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**Educators' Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary
School in the Umlazi District**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled Educators' Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary School in the Umlazi District is my own work and has not been submitted part or full in any university.



TRISHANTHA MARI

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The following individuals played a crucial role in the completion of this study, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to them:

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Abstract

The study explores educator's experiences teaching pregnant learners. Educators provided insight of challenges and experiences encountered. This study was executed in Chatsworth, Durban, South Africa, in a single school in the Umlazi District. The study sought to establish educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school, the main factors that contribute towards teenage pregnancy, and the role educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling. The study presented was deeply anchored in the social constructionist theory, shedding light on critical aspects of sociology, communication theory, and social ontology. This influential framework progresses the notion that meaning and understanding are co-constructed collaboratively rather than emerging in isolation. Through its lens, educators have been adept at pinpointing specific patterns and behaviours exhibited by students, offering profound insights into the learning process. Moreover, the interactions between educators and learners were meticulously analysed, positioning these dialogues as vital mediums through which information and meaning are co-created.

Four educators from a secondary school in the Chatsworth area were purposely sampled for the study undertaken. Data was obtained using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews (Department of Basic Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of learner Pregnancy in Schools (2021) and the School's Pregnancy Policy). The study depicted that as much as policies are in place there is discrepancies in practice. The study utilised inductive data analysis which the researcher used to deal with primary and detailed data of quality generated from participants. Additionally, the study used thematic analysis that involves a systematic process of transcribing of data and identifying patterns. The study revealed that educators experience pregnant learners as demonstrating high rates of absenteeism, which resulted in them missing out on work and assessments that impacting negatively on their academic performance. Educators identified peer pressure, poverty, and a lack of knowledge as key contributors to teenage pregnancy. Despite feeling incapable of dealing with pregnant learners, educators tried their best to assist pregnant learners, where, while being absent and on maternity leave, these educators took on the role of counselling these learners in an attempt to ensure they continued with their schooling career. Additionally, educators requested that parents were called into school and pleaded for more parental support for the learners to complete school and support their child. Furthermore, educators tried their best to get study material and assessments to learners so that they would not fall behind, and could work while being home-bound. The focus group

discussion shed light on the lack of skills and support educators have from the Department. Educators felt they are incapable of dealing with pregnant learners as they were not trained to deal with them specifically. Furthermore, educators felt that despite the fact that policies were in place, it proved impractical – or indeed challenging – to practice, as they had so many other duties and responsibilities in a school day.

The study recommends that the need for the School Management Team to reduce workload of educators and the Department of Education partners up with the Department of Health in providing critical support and empowerment for these educators, such as providing resources like condoms for learners. In addition, empowerment programmes must be put in place within the community and school context to empower young women to be assertive and carry themselves with dignity.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

A major psychosocial challenge facing teenage girls in the 21st century is the high rates of not-yet-prepared, immature mothers and mothers-to-be; acknowledging that every child is a national asset, and it is us, as educators and various other stakeholders, who take learners on a meaningful journey of learning, from which our own learners will arise with the wisdom, knowledge and skills necessary to respond better to challenging changing times. The study explores educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school, the factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy, and the role educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling.

This chapter commences with a brief background of the study. In this chapter, I will discuss the location of the study, its purpose and rationale, and highlight the key questions, in order to conclude with an overview.

1.2 Location of the study

This study was carried out at a secondary school in Chatsworth, south of Durban. This educational institution provides education to learners from grade eight to twelve. The area the school is located is an area that has residents that display poverty; many residents live in one-bedroom flats with large families. Most residents are unemployed. Violence, drugs and alcohol consumption are rife in the area. There is a lack of parental involvement. The area is fully equipped with facilities such as state clinic, hospitals, a youth centre, police stations and social welfare offices. The location was selected based on the high rates of teenage pregnancy at the school.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school. The study aimed to develop an understanding those factors that educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy, the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

Through the use of literature reviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, this study sought to identify intervention strategies in addressing the problem of teenage pregnancy at school level, and to identify the gap between policy and practice with regards to educators' experiences. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews enable the respondents to share their experiences and opinions about the subject matter, and it will also not restrict them to close-ended answers. The interviews were recorded, thereby ensuring reliable and trustworthy data generation. A social constructionist framework was chosen to conduct this study, as it is closely associated to the study's intentions, where knowledge emerges out of human relationships. In this case, the relationship in question is between the educator and pregnant learners in a specific context (school setting). The social constructionist framework gave rise to the links educators have with learners. As noted by Andrews (2012), knowledge is created by the interactions of a specific group within society, with this social world successfully influencing individuals resulting in routinisation and habitualisation. This suggests that the relationship educators have with the pregnant learners has created knowledge about these learners and their pregnancies. As is widely known, learners spend an average of seven hours per day with their educators, where this time spent at schools brings about an interaction between educator and learner that enables the educator to construct knowledge about the individual via observing routines and actions that are repetitive, and cast into patterns. The study was conducted with four life-orientation educators at a secondary school in the Durban region in the Umlazi District.

1.4 Roles

As an educator and I can relate to other educators, and have noted that teenage pregnancy poses a unique space for research, as there is paucity of literature on educators' experiences with emphasis on urban schools. I have decided to conduct this research with the aim of delving deeper into the perspectives and experiences of educators. Being an educator in a secondary school for four years and having to deal with the pressures of the Department of Education (DBE) and school management teams (SMT) in attending to pregnant teenagers has led to this study. Having taught in a rural and urban school, some of which have high rates of pregnancy and some very few cases/none, I have experienced contrasting situations and understood the requirements from the DBE and school management teams, however, I was left in situations which were not practical. I have observed that the SMT expects educators to adhere to the DOE, without providing relevant support. It is evident in the broader literature that teenage pregnancy is relevant in rural schools, however it is also

prevalent in urban schools. By engaging in this research, a novel perspective is presented from urban educator's perspective. By conducting this research, I aim to gain insight into the experiences of educators, and understand the way they perceive their experiences and interactions.

1.5 Significance of the study

The Department of Social Development (2022) recorded KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo and Eastern Cape as the provinces with the highest number of teenage pregnancies in the past two years. Statistics South Africa reported that South Africa has recorded 34 597 teenagers who gave birth in 2020/2021 (The Department of Social Development, 2022). Teenage pregnancy is a concern to South Africans, as it brings about other exacerbating factors hindering a young girl's life. According to Shefer, Bhana and Morrell (2013), pregnant teenage mothers are faced with complications and health risks, due to their bodies being immature, where even though they are able to conceive once they start to menstruate, a teenager's body is not fully ready to give birth to a child, as their bodies are still undergoing development. This results in certain health risks to the mother, and to the unborn child, and even sometimes leads to death during childbirth. Teenage girