is the second largest municipality in the Vhembe district with 116 371 households. Around 416 728 people presently reside in the Municipality and based on the massiveness of the rural populace, the municipality can be classified as predominately rural (Makhado IDP, 2021/22). The highest population in the Vhembe District is youths with 533 868, of which 15 323 are from the Makhado municipality. There are approximately 55 000 unschooled people in the Makhado municipality, of which 39 000 are women (Makhado IDP. 2021/22). At the time of the study, the youth unemployment rate in the Makhado municipality was 64% (Stats SA, 2021). There were 114 secondary schools with around 65 000 students and 251 primary schools with around 90 000 learners in the 2021/2022 academic year (Makhado IDP, 2021/2022). In South Africa, teenage pregnancy remains one of the leading causes of school dropouts.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) reported around 34 000 teenage pregnancies between 2020 and 2021. Moreover, rural provinces such as Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape as well as urban areas such as Gauteng and the Western Cape have higher rates of teenage pregnancy in South Africa (Risenga & Mboweni, 2022). In terms of teenage pregnancy statistics of girls aged between 10 and 17, the KwaZulu-Natal province ranks first, followed by Limpopo province (Stats SA, 2021).

Vuwani village, Vhembe district, in Limpopo province reported 775 teenage pregnancies in 2023 (Sepeng *et al.*, 2023). Limpopo reported 13 397 births by teenage mothers in 2021. Moreover, the Vhembe district recorded the highest in the province with 31 977 births by teenage mothers in the same year (Limpopo province Premier, 2022). This research site was selected purposively for the study mainly because of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the district.

3.5. Population

According to Fain (2017), a population is a set of subjects, objects, events or elements under study. The population in this study consisted of all teenage mothers attending school in the academic year 2020-2021 in Molapo (Pseudonym) village, Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. As mentioned previously, the Makhado population has a youthful age structure with 15 323 youths. According to Makhado IDP (2021/22) a total of 65 610 and 90 241 learners were enrolled in secondary and primary schools respectively. The purpose of the study was to explore the teaching and learning support teenage mothers received during the coronavirus disease lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. Therefore, the population of the study was teenage mothers who were registered in schooling during the period of the 2020-2021 academic years. A total of 11 teenage mothers who were learners during the COVID-19 lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, in Limpopo province participated in the study.

3.6. Recruitment, Sampling, and sampling procedure

3.6.1. Recruitment of participants

In their article, Manohar *et al.* (2018) describe the recruitment process as an effort to identify potential research participants and provide them with enough information to establish their interest in joining a proposed research study. The researcher commenced the recruitment process by bringing gatekeepers on board to build trust. According to Tracy (2020), a gatekeeper is a person who holds the figurative keys to

access the research site. The researcher met with the gatekeepers to obtain permission to conduct the research study and identify the participants. In this study, the gatekeepers were the community leaders that were recognised by the tribal authority. The research assistant helped in recruiting and organizing meeting venues. It is important to identify a community leader within the community who is already trusted by that community for the introduction of a project and for gaining access to that particular community (Manohar *et al.*, 2018). The community leaders ensure interactions between the researcher and the community members.

Gatekeepers are indispensable mediators for gaining access to the study setting and participants in social research (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). It was vital for the researcher to establish good rapport with the gatekeepers to gain their co-operation as they had the power to grant permission and they were the link between the researcher, the tribal office and the participants. As described by Cornish *et al.* (2023) PAR focuses on building the relationships first then followed by the research. A letter requesting permission to conduct the study in the community was sent to the community leaders as gatekeepers and thereafter, the letter was taken to the tribal office by the research team leader who is the community member of Molapo (Pseudonym) village. The researcher was subsequently granted the permission letter **(Appendix K)** to conduct the study in the community.

In order to respect the culture of the community, the researcher familiarised herself with Vhavenda cultural norms before meeting the Queen's right hand man and the tribal council. The researcher met the Queen's right hand man first and explained the purpose of the study and how it will benefit the community. Subsequently, a meeting with the Queen as the acting Chief and her right hand man and the tribal council was held where the researcher further explained the purpose of the study. During the meeting with the Queen, the researcher observed the Vhavenda's indigenous form of greeting by lying down on her side with both hands clasped to show respect and good manners.

In accordance with community norms, the Queen was also presented with money as a token of appreciation. The Queen indicated that she has worked with researchers in her community and is delighted that her community was chosen and that the findings will be beneficial to teenage mothers' future. The queen and the royal

council showed interest in the study and promised to give the research team full support. The Queen and the royal council requested to be given feedback upon the study's completion. The researcher promised to provide the royal council with a copy of the report.

To ensure the principles of community engagement through inclusion and shared values, a research committee comprising of a community leader, representatives from the tribal office, community members and research assistant was established and involved throughout the research process. The local church was identified as a venue for the meetings by the participants and the gatekeepers. The community gatekeepers were involved as advisors in the study and the researcher respected their advice to promote social justice and sustainable relationships. The participants were primarily recruited by the community leaders and research assistant whereby an open invitation was circulated to all teenage mothers who were interested in participating in the study through platforms such as community gatherings, Facebook, WhatsApp and putting flyers at tactical places such as churches and shops. In addition, information was passed through word of mouth to members of the community. This was done to promote inclusion, democracy and social justice (Kemis *et al.*, 2014).

3.6.2. Sampling and sampling procedure

Sampling is a most important feature of qualitative research methods. Leavy (2017) refers to sampling as the process by which a number of individual cases are selected from a larger population. According to Bordens and Abbot (2018), sampling allows the researcher to apply the findings based on a sample of individuals to the larger population from which persons were drawn. In this study, the researcher used non probability sampling; purposive and snowball sampling. In purposive sampling, Gray and Grove (2021) posits that the researcher deliberately chooses participants, elements, events or incidents to study. According to Fain (2017), snowball sampling also known as network sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that relies on subjects identifying other subjects with similar characteristics (Fain, 2017). The researcher used purposive and snowball sampling based on the ability to find

participants in socially devalued population, in this case teenage mothers (Gray & Grove, 2021).

PAR emphasizes the direct engagement of the local urgencies and collaboration with those affected by the issue being studied (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). The researcher requested the teenage mothers who attended the first research meeting to recruit other teenage mothers in Molapo (Pseudonym) village. The teenage mothers were then involved in referring other teenage mothers who were willing to participate in the study. The number expanded as the researcher asked the teenage mothers to refer their peers. The snowball sampling assisted the researcher to recruit suitable participants since there was no database for teenage mothers in the village. An overall of 11 teenage mothers participated in the study.

3.6.3. Meeting with participants

According to Gray and Grove (2021), enlisting stigmatized or marginalized groups is difficult. Similarly in this study, only a few teenage mothers attended the first meeting with the researcher. As a result of being stigmatized and labelled by peers, teachers and community members, teenage mothers may avoid public gatherings to save themselves embarrassment (Adangabe *et al.*, 2021). The researcher, with the assistance of the research assistant established rapport with the participants and identified that 3 participants met the sampling criteria. However, the participants indicated that some participants were willing to join the meeting but they were unable due to household chores such as doing laundry and cleaning.

The participants further reported that it was not feasible to attend morning meetings on Saturdays due to those chores. The researcher scheduled other meetings on Saturday afternoon to allow the participants to complete household chores before the meetings. The second meeting was successful with many teenagers showing up. However, some of the teenagers who showed interest in the study did not meet the sampling criteria but instead of chasing them, the researcher allowed them to stay and utilized the opportunity to provide health education to the teenagers. Some participants decided to quit before the interviews could even commence and the researcher respected their right to choose not to participate. Coerced participants are not at liberty to exercise their autonomy (Cohen-Almagor, 2021).

3.6.4. Inclusion criteria

The following participants will be included in the study:

All teenage mothers who avail themselves for the study.

All teenage mothers who were registered for schooling in the academic years 2020 to 2021.

All teenage mothers who have signed assent to partake in the study.

All teenage mothers whose parents, guardians or care givers have signed the consent forms for them to partake in the study.

3.6.5. Exclusion criteria

All teenage mothers who were not registered for schooling in the academic years 2020 to 2021.

All teenage mothers who did not sign the assent to partake in the study.

All teenage mothers whose parents, guardians or care givers did not sign the consent forms for them to partake in the study.

3.7. Data generation methods and process

Data generation is the process of choosing subjects and gathering data from them (Gray & Grove, 2021). The local church was utilized as a research venue for the interviews. The church was recommended by the research team as it was open for use by the community for different activities as the church members and the pastor believes in community development. The church was selected because it is quite, free from distractions and convenient for the participants. The interviews were conducted after school and on weekends to avoid interfering with school attendance. Before the commencement of actual interviews, the researcher established a relationship with the community members and the participants through the assistance of the community leader. The researcher generated data using multiple methods; individual face-to-face interviews and group discussions, iterative arts-

based reflective response and phone calls as they are more appropriate for qualitative research. Individual interviews offered a degree of depth and detail on each participant while the power of the focus group was the variety of different viewpoints and experiences that participants divulged during the interactive discussion (Flick, 2018). The interview was initiated by open ended questions such as;

“What learning support did you receive during the COVID-19 lockdown? How do you feel about the support that you have received?”

Further probes were given to seek more clarity and understanding. The participants were able to express themselves freely through open ended questions, while arts-based methods generated deep insights into the participants' lived experiences and views that went beyond rational cognitive approaches (van der Vaart *et al.*, 2018). In the beginning, it was not easy to engage the participants in arts-based so it took some effort to encourage them. The researcher investigated why the participants were reluctant to utilize art-based and discovered that most participants thought that they were expected to draw perfect pictures.

After a thorough explanation and encouragement, the participants eventually felt free to engage in arts-based and were able to express themselves through drawings. According to Weller *et al.* (2018), open-ended questions allow the researcher to explore issues in depth, to understand processes and to identify possible reasons of observed correlations. Open-ended questions further allowed the participants to respond freely without being restricted. Furthermore, the participants were asked probing questions to get clarity and understanding of arts-based pictures used. These allowed the researcher to obtain rich information from the teenage mothers.

The researcher used unstructured interviews to answer the research questions. The researcher started with face to face interviews to create a dialogue with the teenage mothers. Eleven (11) face to face interviews were conducted with each interview lasting between 20-30 minutes each. Interviews were conducted in the church to ensure privacy. English, Sepedi as well as Tshivenda were used to interview the participants as per their preferred language. The researcher initially did not plan to use Sepedi but most teenagers suggested that Sepedi should also be used because they are well conversant with the language. This was done to respect their right of

choice and freedom to participate as they wish. This helped in building rapport and trust. The challenges that the researcher encountered during the interviews are as follows; some participants were not responding to questions as expected, one participant was laughing throughout the interview for no apparent reason, some participants left before the interviews could even start and lastly one participant had to stop the interviews in the middle due to an emergency at home. To show respect, the spirit of Ubuntu and promote dignity, the researcher and the assistant stopped the interviews and accompanied the participant home to attend to the emergency. Another method that the researcher utilized was focus groups for those teenage mothers who were comfortable to share their stories with other teenage mothers.

The researcher had two group discussions with five and six teenage mothers per group. In each group, the discussion lasted approximately 50 minutes. Ground rules were set by both the participants and the researcher before the commencement of the group discussions. The researcher facilitated the group discussions with the help of the research assistant. The researcher also modeled the behaviour and attitudes that the participants were expected to employ during the group discussions. Both verbal and non-verbal cues were observed and responded to appropriately. The researcher and the participants reflected on and evaluated the generated data throughout the process. By utilizing participatory arts-based methods, the researcher was able to capture the complex texture of teenage mothers' lived experiences and explored the connections between nature and culture (Lopez *et al.*, 2018). The participants were encouraged to express themselves through art.

3.8. Data analysis

Eldridge (2017) noted that data analysis integrates observation and language to cultivate an in-depth description of the results. The researcher generated and analyzed data concurrently as PAR recognizes the need to include participants in all phases of the study (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). This promoted accessibility and a sense of ownership of the findings to the participants. The researcher went through the generated data and visual art obtained from the participants to analyze and create the logic of the facts. The researcher adopted inductive reasoning approach to analyze data. In the first stage of inductive reasoning, the researcher observed the

generated data followed by the seeking of patterns and lastly developing general conclusions (Park *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the researcher adopted Braun and Clarke framework of thematic analysis, a method of qualitative data analysis as cited in Kiger *et al.* (2020). The steps included: familiarization of data, generation of codes, combining codes into themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report

First step: Familiarization of data

The researcher assembled all collected data and transferred the audio from the cell phone recorder to the laptop. The pictures were scanned from paper to the laptop and all sources of data were labeled. The demographic data of the participants were also labeled. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated from Tshivhenda to English.

Second step: Generation of codes

The researchers' journey from empirical data to raw representation is reflected in the coding process (Brailas *et al.*, 2023). During this phase, the researcher read through the generated data and marked all thoughts that emerged from the data and assigned codes.

Third step: Generating themes

An interesting or significant aspect of the data and/or research question is captured by a theme, as indicated by Maguire and Delahunt (2017). The researchers in this case used the generated codes to categorize the data into broader themes or categories.

Fourth step: Reviewing themes

Research ensues in this step, which involves reviewing, modifying and developing preliminary themes. The process involves analysing all extracted extracts for each theme and determining whether they are consistent with one another (Dawadi, 2020). To confirm whether the themes fit the dataset, the researcher reviewed the

entire dataset and coded any extra data within themes that had been overlooked before coding.

Fifth step: Defining and naming themes

In defining themes, the researcher must figure out what each one means and how it assists in understanding the data and naming the theme involves coming up with a name that is simple and understandable. Two subordinate themes, six themes and 10 sub-themes emerged from the generated data.

Sixth step: Producing a report

The writing-up process involves weaving together the analytical description with clear data extracts to convey to the reader a clear and convincing narrative about the data and contextualize it in relation to existing research. The research findings were then analysed and written up by the researcher after defining and naming the themes.

Measures to ensure trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the study was accomplished by applying Lincoln and Guba strategies as cited in Nowell *et al.* (2017). The strategies are: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. The full details of these strategies are provided below.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in the accuracy of the findings (Flick, 2017). The researcher utilized several sources and engaged with the participants as some of the methods to ensure credibility (Stahl & King, 2020). In this study, the researcher established credibility through interaction with the participants for a period of four(4) months, from March to June 2023 and developing a sense of trust during interviews. The data were generated using different methods such as in-depth interviews and field notes. Audio recordings were also done. The researcher utilized the same interview guide throughout the process of the study.

Dependability

Dependability denotes a provision of access to data that demonstrates the emergence of hypothesis and changes in understandings (Flick, 2017). Credibility can be demonstrated by an audit trail (Nieswiadomy & Bailey, 2018). The verbatim transcription of the audiotape recordings and field notes are kept safe and reviewed to provide an audit trail. The researcher and the supervisor are the only people having access to the audiotapes.

Transferability

Transferability is a way of making the research findings useful in other contexts, thereby extending the findings beyond the researcher's data (Leavy, 2017). The researcher employed thick description technique to provide detailed descriptions and interpretations of the situations observed by the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This provided a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of cultural background and setting in which they live. The researcher ensured transferability of the results by describing the research setting and processes thus confirming the transferability and authenticity of the study.

Conformability

Conformability refers to the degree to which the findings of the research study could be used by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It was established that the generated data were a true reflection of the participants by allowing participants to confirm the themes, also known as member-checking. (Motulsky, 2021). In order to ensure consistency, the researcher and co-coder independently coded the transcripts, then compared them and consolidated them after discussion (Busetto *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the researcher ensured that the objectives correlate with the research questions. The generated data and findings were shared with the supervisor to ensure accuracy.

3.9. Ethical considerations

All kinds of research are underpinned by the key ethical principle that research should be overtly and participants should be informed about a study and provides consent before they are engaged in the research process (Flick, 2018). Ethical

norms ensure that researchers are held accountable to the public (Resnik, 2020). Before the commencement of the study, the researcher obtained permission to conduct it from the tribal authority (**Appendix K**) where the study was conducted, followed by an ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC), Protocol reference No. HSSREC/00005097/2022. The following research ethics has been considered in the study: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, beneficence, respect and justice, fair recruitment of participants, and the social value of the research.

3.9.1. Informed consent

Nieswiadomy and Bailey (2018) state that informed consent concerns a participant's participation in research in which they have full understanding of the study before the study begins so that the informed decision to partake in the study can be taken. The researcher obtained permission to conduct a study from the tribal authority (**Appendix A**). The purpose of the study including its objectives was explained to the participants to ensure voluntary participation. Informed written consent (**Appendix C**) for participants over the age of 18 and assent (**Appendix D**) for participants under the age of 18 were signed by participants before taking part in the study.

The parents of the participants under the age of 18 also signed informed written consent (**Appendix B**) for their children to participate. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they have the right to refuse participation and no penalties will be imposed. The participants may also withdraw from the research at any time of the study without giving any reasons and no penalties will be imposed. The researcher or any other person did not coerce or force the participants to participate in the study.

These principles of informed consent were adhered to:

Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality relates to an attempt to take away from the research records any elements that might indicate the participants' identities (Lune & Berg, 2018). Anonymity states that the participants' names' cannot be linked by the researcher to the responses (Lune & Berg, 2018). The researcher ensured that any information that might lead to the disclosing of participants' identities is not revealed during the

process of the study. The pseudonyms were used instead of real names and the real names will never appear anywhere in the report to protect the identities of the participants.

Beneficence, respect and justice

The study posed neither harm nor discomfort to the participants. The researcher ensured the principle of respect and justice by respecting the rights and dignity of the participants throughout the study process. The participants were treated fairly and equally and the researcher will adhere to information provided in the information leaflets (**Appendix B & C**). The researcher respected the culture, norms and beliefs of the participants without imposing her own. Therefore, the researcher learned and customized herself with the cultural matters of the community before we could commence with the study. The researcher learned how to greet and behave in the tribal authority and went down and slept on the floor to greet the Queen. Moreover, to ensure respect and justice for teenage mothers, the researcher generated data during school holidays, after school hours and on weekends only. The data were only generated on agreed times between the researcher and the teenage mothers. The participants participated in the study willingly and they were made aware of their right to quit the study at any time of the research.

Fair recruitment of participants

The participants were recruited equitably and selected for reasons directly related to the problem being studied (Gray & Grove, 2021). The researcher was guided by the inclusion criteria to invite participants to partake in the study. The researcher ensured the principles of community engagement by establishing a research committee comprising of stakeholders and community members and they were involved in all aspects of the research process (Musesengwa & Chimbari, 2017; Key *et al.*, 2018). The researcher did not recruit the participants personally, instead an open invitation was made using information leaflets that were circulated during community gatherings by community leaders. (**Appendix B and C**). The snowballing method was utilized whereby the recruited teenage mothers referred other teenage mothers.

Social value of the research

The Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) (2016) refer to social value as the relevance of the information that a study is likely to produce. The social value in research protects the participants or community from harm. To enhance social value, the researcher established a collaborative partnership with the community members and stakeholders and respected the local culture and norms (Lutge *et al.*, 2017). The researcher observed the social norms and culture of the community by conducting the study honestly and with respect.

3.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter delineated the research methodology that was employed to explore the learning support received by teenage mothers during the coronavirus disease lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. The study is positioned within a transformative paradigm which is reasonably connected to qualitative, critical participatory action research. The PAR is reasoned to be the most fruitful form of research design for dealing with social problems. In this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative, critical participatory action research through community engagement approach. Arts based participatory research was also employed. Through community engagement, the researcher established a collaborative relationship with community members, promoting democracy and inclusion. An arts-based approach was used in the study to improve constructive inclusion of teenage mothers' voices and to evoke emotion, cultivate empathy, capture the multisensory nature of lived experiences and promote self-reflection and awareness of environmental change in teenage mothers (Mudau & Chiya, 2023).

The study was conducted in the Makhado municipality in the Vhembe district, Limpopo province. The population in this study consisted of all teenage mothers who attended school in the academic year 2020-2021 in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. The data were generated through semi structured group and individual interviews as well as drawings. The thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. The researcher adopted the Lincoln and Cuba framework to ensure trustworthiness. The informed consent was obtained from all participants. The next chapter will deliberate on the study findings and discussions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the teaching and learning support teenage mothers received during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. Community based approach was embraced in this undertaking. The study employed a qualitative, arts-based participatory action research to generate data through individual interviews and focused group discussions with teenage mothers at the Makhado municipality. The chapter will unfold by presenting and analyzing the results of the study according to the themes and categories that emerged from the generated data and discussions based on the findings.

4.2 Demographic profile of the participants

The study participants were eleven (11) teenage mothers from Molapo (Pseudonym) village in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. The snowball and purposive sampling were used to recruit the participants. The teenage mothers that were interviewed were between the ages of 17 and 19 years. All teenage mothers fell pregnant before their 18th birthdays. Furthermore, all eleven (11) teenage mothers indicated that they live in extended families as they all still dependent on their parents and grandparents. All participants had unplanned pregnancies and they were not married. Ten (10) of the participants were first time mothers while one had experienced two repeat pregnancies, the first pregnancy was at the age of 15 and the second one at the age of 17. The participants' children were between the ages of 1 and 5 years and still need continuous childrearing. Nine participants were still in school; one passed grade 12 and one failed grade 12 and dropped out of school. Table 4.1 signifies the summary of the demographic data for all the participants who were interviewed in this study.

Table 4.1: Demographic data of the participants

Participants's number	Pseudonyms	Age	Age when gave birth	Age of the child in months	Number of kids	Education level during COVID-19	Breadwinner in the family
1.	Blessing	18	17	15	1	10	Brother
2.	Karabo	18	16	18	1	10	Both parents
3.	Lerato	17	15	26	1	9	Mother
4.	Nthabi	19	17	30	1	12	Father
5.	Lulu	19	15	63, 27	2	12	Father
6.	Mpho	19	16	26	1	12	Both parents
7.	Nonki	18	17	22	1	11	Mother
8.	Lebo	17	15	29	1	9	Grandmother
9.	Lucy	18	16	31	1	11	Father
10.	Stella	17	16	19	1	10	Mother
11.	Mary	17	14	27	1	11	Child support grants

4.3 Thematic presentation of study findings

The researcher employed Braun and Clark's (2006) six steps of thematic data analysis. The steps include familiarizing, generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining and naming themes and producing report. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim during the process of the data analysis. The data from both the audio-recorded transcriptions were assembled and organized according to objectives of the study. Data were then analysed by the researcher to identify ideologies, themes, and sub-themes. The researcher commenced with the analysis by relooking at the study research questions and objectives to ensure that the analysis is framed to inform these. Afterwards, the data were coded and categorized

according to the themes that emerged. The researcher analysed and interpreted the superordinate themes, themes, sub-themes and perceptions to develop conclusions and recommendations. Superordinate themes, themes and sub-themes are discussed next and are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Superordinate theme, themes and sub-themes emerging from the findings

Superordinate theme	Themes	Sub-themes
1. Learning support	1.1 Human resource support	1.1.1 Family support 1.1.2 Community support
	1.2 Media support	1.2.1 TV lessons and Radio lessons 1.1.2 WhatsApp and phone lessons
	1.3 School based support	1.3.1 Teacher support
	1.4 Emotional support	1.4.1 Positive self-concept
2. Learning conditions	2.1 Changed school patterns	2.1.1 COVID-19 related school closure 2.1.2 Few days of schooling
	2.2 Child related Challenges	2.2.1 Child relief at home to continue learning 2.2.2 Inability to balance motherhood and learning

The results of the study are presented based on superordinate themes, themes and subthemes. Two (2) superordinate themes, six (6) themes and ten (10) sub-themes were generated from the results. The first superordinate theme, which is learning support generated human resource support, media support, school based support and emotional support themes. In addition, six (6) subthemes emerged from the themes (detailed will be given below). The second superordinate theme, which is learning conditions generated two (2) themes; changed school patterns and challenges experienced. Furthermore, four (4) subthemes emerged. The themes

were illustrated in Table 4.2 and discussed in detail below, with reference to existing literature.

4.3.1 Learning support

The first superordinate theme that emerged from the participatory arts-based and interview findings was learning support. Four (4) themes and eight (6) sub-themes were generated and each sub-theme will be discussed below. Every learner need to be supported in order to thrive in his studies, more so, teenage mothers needs extra support as they juggle motherhood and learning.

4.3.1.1 Human resource support

Two sub-themes were generated from human resource theme; namely, family support and community support. The support from family members as well as community members is of great value in assisting the teenage mothers to cope with mothering and schooling.

4.3.1.1.1 Family support

The participants revealed mixed responses on the support received from their families. Most teenage mothers were given some support by their parents, grandmothers and siblings. However, some indicated that the support that they have received was not adequate. The participants indicated that their parents, grandmothers, siblings, cousins and child-father were assisting with babysitting, child needs and learning needs. These are supported by the following quote from Karabo:

“My grandmother used to take care of my child and I could leave her with my child while I was studying. She never gave me problems in babysitting”.

A similar view was also shared by Mpho stating that:

“My parents would do both, like on days were she is crying at night, my mom would come and take her”.

Nonki further indicated that:

“My mom would give me time to study. She eventually started taking care of her like her own; I’m not given much responsibility towards the child”.

On the contrary, some teenage mothers revealed that they did not get support or the support they have received was inadequate. In agreeing with the above findings one participant had the following to say:

Lerato: “I only had time when my mother came back from work or when my sister is around and willing to baby sit that’s when I could have time to study”.

Nthabi further revealed that she sometimes had to skip classes because there was no one to take care of the baby:

“I used to take 4 to 5 days without going to school because I was taking care of the child”.

Family support plays an important role in the well-being of any teenager and for teenage mothers it is even more important. The countenance by the participants is in line with a Kenyan study that states that a strong support mechanism is vital in assisting teenage mothers to continue with their studies (Okondo, 2022). Bukhosini’s (2019) findings suggests that family support is crucial to learning mothers in order to successfully manage motherhood and learning. In spite of the fact that teenage mothers need to learn from their experiences and face their responsibilities, more support structures are clearly needed in order to continue with their studies. Furthermore, social support for teenage mothers is needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number four on inclusive and equitable education (SDG Report, 2022). Moreover, achieving SDG 4 is crucial in achieving SDG 3, specifically in ensuring universal access to reproductive health care services (Lawrence *et al.*, 2020). The participants showed that their mothers and grandmothers played a major role in taking care of the babies while studying. This aligned with an African approach that it takes a village to raise a child. This study findings corroborates the study conducted in the Philippines which reported that many teenage mothers received strong support from their parents and siblings (Pueyo, 2022). Moreover, this was more needed during the COVID-19 crisis as the creches and schools were closed whereas the teenage mothers were expected to continue to learn like other teenagers.

While most participants reported that their fathers were present in their lives, none mentioned that they assisted with babysitting. The lack of assistance in child-caring was aligned with the findings by Khulu, Sengane and Mudau (2022) that fathers are mostly present but absent because of the gendered role of childcare. Generally, fathers are known to provide for families but not caring for children (Taylor, Guy-Walls, Wilkerson & Addae, 2019; Kisiangani *et al.*, 2020). In a recent study by Haufik (2023), it was indicated that teenage mothers who are supported by family are able to continue with their education.

Similarly, the teenage mothers who had the significant others in their lives who accepted and supported them during their trying time were able to progress to the next grades despite their challenges (Pueyo, 2022). Thus, it was evident in this study that most students managed to progress to the subsequent grades despite the challenges encountered. Moreover, according to Erfina *et al.* (2022), mothers and grandmothers played a significant role in assisting teenage mothers in taking care of their babies. Additionally, Sriyasak *et al.* (2018) stated that a teenage mother's biological mother is the primary caregiver and co-parent.

The finding of the study further revealed that all teenage mothers were still dependent on their families. The participants indicated that their parents are financially responsible for both the teenage mother and the child. The findings further revealed that their parents were the major source of support for baby's needs and learning materials such as study guides. However, the findings of this study do not support the previous research that was conducted in Rwanda, which stated that most teenage mothers lost sponsorship from their parents after conceiving (Gatsinzi, 2022). As indicated by the narratives from the participants, the families continued to support the teenage mothers both socially and financially during and post-delivery. Additionally, it was evident that some baby daddies were providing financial support to their children and this support plays an important role in relieving the burden. According to this study, some baby daddies were not able to support the teenage mothers because they were not working while some were no longer in relationships with the teenage mothers. For example, Blessing when asked whether the child's father is supporting her and the child, reported that:

"No, he does not support. He does not work".

Although it was evident that some baby daddies provided financial support, however, they did not provide social support. This finding agrees with Gatsini's (2020) results which showed that teenage mothers rarely received support from fathers of their children. In addition, Dutta *et al.* (2022) reported that a small number of fathers who were around during and after pregnancy, provided inadequate support to teenage mothers. Bukhosini (2019) argues that both family and baby daddy's support is crucial to student mothers 'successful management of being student mother'. On the other hand, the absence of fathers in this study could be attributed to the fact that teenage mothers are not married and not living with their baby's fathers. Deeper analysis of the narratives displays that there were social networks of support that consists of mothers, grandmothers and families of the father of the children.

However, many of the support networks were not consistent to all the participants which impacted on their learning. As Spaul and van der Berg (2020) pointed out, the main problems with South African regulations following the lockdown was that the reopening of the economy was not accompanied by an adjustment in schools and crèches. Interestingly, this study supports this view, so some participants had to wait for their mothers to come home from work before they could help babysit. Teenage mothers who missed school remain behind other students in academic programmes hence two teenage mothers had to repeat their grades due to the frequent interruption of their studies. Overall, these findings clearly demonstrate that although most teenage mothers were supported by their families to continue with their studies; however, the support was not consistent due to a range of reasons, including working mothers, competing demands on their time and fragile mothers or grandmothers.

4.3.1.1.2 Community support

The findings of this study show that some participants did receive some form of support from community members with regard to child rearing to allow them to continue learning during the corona virus lockdown. However, not all participants shared the same sentiments. Some participants expressed how they struggled to get assistance from community members. One individual stated that:

Nthabi: "There was one of my neighbours who used to come and take the child at times for three days and even sleeping with the child and tell me that I should be studying".

And another participant commended :

Stella: "I took my baby to someone in the village to look after her, so that I can attend school during rotation".

Stella further indicated that it was beneficial due to the fact that it assisted her to study in the evening without disturbances. By contrast, some participants reported that they did not receive any form of support with regard to learning from community members. One participant commended that:

Lulu: "Nothing was done at community level because everyone was focused on lockdown".

Surprisingly, Lulu further indicated that:

"Not even one church helped me".

Another participant alluded to the notion when asked whether she received any support from the community indicating that:

Blessing: "There was no one who helped me".

There is this quote in African culture that says it takes a community to raise a child. This stems from Ubuntu which is an African way of assisting each other. It has been observed that motherhood is a challenge that requires the support and involvement of the community regardless of the age of the mother. The community in which the teenage mother stays has an impact on their lives. Therefore, this is especially important for teenage mothers as they are expected to be mothers and students simultaneously. This current study established that some teenagers were assisted by their neighbours about childminding which enabled them to continue learning. Thus, demonstrating the spirit of Ubuntu, which is an indigenous African philosophy. Africans are known to be caring and supportive of each other and are driven by the spirit of togetherness and social cohesion (Mudau, 2021). Among Africans, a family is not parents and their biological kids but includes everyone in the extended relations. Ubuntu is all about caring, support and feeling for each other (Adejumo-

Ayibiowu, 2021). In the case of supporting TMs by taking care of the child, this is because among Africans raising a child is not only a direct family responsibility but a general community responsibility (Ekwoaba, 2019).

However, contrary to expectations, the study revealed that some participants did not receive any support from community members. One participant indicated that even the church did not assist which is surprising because the church is regarded as the place where the vulnerable are taken care of. Furthermore, since the creches were closed, there were no community resources available to support teenage mothers with child-rearing so they could continue learning. For teenage mothers, it became even more difficult when their parents were working and there was no nanny at home to look after the child.

4.3.1.2 Media support

Media support is the second theme that emerged from the participatory arts-based and interviews findings. Two sub-themes emerged from aforementioned theme; namely, TV and radio lessons, and WhatsApp and phone lessons and it is discussed below.

4.3.1.2.1. TV and radio lesson

During interviews, most participants when asked how they accessed lessons during the COVID-19 lockdown they indicated that the most common media that was used to access lessons was TV and radio. Blessing indicated in a drawing in Figure 1 that she was not able to go to school because she was pregnant and she was learning through TV and radio during the COVID-19 lockdown and it made her lag behind with school work.

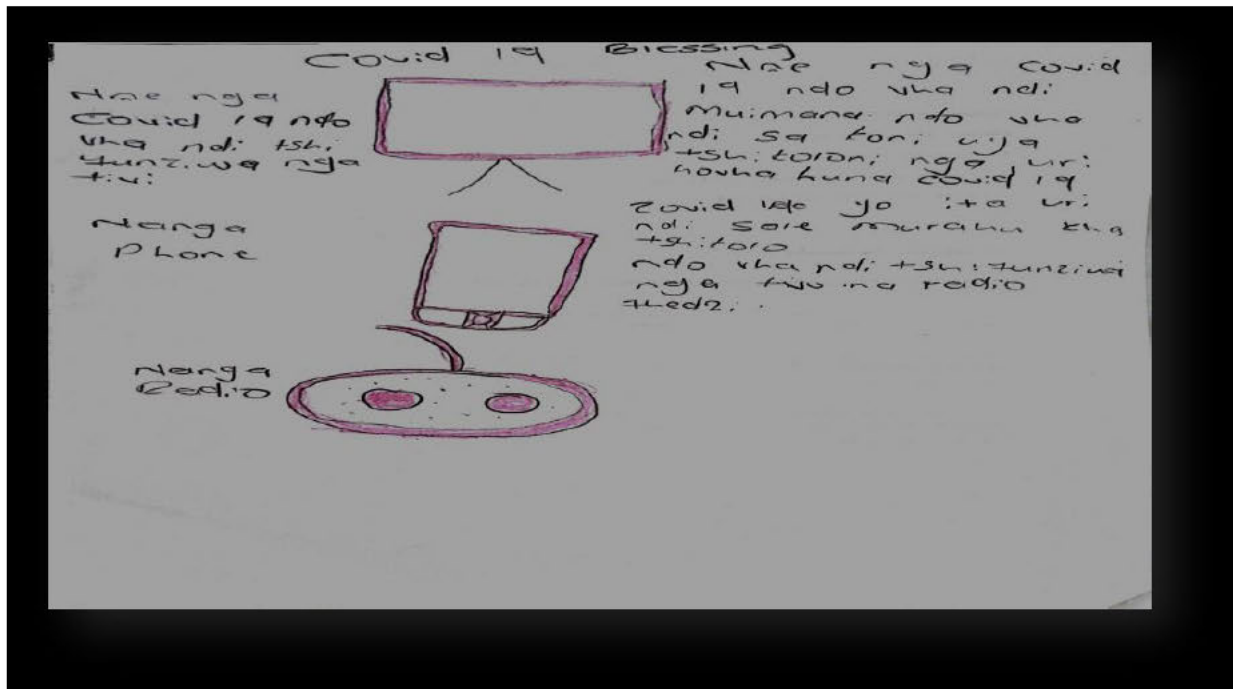


Figure 1: Blessing

Nne nga COVID-19 ndo vha ndi tshi funziwa nga TV, nanga phone, nanga radio. nne nga COVID-19 ndo vha ndi muimana ndo vha ndi sa koni uya stshikoloni nga uri hovha huna COVID-19. COVID-19 yo ita uri ndi sale murahu kha tshikolo. Ndo vha ndi tshi funziwa nga TV na radio fedzi

Translation: *I was learning through TV, phone and radio during COVID-19. I was pregnant during COVID. I was not able to go to school because there was COVID. COVID made me lag behind with schooling. I was learning through TV and radio only.*

Another participant, Lucy illustrated with a drawing:

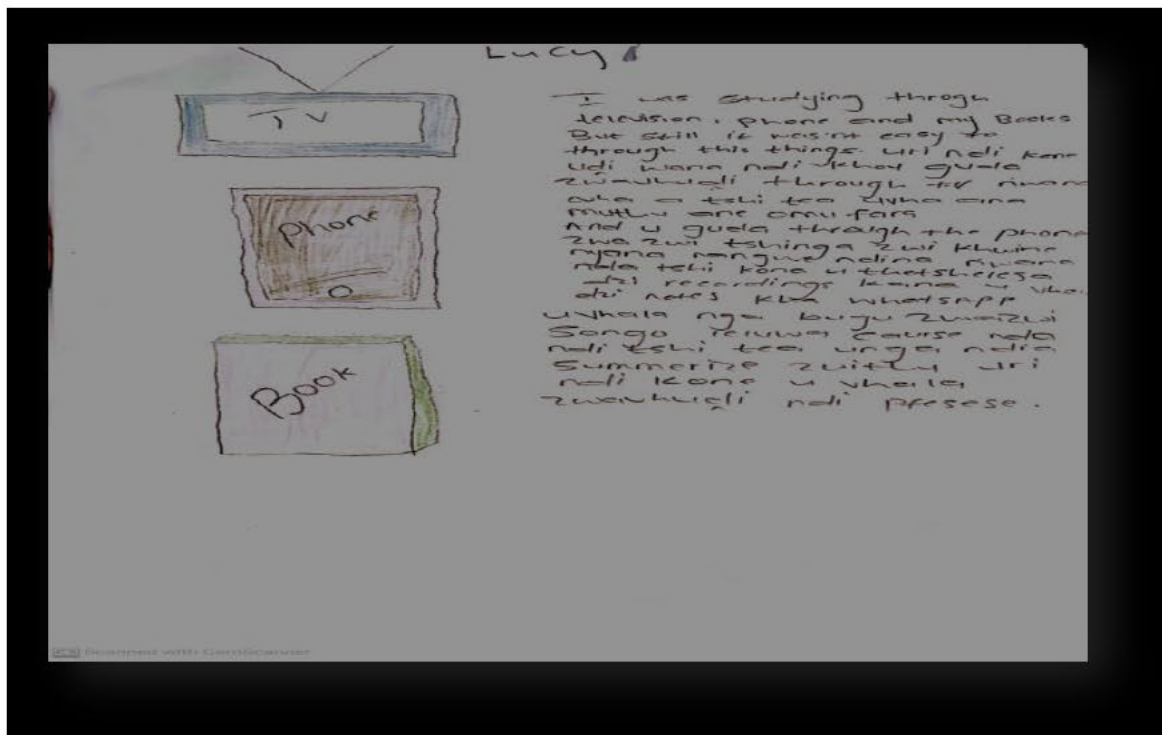


Figure 2. Lucy

I was studying through television, phone, and my books but still it wasn't easy through these things. Uri ndi kone udi wana ndi khou guda zwavhudi through TV nwana o ba a tshi tea uvha ana muthu ane au fara. And u guda through the phone zwa zwi tshinga zwi khwine nyana nangwe ndina dzi recordings kana u vhala dzi note kha Whatsapp. U vhala nga bugu zwazwi songo leluwa cause nda ndi tshi tea unga ndia summarize zwithu uri ndi kone u vhala zwavhudi ndi pfesese.

Translation: I was studying through television, phone, and my books but still it wasn't easy through these things. For me to be able to study through TV, the baby was supposed to be with someone. And studying through phone was better. I was able to listen to the recordings or read notes on WhatsApp. Reading books was not simple because I was supposed to summarize so that I can read well and understand.

Another participant also indicated that:

Lulu: "There was a channel on DSTV with some TV lessons and I used to attend mathematics literacy and geography because I do mathematics literacy. I would write notes while I watched the lessons"

Unexpectedly, one participant mentioned that:

Stella: "I had a TV at home, but I did not have time to watch it for learning I only had time for my books and baby"

The closure of schools due to the lockdown necessitated the DBE in South Africa to move to remote learning. TV and radio stations were utilized to offer virtual lessons. Virtual lessons were much needed in order to mitigate learning loss (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020). However, the current study revealed that although the teenage mothers had access to media such as TV and radio where lessons were broadcasted, nevertheless, most of the teenage mothers were not benefiting effectively from the broadcasted lessons. The participants alluded that it was difficult to understand the lessons that were offered on TV and radio as there were no teachers to explain further and provide feedback.

Similarly, the study that was conducted in Zimbabwe reported that students struggled to understand some content when there was no one to assist them (Mokwetsi, 2020). Moreover, only a few subjects were broadcast which made it even harder for teenage mothers as they had to learn others subjects on their own. Ultimately, this means that some participants had low motivation and self-efficacy due to the absence of teachers. This was challenging to most teenage mothers because their parents could not assist due to low literacy levels. Reddy *et al.* (2020) attesting to this finding indicated that most families in South Africa do not have literate adults who can assist learners with school work at home.

It was challenging for most teenage mothers to understand subjects such as mathematics without the interaction between the teacher and the learner. Mathematics is best learned through face-to-face interaction between the teacher and student (Mukuka & Mulenga, 2021). The teenage mothers expressed that it was better to learn from school rather than on TV and radio because the children would frequently disturb them while busy attending lessons as the creches were also closed. It became difficult to concentrate after such disturbances. Sometimes teenage mothers were forced to miss the lesson when there was no one to assist with child-rearing. Furthermore, the participants had to share the TV or radio with siblings resulting in them missing some lessons while the siblings were also attending lessons. The teenage mothers highlighted that the TV and radio lessons

were not interactive hence they were boring sometimes. As a result of the inability of parents to assist with their children's school work, the lack of communication between the teacher and student, as well as a lack of feedback, teenage mothers were denied the opportunity to continue learning when COVID-19 was in progress. The health of teenage mothers was impacted by the lack of access to education, which is one of the social determinants of health (WHO, 2023). Furthermore, the WHO (2017) argues that supporting high-quality education for all shall improve health and health equity. In essence, a strong collaboration between the DoH and DoBE is vital in achieving both the educational and health needs of teenage mothers.

4.3.1.2.2 WhatsApp and phone learning

The participants all agreed that they had to change from traditional face to face method to online platforms because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Surprisingly, the study shows that most participants had smart phones, however, the variety of perspectives were expressed by the participants with regard to data bundles to access lessons on WhatsApp. Some participants argued that their parents were able to buy data bundles for them while others indicated that they did not have data bundles to access WhatsApp lessons. Some participants attribute to this by saying:

Karabo: "I used my cell phone a lot. I used to get into Whatsapp, there was this teacher who used to prepare lessons and send them to me on Whatsapp it was helpful for me".

Lerato: "There were Whatsapp groups where teachers record a lesson and send to us some notes so that we can be studying at home".

Mpho in support of the aforementioned quotes responded using participatory art indicated that she was not learning much from WhatsApp because she could not understand the content posted by teachers; she needed someone to explain so that she could comprehend. She also reported that learning from TV was better due to the explanations that were provided.

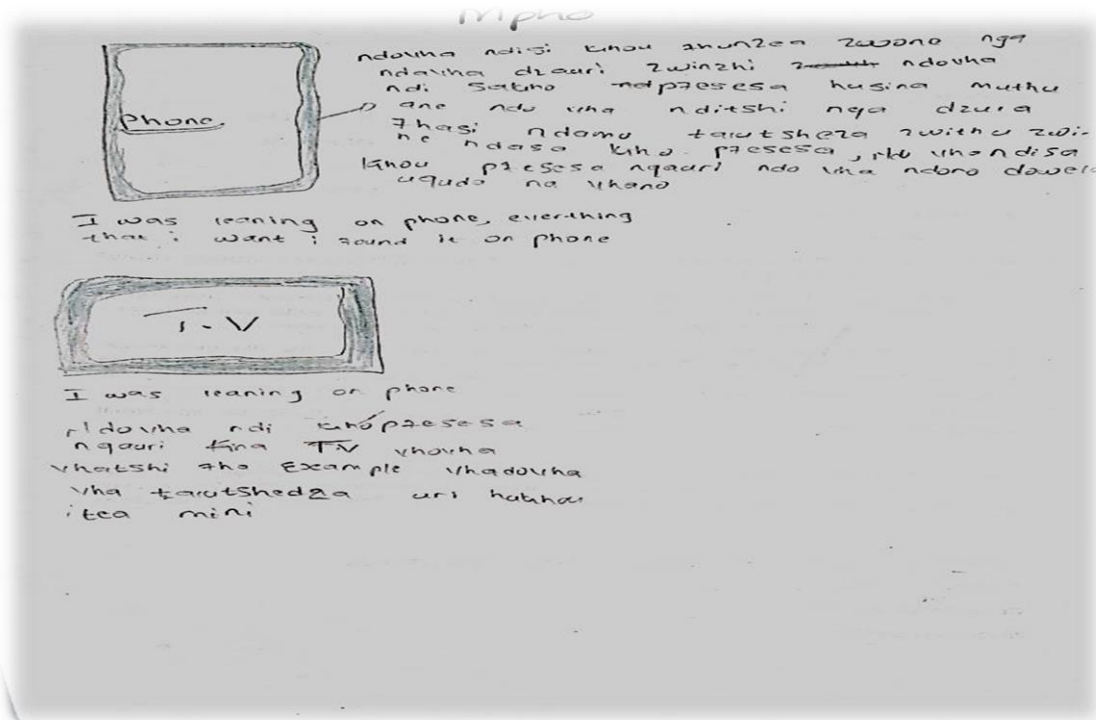


Figure 3. Mpho

Ndovha ndisi khou fhunzea zwone nga ndavha dzauri zwinzhi ndovha ndi sakho pfelesa husina muthu ane ndo vha nditshi nga dzula fhasi ndamu talutshera zwithu zwine ndaso khou pfelesa, vhoneisa khou pfelesa ngauri ndo vha ndono dowela uguda na vha. I was leaning on phone, everything that I want I found it on phone. Ndovha ndi khopfelesa ngauri kha TV vhovha vhatshi fha example vhadovha vha talutshedza uri hakhou itea mini.

Translation: I was not learning because I did not understand a lot of things well there was no one whom I can sit with and explain what I did not understand, I did not understand because I was used to learning with people. I was learning on phone, everything that I want I found on phone. It understand because on TV they were giving examples and explaining what was happening.

Some participants, by contrast, indicated that they were not able to access WhatsApp lessons despite having smartphones. Other participants never had smartphones making it impossible for them to learn from home. This is due to the fact that their parents could not afford smartphones and data bundles. Talking about this matter, one participant indicated that:

Stella: "I did not even have a smartphone to study online; it was just a book only. If there was certain information that was posted on Whatsapp group I would then ask someone at school in the morning to update me with the work".

In agreement with Stella, one participant indicated that she was not able to access WhatsApp lessons when asked why. Then the participant responded by saying:

Mary: "I was frustrated because no one bought me data bundles".

The participant additionally indicated that she could not afford these because her mother was not working and they rely on child support grants.

The imposed lockdown necessitated the transition from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning platforms. All learners including teenage mothers, regardless of their socio-economic status were expected to continue learning through online platforms while at home. Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that most participants had smartphones to access WhatsApp lessons. The findings further reveal that some participants were able to access WhatsApp lessons. However, most participants revealed that WhatsApp lessons were not fully engaging and they had difficulty understanding the content that was offered. Moreover, not all subjects were presented on WhatsApp making it impossible for teenage mothers to learn adequately during lockdown. This means that teenage mothers lacked meaningful teaching and learning.

In contrast, some participants struggled to access WhatsApp lessons due to the lack of data bundles. The findings revealed that some participants were not able to afford to buy data bundles hence they were unable to access WhatsApp lessons. Additionally, some participants could not afford smartphones to access WhatsApp lessons. Landa *et al.* (2021) in support of these findings indicated that South African learners from poor rural communities found it challenging to access online platforms and resources. Similarly, as highlighted in the literature review, Dube (2020) indicated that the cost of data is a hindrance to online learning. All of these led to disruption in the learning experiences of teenage mothers and widened the gap between the less privileged and privileged learners.

This finding corroborates the ideas of Adnan and Anwar (2020) who suggest that it was challenging for online learning to produce the desired results in rural areas. The

study by Barrot *et al.* (2021) further revealed the inequalities in the educational systems. Despite the mandatory reduction in data prices, Research ICT Africa (2020) reports that South Africans are still facing expensive data packages and lack internet-enabled devices and digital literacy, preventing them from going online. However, the observed differences between the privileged participants and the less privileged participants in this study are not significant. This is because two teenage mothers who repeated their grades fall within the privileged group. Moreover, most participants managed to progress to subsequent grades regardless of their socio-economic status. The findings of this study show that South Africa is still an unequal country where there is a huge gap between rural learners from poor communities and learners from urban areas. Furthermore, this proves that the country is still far behind about the deployment of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Therefore, the study concludes that these teenage mothers were denied an opportunity to engage in meaningful learning during the lockdown.

4.3.1.3. School-based support

The third theme that emerges from the findings is school based support. The theme has one sub-theme and will be discussed below. Every learner need to be supported in order to thrive in his/her studies, more so, teenage mothers needs extra support as they juggle motherhood and learning.

4.3.1.3.1 Teacher support

Mental well-being can be boosted by teacher support through the reduction of negative emotions and an increase in resilience. However, in this study, the most common view shared by the participants was that they did not receive support from their teachers or the support was minimal. Whilst the minority mentioned that few teachers assisted them with their learning, all agreed that the support was not enough. As the participants described the events surrounding teacher support, they indicated that:

Nthabi: "They (teachers) only send questions on Whatsapp then I answer" it was not enough at all because when I was responding to the questions sent over Whatsapp they did not respond back to me to show if the answer was right or wrong".

Lebo: "Teachers did not assist us during lockdown; there was no platform to continue with learning" "there was no whatsapp group created from school to learn".

Lebo further indicated that this was stressful because she did not understand the content while at home. The extracts below further support Lebo:

Blessing: "We were not taught. It was only life science that was taught that time. I did not pass those subjects because I was not getting any help on those subjects"

Karabo: "It was only one teacher who was assisting me with online lessons and out of 7 subjects only one was available for online learning"

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically transformed people's lives worldwide, including teachers and learners. It has led to substantial changes in how teachers provide their students with interaction and emotional support during school closures (Ye *et al.*, 2021). Teachers as well as parents had an important role in supporting teenage mothers in their distance learning endeavours. According to Bray *et al.* (2021), abundant support from teachers and a positive student-teacher relationship is associated with higher engagement in remote learning during school closure. In multiple ways, school engagement contributes to academic achievement. Furthermore, DUBY *et al.* (2022), suggest that teenage mothers who received support from teachers experienced fewer disturbances with teaching and learning and were able to understand the content adequately.

This study revealed that teenage mothers did not receive much-needed support from teachers about school work during the lockdown. Similarly, Naidoo *et al.*, (2021) indicated that teenage mothers receive limited support from school to assist them sail across barriers to curriculum. Online platforms were the main source of learning where teachers posted learning content, however, not all teachers and learners were prepared to utilise it. These findings are consistent with the study conducted in England, which stated that the shortage of internet infrastructure to support online teaching gave rise to many teachers being unprepared to provide remote teaching (Howard *et al.*, 2021).

Similarly, Dube (2020) suggested that most rural teachers in South Africa are not conversant with online learning apps, which made it challenging for them to assist learners. The current study established that the online learning platform was not inclusive to all learners, particularly teenage mothers residing in rural areas. It is

apparent from the learning challenges raised by the participants that the online platforms that were utilized by teachers to support the continuity of learning were insufficient and ineffectively implemented. This is in line with the study by Morongwe and Garidzai (2021) who postulated that the online learning excluded rural students from teaching and learning. In contrast, Azzi-Huck and Shmis (2020) reported that China managed to continue with education during school closures through distance learning and the internet.

According to the findings of this study, not all subjects were covered online hence the content was limited. Furthermore, it was difficult for most participants to understand the content that was offered due to a lack of supervision and guidance from the teachers. Additionally, the participants stated that it was even more challenging to understand complex subjects such as mathematics. These brought confusion to most teenage mothers. The absence of physical interaction among learners and teachers effectively leads to the lack of social relatedness that is regarded as vital for academic success (Saleh *et al.*, 2020). These findings are in agreement with Beteille *et al.*'s (2020) findings which showed that teachers and students were overwhelmed with new teaching methods and technologies. On the other hand, some participants had inadequate resources to access the online platforms

The participants felt left behind hence some participants had to repeat grades. Notwithstanding the South African government's effort to promote online teaching and learning, this study reveals that most schools and teachers were not prepared with the introduction of remote learning. The finding supports the research conducted in Saudi Arabia by Alharthi (2021) which showed that some schools were not ready to switch to e-learning. Some participants lacked tools of trade such as smartphones; consequently, the teaching and guiding part did not meet the expected outcomes. This, according to Dube (2020) was due to the abrupt switch from face-to-face to online learning modes. The lack of support for academic attainment or enhancement can be seen as a violation of basic human rights. As a result, young people are repeatedly exposed to the dangers of violence, lack of sexual independence, unemployment and poverty (Otegbayo *et al.*, 2023). As mentioned previously, there is more that needs to be done in South Africa to bridge the gap between the privileged and the less privileged.

4.3.1.4. Emotional support

The fourth theme that emerged from the findings is emotional support. It has one sub-theme and is discussed below. It is possible to establish a strong emotional foundation by bonding with parents and family members.

4.3.1.4.1 Positive self-concept

In this study, the findings indicated that the participants possessed a positive self-concept as a result of the emotional support that was received from parents, grandmothers and baby daddies. Most participants had a positive outlook regardless of the challenges encountered. The above was alluded to by these participants:

Blessing: "I saw it that there is no future without education, most of my family members did not go past grade 10. I want to change the situation at home".

Lerato: "I want to continue with my studies so that I may have a better future with my child. I don't want to struggle with my child and have my child live in poverty. When you get educated you can get a good job unlike when you are not educated were you will be living at mercy of other people. I also want to be in a position where I will be able to support myself and my child".

Another participant indicated that:

Lebo: "I have created a time table for myself at home to study and for the baby. I was coping because my baby slept for a long time, and I was doing my schoolwork at night while everybody was asleep".

A person's emotional support comes from the care, concern, empathy, love and trust that are provided by social support (Kort-Butler, 2017). The narratives above reveal that the support and encouragement that teenage mothers received from family member served as an additional motivation to strive for success despite many challenges. As Okore *et al.* (2021) argue, the lack of family support, forgiveness and acceptance negatively impacts teenage mothers' self-concept. Moreover, self-concept was identified as a factor influencing not only teenage mothers' confidence in their own decisions throughout the childrearing process but also their willingness to seek help from others (Kim *et al.*, 2020).

The participants reported that they could count on their family support which indicated acceptance. In addition to the encouragement that the participants received from family members, it is demonstrated that teenage mothers also received love and care. This promoted self-esteem and positive self-concept and inspired teenage mothers to continue learning. This boosted the confidence of the teenage mothers which enabled them to feel in control of issues. Similarly, Atoum and Al-Shoboul (2018) reported that the availability of emotional support may contribute to happiness, adaptation and harmony. Thus emotional support can significantly alleviate the stress experienced by teenage mothers. When teenage mothers are healthy, they will be able to continue learning well and take care of their children. The emotional wellness of teenage mothers is important because they will be able to make rational decisions about their own lives which benefits their children, family and the general community. Notwithstanding the challenges faced, the majority of the participants said that emotional support enabled them to continue learning.

As indicated previously, the study suggested that despite the challenges encountered, the families of the teenage mothers tried their level best to support the teenagers as much as possible. Due to these factors, self-esteem and self-efficacy were improved as well as motivation to continue learning despite the challenges of being a teenage mother and home-schooling. The findings support past research that suggests that parents can buffer adolescents from the impacts of their environment's stressors (Prime *et al.*, 2020; King *et al.*, 2017). Family emotional support plays a vital role in teenage mothers' self-esteem, decision-making, future direction as well as many aspects of their daily activities (Atoum & Al-Shoboul, 2018). As a result of the emotional support given to teenage mothers, they gained a positive outlook and believed they could still improve their situations. Groves *et al.* (2022) stated that adolescent mothers' re-entry trajectories are strongly affected by family members' provision of instrumental support.

In addition to improving teenage mothers' self-evaluation, social support can also lead to a healthier self-image and self-esteem (Qiaolan *et al.*, 2021). This was evident as most participants in the study further mentioned independence and escaping poverty as motivations for continuing their studies. Govender *et al.* (2020) suggests that education is one of the main reasons for adolescent mothers to

continue their education. Generally, teenage mothers displayed resilience and agency in how they were able to overcome the challenges they encountered because of the support they received from their families.

4.3.2. Learning conditions

The second major theme has two themes and seven sub-themes. Although most teenage mothers aspired to continue studying, the study found that they experienced many challenges with their learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. Based on the responses from the participants, two sub-themes are discussed.

4.3.2.1. Changed school patterns

Changed school patterns revealed that the COVID-19-related school closures led to few days of schooling. As discussed below.

4.3.2.1.1. COVID-19 related school closure

Schools including early development centres (ECDs) were forced to close to minimize the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. All learners were expected to learn from home. However, most participants reported that they were not learning or the learning opportunities were minimal during the school closures. This was alluded by these participants:

Stella: "In the time of corona was worse compared to before the pandemic because there was nothing that we learnt, it meant we had to study on our own".

Lucy: "They (teachers) were not teaching for long time during corona and we were behind with our schoolwork than before pandemic".

Another participant, Lulu, using participatory art resided a poem to indicate that she was not learning during school closures. She further reported that she was waiting for schools to reopen so that she could go back to school and learn. The poem is quoted below:

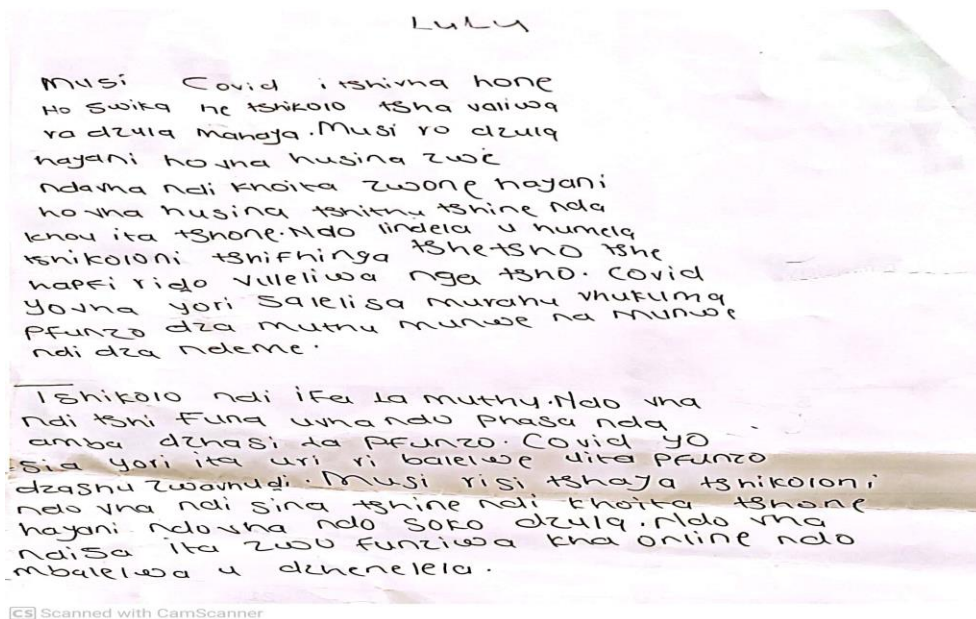


Figure 4. Lulu

Translations:

During the introduction of Covid

There came a time when schools were closed

We stayed at home. When we were at home there was nothing specific that we were doing

I waited to go back to school on the time we were promised to go back to school

Covid drew us back

Everyone's education is important

Education is an inheritance.

I wished to have passed and graduated

Covid drew us back our educational progress was delayed by covid

When I was at home there was nothing specific that I was doing

I failed to get online learning.

Like many countries in the world, the South African government, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 infections, various measures including the closure of schools and creches were implemented. All learners were expected to learn from home. As a result of the control measures, educational outcomes, mental health and social wellbeing could be adversely affected (WHO, 2021). The findings of this study

revealed that most participants were basically not learning or the learning opportunities were minimal during school closures. Most participants reported that contact teaching and learning was the preferred method of learning rather than remote learning. The teenage mothers felt isolated and stressed as they could not interact with their teachers and peers. This finding concurs with the study done by Lee (2020) indicating that school closures during the lockdown had a negative impact on the mental well being of the learners. Learning from home is associated with uncertainty and frustration due to the disruption of what students view as a normative teaching and learning experience and an opportunity for socialization (Jiao *et al.*, 2020).

For healthy development, schools provide functions beyond education that cannot be delivered online, such as interactions with peers (WHO, 2021). Some participants reported that they were doing nothing while at home and they only started learning when the schools were partially opened. The reasons for these difficulties included a lack of access to online platforms due to a shortage of ICT resources. According to Spaul and Van der Berg (2020), only a small percentage of South African learners have sufficient technological gadgets and network coverage to ensure continuity of learning during the lockdown. Similarly, Heng (2021) revealed that school closures exposed a digital divide and educational inequality in rural areas of Cambodia. Furthermore, Dube (2020) argues that remote learning discriminates against underprivileged learners. These made the teenage mother to be left behind with their learning since they were not able to learn during the lockdown period.

The teenage mothers indicated that the South African government could have ensured that all learners are provided with online resources for online access to promote continuity of education during the lockdown. There was a great deal of focus on placing health protocols to minimize the spread of COVID-19, yet health protocols did little to totally address the learning gap between learners who have access to distance learning and those without (Storey & Slavin, 2020). The learning experiences of teenage mothers were disrupted, broadening the gap between the privileged and less privileged learners. Munir (2021) pointed out that distance learning opportunities were not equally available to all children as not all households have the necessary facilities and financial resources to engage in online learning

activities. As previously indicated, the South African government and the DBE were proven not be ready for the sudden closure of schools, denying vulnerable teenage mothers their educational rights as stipulated in the Constitution, thus hindering the effort of global priorities aimed at promoting inclusive and equitable access to education for teenage girls (United Nations Statistics Division, 2020).

In its report on COVID-19, Dube (2020) highlights that the South African government encouraged online teaching and learning, but rural students were not considered. According to UNICEF (2021), being out of school does not only result in learning losses, but might also lead to mental distress and a reduction in social skills. The curriculum was also trimmed by the DBE to accommodate the available teaching days meaning the learners acquired less content than usual. The closure of schools in South Africa widened the already existing disparities in the education system (Dorne *et al.*, 2020). The overall findings of this study revealed that the teenage mothers were not given equal opportunity to transition from face to face to remote teaching and learning during school closures. The goal of Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is to realize the educational rights of all children, including the vulnerable by making schools inclusive centers of learning, care and support (SHP, 2012). However, based on the findings presented here, the study argues that the educational rights of the teenage mothers were violated due to unfavourable learning conditions, thus impacting on the health of teenage mothers and their children as lack of education which is key social determinant of health exposes individuals to unhealthy practices (WHO, 2023). Therefore, the provision of quality of education to teenage mothers may improve their socio-economic and health status.

4.3.2.1.2. Few days of schooling

According to UNICEF (2021), South African learners were up to one year behind with learning due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Rotational attendance of face to face classes was introduced to minimize further loss. Most participants reported that the learning exposure was not adequate during rotational classes. The participant attribute to this saying:

Nonki: "The beginning of the year we would go for two weeks and then stay at home for two weeks. We were being taught here and there but they were not teaching us a lot of things, we were just going".

Mary: Then we had rotational classes, and this didn't work for me because I needed more time to come to school so that I will understand more".

Another participant in support of the above mentioned quotes indicated that:

Blessing: "During lockdown things were not okay because I was pregnant and not going to school all the time. I was not feeling like I am a student because of not frequently attending school".

The shift to blended learning in response to the corona virus outbreak included rotational classes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while avoiding further loss of learning time. The schools around South Africa implemented a bi-weekly rotational program while others adopted daily rotational model. The learners were attending classes on alternative days or weeks. This study revealed that although learners were excited to go back to school, the excitement was short lived due to the fact that the time they had with teachers was limited, making it difficult for them to comprehend what was being taught. Additionally, Ximba (2021) reported that rotational timetables slowed down learning since disruptions in the school week affect students' ability to absorb and remember information. Moreover, the amount of content that was covered in class was not adequate to enhance teaching and learning. Most participants felt that the rotational classes were not beneficial as they were not learning much. The teenage mothers indicated that they were exposed to minimal learning opportunities meaning they were lagging behind and lost learning experiences.

The participants needed more time at school to supplement the time lost while at home. According to UNICEF (2021), learners lost 54% of learning time due to rotational attendance and sporadic school closures. As discussed previously, the loss of contact learning due to the closure of schools and the rotational attendance necessitated a trimming and re-organisation of the curriculum (Soudien *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the quality of education of teenage mothers was negatively impacted by rotational classes.

4.3.2.2. Child-related challenges

Although most teenage mothers aspired to continue studying, the current study found that they experienced many challenges as they juggled motherhood and school work. Teenage mothers faced increased responsibility and a change in lifestyle. Based on the responses from the participants, two sub-themes emerged.

4.3.2.2.1. Child relief at home to continue learning

The participants reported that even though their parents, grandmothers and siblings assisted them with baby-sitting, it was difficult to learn while child rearing. This was supported by the participants who stated that:

Lerato: "my mother was going to work; my sister was not always around so I was taking care of my child. I only had time when my mother come back from work or when my sister is around and willing to baby sit that's when I could have time to study".

Blessing: "when she (mother) was very sick, I was not going to school, she even decided to call the sister of my boyfriend to stay with us so that she will be taking care of the child when I go to school".

It is noted from the above statements that teenage mothers needed caregivers that will consistently assist them with child rearing so that they can continue learning. The above was alluded by other participant saying:

Mary: "I couldn't manage all these things and taking care of the baby, I would ask my mother to help me but sometimes it was not possible because she was busy with her personal things".

Lebo: "Having a baby at my age while at school is challenging because there is a lot of work, you have to wash dishes at home and the baby needs my attention".

The study findings indicate that becoming a mother increases teenage mothers' burden of responsibilities. Along with becoming mothers, they are still required to perform household tasks such as house chores just like other teenagers (Mangeli *et al.*, 2017; Iita, 2021). Moreover, teenage mothers are also learners and they are expected to keep up with the rest of the class. A lockdown imposed by the COVID-

19 worsened the already difficult situation since creches were closed, leaving teenage mothers to learn and care for their children at home. For those teenage mothers without strong social support, the situation was even worse. The participants reported being overwhelmed resulting in stress and poor concentration.

Based on this study findings, teenage mothers need support to deal with the new roles of being mothers while still learning. The study revealed that even though the teenage mothers had some form of support in terms of baby-sitting; the support was not adequate as they were still expected to assume the parental roles with regard to child rearing and also perform house chores. This is supported by Mathebula (2018) who stated that teenage mothers have to resume their mothering role as soon as they return from school and therefore have no time to concentrate on school work, leading to their failure. Similarly, Mangeli *et al.* (2017) stated that teenage mothers do not receive sufficient social support from home thus aggravating the challenges. The participants indicated taking unplanned regular breaks from their studies to attend to child needs. This means that their education often took a back seat to childrearing.

This negatively impacted on their concentration and also consumed a considerable amount of their study time. Teenage mothers experienced a reduction in educational attainment due to their dual responsibilities (Maemeko *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, educational attainment is a main predictor of health (Maslowsky *et al.*, 2021). According to Jochim *et al.* (2023), supporting adolescent mothers' educational attainment and timely return to school may be vital to interrupting intergenerational cycles of adversity. According to Raghupathi and Raghupathi (2020), tertiary education is critical in influencing infant mortality, life expectancy, child vaccination and enrolment rates. Therefore, higher education may enable teenage mothers to get better jobs and improve their overall self-awareness on personal health as well as the health of the child. It was further revealed that some participants were sometimes forced to skip classes or take a break from schooling to take care of their children as no one was available to baby-sit.

Pregnancy and motherhood are common reasons for school dropouts among teenagers in South Africa (Jochim *et al.*, 2021). A research on the effects of motherhood in Botswana reported that teenage mothers did not have anyone to take

care of their children and had to drop out of school to take care of their children (Matjene & Mokgatle, 2017). This result agrees with Adangbe *et al.* (2021) which reported that teenage mothers may miss school frequently as they deal with challenges such as taking a child to the doctor. These made the teenage mothers feel stressed and thought that their babies are burdensome. In the absence of support, this may lead to child abuse and child abandonment. Therefore, community health nurses need to pay close attention to teenage mothers to check for psychological stressors and refer teenage mothers for counselling where necessary.

As education is a social determinant of health, teenage mothers with low educational attainment are at risk of unhealthy behaviours compared to those with high levels of educational attainment (Maslosky *et al.*, 2021). According to Groves *et al.* (2022) around two-thirds of teenage mothers drop out of school which increases their risk to HIV and other poor health outcomes. The frequent disturbances had negative effects on their performance as well as their studies hence some teenage mothers had to repeat a year of study. In support of this, Okokondo (2022) indicated that teenage mothers who missed school remained behind other students in academic programmes resulting in poor performance. Overall, although some participants were relieved by their family in taking care of the babies so that they can study, however, the relief was not consistent.

4.3.2.2.2. Inability to cope with parenting and learning

As the teenage mothers juggle motherhood and school work, they face increased responsibility and a change in lifestyle. The participants reported that it was difficult to cope with home schooling while taking care of a child. They indicated that they sometimes had to pause studying to take care of crying babies and it becomes difficult to concentrate afterwards. The aforementioned statement was alluded by:



Figure 5: Nonki

Translations:

Nwana – Baby

Tshi a konda ngamaanda - It is very difficult

The result of the current study shows that the participants expressed a constant sense of being overworked and unable to cope with motherhood and learning. This finding is in agreement with the findings by Nkosi and Pretorius (2019) which showed that balancing motherhood and education simultaneously is an overwhelming experience for teenage mothers. Balancing the responsibilities that comes with motherhood and learning is a complex activity that needs a solid support structure. The imposed COVID-19 lockdown worsened the burden on teenage mothers. Even though most teenage mothers were provided with much needed support by significant others, the aforementioned statements indicate that child rearing while home schooling was bothersome to most teenage mothers.

This is in agreement with LaBrenz *et al.* (2022) findings which stated that during the COVID-19 lockdown, learning mothers felt pressured to meet educational expectations and fulfil their childrearing responsibilities. Similarly, this finding supports the literature which suggests that teenage mothers experience problems in meeting the several necessities of the child, doing household tasks and attending

school (Mangeli *et al.*, 2017, Iita, 2021). Teenage mothers encountered regular interruptions from their studies.

The teenage mothers could not focus on their studies while the babies were crying. This changed the mood of the participants and made them lose interest, and consequently lost focus on school work. Furthermore, they were forced to halt their studies in order to calm down crying babies. In some instances, it was not possible to watch learning content that was broadcast on TV because they had to bath and breastfeed their babies. This led to disturbances and reduction in school work time hence poor performance. A study conducted in Namibia by Maemeko *et al.* (2018) attest to these findings indicating that the dual responsibilities of teenage mothers is associated with poor academic performance.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the study's findings that explored the teaching and learning support that teenage mothers received during the corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo province. Both teenage mothers and teachers were not adequately prepared to transition to blended learning, meaning they were not ready to engage in remote teaching and learning. However, on a positive note, the teenage mothers possessed positive self-concept as a result of the emotional support received from their loved ones, thus inspired them to learn despite the challenges.

Teenage mothers struggled to concentrate on school work due to regular interruptions by crying children. Furthermore, balancing motherhood with learning was challenging to most teenagers as a result of the many responsibilities associated with it. The teenage mothers were exposed to unfavorable learning conditions during school closures and rotational attendance of classes leading to loss of learning time and compromised quality of education. In essence, the COVID-19 lockdown increased the burden of learning among teenagers especially those who had limited support from parents. More so, the lack of learning support for teenage mothers failed the government objectives of bridging inequality and leaving no-one behind. The next chapter presents the overview of the study, the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the teaching and learning support teenage mothers received during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. The previous chapter presented the findings of the study, and the themes that emerged from the study were discussed and supported with the literature. This chapter provides an overview of the study, a summary of the results, the conclusions of the study, recommendations and limitations resulting from the study.

5.2. Overview of the study

This study adopted a qualitative approach following the participatory action research using arts-based participatory action research methods. The study was conducted in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, in the Limpopo province. Data were generated from eleven (11) teenage mothers through the participatory arts-based, unstructured individual and group interviews over a period of four (4) months (March to June 2023). The researcher recruited the participants through purposive and snowballing to reach socially devalued participants. Drawings and poetry were used as participatory arts-based methods by the participants. The interviews were conducted in Sepedi, Tshivhenda and English and recorded using a recorder. Transcription and translation of the verbatim data were completed. The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis and the themes that emerged were supported with the applicable literature. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations throughout the study.

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the teaching and learning support teenage mothers received during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo.

The research objectives that were achieved were:

- 1) To describe the teaching and learning support received by the teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality.
- 2) To describe the learning conditions the teenage mothers were exposed to during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality.

5.3. Summary of findings

Two superordinate themes, six themes and 10 sub-themes emerged from the data analysis and the results were deliberated based on the emerged themes. The superordinate themes are learning support and learning conditions. Six themes also emerged; human resource support, media support, school based support, emotional support, changed school pattern and child related challenges

5.4. Themes and their implications

Superordinate Theme 1: Learning Support

Theme 1.1. Human resource support

The study revealed that most teenage mothers received support from their mothers, grandmothers and siblings with regard to childrearing thus enabling them to continue with home learning. However, the support was not consistent to some teenage mothers. Some teenage mothers were unable to do school work because they had to wait for their parents to come back from work to babysit so that they could study. Some had to skip classes during the grades rotation because there was no one to take care of the child.

Furthermore, there was minimal community support for teenage mothers, only few neighbours assisted some teenage mothers with babysitting. Moreover, there were no community resources to assist the teenage mothers to manage during the COVID-19 lockdown. These findings indicate that while most teenage mothers were supported by their families to continue with their studies; however, the support was not consistent to allow them to fully engage in their studies.

Theme 1.2: Media support

The current study revealed that although the teenage mothers had access to media such as TV and radio where lessons were broadcast, nevertheless, most of the teenage mothers were not benefiting effectively from the broadcast lessons. The participants alluded that it was difficult to understand the lessons that were offered on TV and radio as there were no teachers to explain further and provide feedback. Moreover, only few subjects were broadcast which made it even harder for teenage mothers as they had to learn other subjects on their own. This was challenging to most teenage mothers because their parents could not assist due to low literacy levels.

It was challenging for most teenage mothers to understand subjects such as mathematics without the interaction between the teacher and the learner. Sometimes the teenage mothers were forced to miss the lessons when there was no one to assist with child rearing. Furthermore, the participants had to share the TV or radio with siblings resulting in them missing some lessons while the siblings were also attending lessons. The teenage mothers were denied the opportunity to continue learning when the COVID-19 was in full swing.

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that most participants had smartphones. The findings further revealed that some participants were able to access WhatsApp lessons. However, most participants revealed that WhatsApp lessons were not fully engaging and they had difficulty to understand the content that was offered. Moreover, not all subjects were presented on WhatsApp thus making it impossible for teenage mothers to learn adequately during the lockdown. In contrast, some participants struggled to access WhatsApp lessons due to the lack of data bundles. The findings revealed that some participants were not able to afford to buy data bundles hence they were unable to access WhatsApp lessons. Therefore, the study concludes that these teenage mothers were denied an opportunity to engage in meaningful learning during the lockdown.

Theme 1.3. School based support

The study revealed that the teenage mothers did not receive support from teachers and those that received support from teachers, it was minimal. Most teachers were not prepared to facilitate remote learning due to the sudden closure of schools thus

only few teachers were able to utilize the online teaching platforms and only few subjects were taught. The teenage mothers struggled to understand complex subjects such as mathematics due to the lack of interaction and feedback from the teachers. Moreover, some schools did not even establish online learning platforms during the COVID-19 lockdown making it impossible for teenage mothers to learn from home.

Some of the teenage mothers were able to seek assistance from peers with regard to school work, however the learning support was insufficient. The family members assisted teenage mothers in taking care of the babies to allow them to study even though the assistance was not adequate. Some teenage mothers had siblings and parents taking care of the children after work and were willing to take care of the children. Some teenage mothers had parents that are too ill to take care of the children. This indicates that teenage mothers did not receive consistent learning support from teachers, peers and family members resulting in unequal access to education

Theme 1.4 Emotional support

The findings of this study revealed that the support and encouragement that teenage mothers received from family members served as an additional motivation to strive for success despite many challenges. The participants reported that they could count on their family support which indicated acceptance. In addition to encouragement that the participants received from family members, it is clearly demonstrated that teenage mothers also received love and care. Notwithstanding the challenges faced, the majority of the participants said that emotional support enabled them to continue learning.

As indicated previously, the study suggested that despite the challenges encountered, the families of the teenage mothers tried their level best to support the teenage mothers as much as possible. Due to these factors, self-esteem and self-efficacy were improved as well as motivation to continue learning despite the challenges of being a teenage mother and home schooling. As a result of the emotional support provided to teenage mothers, they gained a positive outlook and believed they could still improve their situations. Generally, the teenage mothers

were able to surpass the challenges they have encountered because of the support they have received from their families.

Superordinate theme 2: Learning Condition

Theme 2.1: Changed school pattern

The findings of this study revealed that most participants were not learning or the learning opportunities were minimal during school closures. Most participants reported that contact teaching and learning was the preferred method of learning rather than remote learning. The teenage mothers felt isolated and stressed as they could not interact with their teachers and peers. Some participants reported that they were doing nothing while at home and they only started learning when the schools were partially opened. The reasons for these difficulties included a lack of access to online platforms due to a shortage of ICT resources.

The teenage mothers were left behind with their learning since they were not able to learn during the lockdown period. The learning experiences of teenage mothers were disrupted, broadening the gap between the privileged and less privileged learners. Most participants felt that the rotational classes were not beneficial as they were not learning much. The teenage mothers indicated that they were exposed to minimal learning opportunities, meaning that they were lagging behind and lost learning experiences. Therefore, the quality of education of the teenage mothers was negatively impacted by rotational classes and school closures.

Theme 2.2: Child related challenges

The study findings indicate that becoming a mother increases teenage mothers' burden of responsibilities. For those teenage mothers without strong social support, the situation was even worse. The participants reported being overwhelmed resulting in stress and poor concentration. Based on this study findings, teenage mothers need support to deal with new roles of being mothers while still learning. The study revealed that even though the teenage mothers had some form of support in terms of baby-sitting; the support was not adequate as they were still expected to assume the parental roles with regard to child rearing and also perform house chores.

The participants indicated taking unplanned regular breaks from their studies to attend to child needs. This means that their education often took a back seat to childrearing. This negatively impacted on their concentration and also consumed the considerable amount of their study time. It was further revealed that some participants were sometimes forced to skip classes to take care of their children as no one was available to babysit.

The study revealed that balancing motherhood and learning simultaneously was overwhelming to teenage mothers. The abrupt closure of schools including creches exacerbated the situation. The teenage mothers had to learn while taking care of the children because creches were closed. The teenage mothers encountered regular interruptions from their studies and lost focus while the children were crying. This changed the mood of the participants and made them lose interest, and they consequently lost focus on school work. In some instances, it was not possible to watch learning content that was broadcast on TV because they had to bath and breastfeed their babies. These led to disturbances and reduction in school work time.

5.5. Conclusion

The study attained its goal of exploring and describing the teaching and learning support that teenage mothers received during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Makhado municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo. The study objectives were also achieved. The PAR through community engagement approach enabled the researcher together with the participants to identify the problem and develop a research based solution. It was concluded that teenage mothers received learning support from family, teachers and community members. However, the support was not adequate and consistent to promote continuity of learning. As stated in the study, insufficient and inconsistent support play a significant role in poor educational attainment of teenage mothers. Therefore, it is vital for parents, care-givers, community members, and teachers to empower teenage mothers to continue learning in a safe environment. Teenage mothers might not access their rights to education unless parents, teachers, as key bearers of policy implementation change their attitudes and are empowered to appreciate and cater for the educational needs of teenage mothers. It is the role of the whole community to support and encourage

teenage mothers to continue with their education in order to attain educational goals and reach their career targets. The financial support with regard to the buying of data bundles was not enough due to financial constraints.

Additionally, the emotional support received by the teenage mothers created positive self-concept and enabled them to have a positive outlook. It was further concluded that the teenage mothers did not receive adequate learning support from teachers and family members due to remote learning, teacher unpreparedness and the lack of consistent care givers at home. Family members who support teenage mother by caring for the baby permit the mother to continue with her education. Moreover, research has found that the accessibility of support in caring for a baby and policies advocating for return to school after child's birth enhance teenage mothers' continuance with school. The teenage mothers experienced child related challenges. Balancing motherhood and learning simultaneously was challenging to teenage mothers due to regular interruptions by the children resulting in poor concentration and loss of focus. Lastly, the study concludes that teenage mothers received support from family and community members, teachers and baby daddies during the COVID-19 lockdown; however, the support was not adequate and consistent to promote continuity of learning. The balancing of motherhood and learning was demanding to teenage mothers as they had to juggle child rearing and learning concurrently. To prevent the long-term effect of poor educational attainment in teenage mothers which was intensified by the pandemic, there is a need for intensive efforts involving parents, community members, teachers and the government.

5.6. Recommendations of the study

The recommendations are based on the findings of the study. The researcher is of the view that although most teenage mothers received support in the Makhado municipality, the support was not adequate and consistent. Therefore the researcher recommends the following:

Nursing practice

The Department of Health should assist with the development of support groups for teenage mothers in the community to promote a sense of belonging and facilitate community health care workers' involvement to enhance the support of teenage mothers. Support groups will create a platform where teenage mothers can share their challenges while enabling the community health workers to assist the Department of Health with the identification of those challenges.

Nursing research

More research should be done on how parents, community stakeholders, baby fathers of teenage mothers balance caring for the mother and the child at the same time. The findings of the study will serve as a baseline for researching on strategies to enhance support for teenage mothers during future crisis and disasters.

Nursing education

Nursing education curriculum may be aligned to enhance students' knowledge of school health promotion initiatives as part of their nursing education in order to be able to integrate broad-based services when caring for teenage mothers. In this way, nurses will be able to formulate interventions and strategies to assist teenage mothers in balancing school work and motherhood in order to reduce the dropout rates.

Policy development

Although the DBE in South Africa has policies that encourage teenage mothers to remain in school, however, it is silent about how they should be supported in relation to balancing dual roles. Therefore, the study recommends that there be strategies or guidelines in schools that support teenage mothers in balancing roles of being a mother and a learner simultaneously to promote a healthy and conducive environment. Furthermore, all stakeholders in the education sector should develop context-specific gender-sensitive guidelines to support teenage mothers with regard to teaching and learning during and after emergencies, catastrophes and pandemics. Furthermore, teacher training should include skills on guidelines and supportive

measures for how to assist teenage mothers at school and have flexible time-table to accommodate young mothers.

The findings revealed that the education sector needs to invest more on online platform access, especially for those in rural areas living in poverty. The South African government and the DBE should develop policies or guidelines for reforming rural education, including the provision of ITC facilities and training of both teachers and learners on ITC skills in order to achieve an inclusive, equitable and quality education. Additionally, families should be given training in the effective use of digital technology and pedagogical support to increase self-efficacy of parents and learners during remote learning. Finally, the study recommends that schools establish support services that offer counselling to teenage mothers going through mental health difficulties, as well as policies and guidelines to support these services.

5.7. Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered several limitations during the study. Firstly, this study explored the learning support received by teenage mothers in only one municipality in Limpopo province. Therefore, a comprehensive research is required for the inclusion of different provinces in geographical status and cultural and environmental conditions so that the results can be generalized. Data collection were time-consuming since the researcher was located far from the study area and participants could only be available on weekends.

Furthermore, the researcher was not familiar with the participants' native language, requiring the assistance of an interpreter, which prolonged the interview. The study focused on participants outside the school setting which limited access to the views of teachers' challenges in providing support. The support was received from the teenage mothers' perspectives which could be insufficient for future planning. Further studies are recommended in this regard.

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APPENDIX A

██████████

██████████

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03 OCTOBER 2022

The Honourable Chief

Tshikuwe Village

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF MOLAPO (Pseudonym) VILLAGE TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

My name is Kapse Christina Makaleng; I am studying for Masters in Nursing at University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study is titled: teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado Municipality, Vhembe district.

I hereby request for your permission to conduct the study in the community. The study aims at exploring the teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The findings of the study will be used in developing guidelines on supporting teenage mothers when studying from home in the event of lockdown or any other crisis.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00005097/2022).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at Limpopo College of Nursing: Sekhukhune Campus in Glen Cowie. Cell phone Number: ██████████ email: ██████████ or the UKZN Biomedical Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor:

Full Name: Dr. TS Mudau

University of KwaZulu-Natal

College: Health Sciences

Campus: Howard College

Desmond Clarence Building

Proposed Qualification: Independent study

Cell: [REDACTED]

Floor 4

Tel: 031 260 1433

APPENDIX B

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 03 October 2022

Dear Learner

My name is Kepshe Christina Makaleng; I am a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal, currently studying for Masters in Nursing. My contact details are: Cellphone Number: [REDACTED], email address: [REDACTED]

Your child is invited to take part in a research that includes teenage mothers and the teaching learning support that they have received during the Corona virus disease lockdown in 2020 - 2021. The purpose of this research is to describe the teaching and learning support received by the teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality. The study is expected to enroll a minimum of 20 teenage mothers. The study will involve interviews and group discussions of about 6 people per group. Only participants who are willing to share their stories with others will be in group discussions. Should you wish to allow your child to be enrolled in the study; the duration of her participation will be 3 months.

The study may include discomfort and induce undesired emotions. The study may not produce direct benefit to your child as the participants but will benefit other teenage mothers that may find themselves in lockdown or any crisis that requires unplanned temporary closure of schools as the study aims to provide guidelines for the teaching and learning support of teenage mothers during lockdowns.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00005097/2022).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at Limpopo College of Nursing: Sekhukhune Campus in Glen Cowie. Cellphone Number: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED] or the UKZN Biomedical Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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University of KwaZulu-Natal

College: Health Sciences

Campus: Howard College

Desmond Clarence Building

Proposed Qualification: Independent study

Cell: [REDACTED] Tel: 031 260 1433

Floor 4

Your child's participation in this research is voluntary; you may withdraw her from participating at any time. Should you choose not to allow your child to participate in the study or withdraw her participation, she will not be affected negatively in any way. Should you wish to withdraw her from the study kindly inform the researcher telephonically before the scheduled meeting dates.

The researcher will terminate the participant from the study on the following accounts: the participant is sick, provide false information deliberately, miss appointments without valid reasons or notifying the researcher.

Your child will not be paid for her participation in the study and she will not incur any costs. The researcher will provide refreshments during the interview sessions.

Your child's name will not appear anywhere on the research documents other than on this consent form which will not be forming part of the research document for dissemination.

For the focus group discussions, your child will only be asked general, not personal questions. Although every effort will be made to ensure that other participants will respect confidentiality of what you disclose in the group, this cannot be guaranteed. For this reason your child is advised not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

The researcher will store data safely for the period of this study and 5 years after the study has been concluded.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I have been informed about the study titled teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without being coerced or threatened in anyway.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at email address; [REDACTED] or cellphone number [REDACTED]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

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Campus: Howard College

Desmond Clarence Building

Proposed Qualification: Independent study

Cell: [REDACTED] Tel: 031 260 1433

Floor 4

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX C

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 03 October 2022

Dear Learner

My name is Kapse Christina Makaleng; I am a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal, currently studying for Masters in Nursing. My contact details are: Cellphone Number: [REDACTED], email address: [REDACTED]

You are invited to take part in a research that includes teenage mothers and the teaching learning support that they have received during the Corona virus disease lockdown in 2020 - 2021. The purpose of this research is to describe the teaching and learning support received by the teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality. The study is expected to enroll a minimum of 20 teenage mothers. The study will involve interviews and group discussions of about 6 people per group. Only participants who are willing to share their stories with others will be in group discussions. Should you wish to enroll in the study; the duration of your participation will be 3 months.

The study may include discomfort and induce undesired emotions. The study may not produce direct benefit to you as the participants but will benefit other teenage mothers that may find themselves in lockdown or any crisis that requires unplanned temporary closure of schools as the study aims to provide guidelines for the teaching and learning support of teenage mothers during lockdowns.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00005097/2022).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at Limpopo College of Nursing: Sekhukhune Campus in Glen Cowie. Cellphone

Number: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED] or the UKZN Biomedical Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

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Supervisor:

Full Name: Dr. TS Mudau

University of KwaZulu-Natal

College: Health Sciences

Campus: Howard College

Desmond Clarence Building

Proposed Qualification: Independent study

Cell: [REDACTED] Tel: 031 260 1433

Floor 4

Your participation in this research is voluntary; you may withdraw from participating at any time. Should you choose not to participate in the study or withdraw your participation, you will not be affected negatively in any way. Should you wish to withdraw from the study kindly inform the researcher telephonically before the scheduled meeting dates.

The researcher will terminate the participant from the study on the following accounts: the participant is sick, provide false information deliberately, miss appointments without valid reasons or notifying the researcher.

You will not be paid for your participation in the study and you will not incur any costs. The researcher will provide refreshments during the interview sessions.

Your name will not appear anywhere on the research documents other than on this consent form which will not be forming part of the research document for dissemination.

For the focus group discussions, you will only be asked general, not personal questions. Although every effort will be made to ensure that other participants will respect confidentiality of what you disclose in the group, this cannot be guaranteed. For this reason you are advised not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

The researcher will store data safely for the period of this study and 5 years after the study has been concluded.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I have been informed about the study titled teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without being coerced or threatened in anyway.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at email address; [REDACTED] or cellphone number [REDACTED]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX D

ASSENT FORM

Good Day

My name is Kapse Christina Makaleng; I am doing Masters in Nursing at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My study is on the teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during Corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality Vhembe district.

I would like you to participate in my study. You will be requested to describe how you were supported with regard to teaching and learning from home during the Corona virus disease lockdown. I will be recording our conversation on audio recorder and cellular phone and appeal that you be truthful when you give answers. I will share our conversation with my supervisor and your name will not be disclosed

You will not be exposed to any harm. There will be no payment for participating in the study. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to be even if your parents agreed on your participation. You can quit the study at any time and you will not be punished.

Are you willingly agreeing to be part of the study? If yes please sign below:

I _____ (Full Names) want to participate in this study.

I hereby confirm that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project has been clearly explained.

I understand that I have a right to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire.

I understand the purpose this study is to explore and describe the teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during the Corona virus disease lockdown in the Makhado Municipality.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of community rights that I would usually be entitled to

I have been informed that the study does not expose me to any injury as a result of participating.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher on telephone number [REDACTED] and email on [REDACTED]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact the UKZN- HSSREC as provided below.

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KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor:

Full Name: Dr. TS Mudau

University of KwaZulu-Natal

College: Health Sciences

Campus: Howard College

Desmond Clarence Building

Proposed Qualification: Independent study

Cell: [REDACTED]

Floor 4

Tel: 031 260 1433

Participant's signature

Date

Witness

Date

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What learning support did you receive during the COVID-19 lockdown?
Probe to follow
2. What were the learning conditions were you exposed to during COVID-19 lockdown?
Probe to follow
3. What suggestions do you make about improving the existing learning support during crises or emergencies?
Probe to follow
4. How did you feel about the learning support that you have received during COVID-19 lockdown?
Probe to follow

APPENDIX F: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH

The researcher from University of KwaZulu-Natal is looking for Teenage Mothers to participate in research study Titled: Teaching and learning support received by Teenage Mothers during corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality

You may qualify if you are a Teenage Mother:

- *Between the age of 13 and 19*
- *Were enrolled for schooling in 2020/2021*

For more information contact: [REDACTED]



APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT, LERATO

Researcher: I have already explained why we are having this interview, I am recording now.

Participant: Yes, you did

Researcher: I need to know how you were supported during COVID19 lockdown when you had a child. Tell me about all the challenges regarding learning you have experienced during COVID19 lockdown?

Participant: The challenges I faced were difficulty to have enough time to study or listening to radio or TV lessons.

Researcher: What caused you not to have enough time to read or listen to radio or TV?

Participant: I had a child and my mother was going to work, my sister was not always around so I was taking care of my child. I only had time when my mother come back from work or when my sister is around and willing to baby sit that's when I could have time to study.

Researcher: So, you are saying if you were alone at home, it was not possible for you to study because there was no one who can take care of the baby, what else was challenging for you, what learning support did you receive during lockdown?

Participant: There were WhatsApp groups where teachers record a lesson and send to us some notes so that we can be studying at home.

Researcher: You had a study group discussion and the teachers were sending notes also, all the teachers were sending notes or there were specific teachers who were sending the notes?

Participant: No, not all teachers were sending. There were specific teachers who were sending.

Researcher: What about other subjects?

Participant: I was getting lessons on the TV or I could get my notes and read them because there was nothing we were given in those subjects.

Researcher: You were relying on TV on some subject? How do you feel about the lessons that you receive on TV?

Participant: TV lessons were okay but the problem was on understanding well what was being taught.

Researcher: Was there anyone who you could go to for help on those subjects you were not able to understand? Is there anyone who was assisting you with regard to that?

Participant: There was someone who used to be teacher and is the one I used to go to for help here and there.

Researcher: You said at home it was difficult to study when there is no one because of the child, but when the parents or your sister were around they were assisting, I want to find out if there was any assistance you got from community members?

Participant: There was no any assistance from community members.

Researcher: How do you feel about the support during that time?

Participant: It was not that bad.

Researcher: Tell me how it was, I need to understand.

Participant: It was fine.

Researcher: How fine, I need to understand the situation ok?

Participant: I don't know what to say.

Researcher: Share with me what you think can work best going forward and what do you think can assist to learn in times of pandemics like COVID19?

Participant: We should have someone personal who can assist students and teachers being able to send notes on WhatsApp or even recorded lessons that can be shared with students.

Researcher: Tell me about the learning strategies that you used to continue learning during COVID19?

Participant: I used my cell phone and also the TV.

Researcher: What made you go back to school after having a child?

Participant: I want to continue with my studies so that I may have a better future with my child. I don't want to struggle with my child and have my child live in poverty. When you get educated you can get a good job unlike when you are not educated where you will be living at the mercy of other people. I also want to be in a position where I will be able to support myself and my child.

Researcher: Where is the father of the child?

Participant: He is around.

Researcher: Does he help support the child?

Participant: Yes.

Researcher: How does he help?

Participant: He gives me some money or buys what is needed if there is any shortage.

Researcher: How about your school work? Does he support that you should further your education?

Participant: Yes, he supports it.

Researcher: How does he support you?

Participant: He just passed grade 12 so he is going to school as well.

Researcher: You said you were using a phone, WhatsApp, TV and radio, were these things helpful in making you understand?

Participant: It was just meeting me half way, it was not as efficient as going to school on a daily bases because they were not covering the whole syllabus.

Researcher: You said some teachers were sending notes on WhatsApp, how about other teachers. How did you learn their subjects?

Participant: I used to read through the books that we were given at school.

Researcher: How were you coping?

Participant: It was difficult hey.

Researcher: How did you manage to learn then?

Participant: I used to summarize everything I read making my own notes.

Researcher: How do you feel about the learning support that you received during that time?

Participant: It was sharp.

Researcher: Let's talk about learning conditions at home during COVID19 to be learning at home while you have a child during that time?

Participant: It was difficult because at time when you are studying and the child is crying uncontrollably and those taking care of the child would bring her to me then I had to stop studying and babysit and then I will have to continue studying when the child stops crying. This was difficult because by the time you get back to studying the mood to study will be different from the beginning and at times you fall asleep the time you will be trying to make the child sleep.

Researcher: I would like to know, you said your mom was working and your sister was assisting you, you said the father of the child was assisting you financially. Then was there any help you received from community leader during those times?

Participant: No, there was not community leader who got involved in anything.

Researcher: Okay, is there anything you would like to ask?

Participant: No

Researcher: Thank you

APPENDIX H: UKZN Introduction to Research Ethics Certificate



**Zertifikat
Certificat**

**Certificado
Certificate**

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate
Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

kepse makaleng
a complété avec succès - has successfully completed
Introduction to Research Ethics
du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation



Release Date: 2022/08/24
CD : s1000f001

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Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

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Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS/ASMS/AMSW) (www.sams.ch) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (www.kjps.ch)

[R20V - 20220217]

APPENDIX I: UKZN Informed Consent Certificate



Zertifikat Certificat

Certificado Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that



kepse makaleng

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Informed Consent

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2022/08/24
CD : 14284568



Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

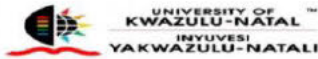
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Ce programme est soutenu par - This program is supported by:
European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) (www.edctp.org); Swiss National Science Foundation (www.snf.ch); Canadian Institute of Health Research (<http://www.cihr-irac.gc.ca/2011.html>);
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[2021 - 20220217]

APPENDIX J: UKZN ETHICAL CLEARANCE



10 January 2023

Kepeke Christina Makaleng (222129470)
School of Nursing & Public Health
Howard College Campus

Dear KC Makaleng,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005097/2022

Original title: Teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during Coronavirus disease - 2019 lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district

Revised title: Teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during corona virus disease lockdown in Makhado municipality, Vhembe district

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 23 November 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

This approval is valid until 10 January 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hiatele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/8357/8387 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX K: Permission to Access Community Members

From: Lifhiga Royal Council

To: Mrs. Makaleng Kepshe Christina.

Student number 222129470

Dear Madam.

Re: Permission to undertake a research study in Tshikuwi village.

Research Topic: Teaching and learning support received by teenage mothers during COVID19 lockdown in Makhado Municipality.

Subsequent to receiving your application the leadership of the Royal Council has granted you permission to undertake your study. The permission is granted with immediate effect.

Please note that the leadership is available to assist with community resources to facilitate the smooth progress of the study.

Hoping you will find this useful.

Yours sincerely

Community Council secretary

[Redacted Signature]

LIFHIGA'S ROYAL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 2252, TSHIKUWI
DZANANI, 0955
DATE:

APPENDIX L: CODING CERTIFICATE



05 October 2023

To whom it may concern

Re: Coding Qualitative Data for Makaleng K.C.

This serves to confirm that I independently coded the qualitative data for the study entitled: "TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT RECEIVED BY TEENAGE MOTHERS DURING CORONA VIRUS DISEASE LOCKDOWN IN THE MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT."

Should you require further clarification do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully

Dr I. Moyo (DLit et Phil HS, MScNS, BSc NS)

APPENDIX M: LETTER FROM EDITOR



Centre for Scholarly Publishing Services (PTY) Ltd

Reg no: 2615/444302/07

20 November 2023

KEPSE CHRISTINA MAKALENG

School of Nursing and Public Health
College of Health Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban, South Africa

This serves to confirm that an MA dissertation titled *Teaching and Learning Support received by teenage mothers during the Corona virus disease lockdown in the Makhado Municipality, Vembe District, Limpopo Province* by Kepshe Christina Makaleng and submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters in Nursing, in the School of Nursing and Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa has undergone both a thorough copy-editing as well as proof-reading processes.

Sincerely,



Solani Ngobeni
Publishing Director
Centre for Scholarly Publishing Services (Pty) Ltd.

Cell: [REDACTED]
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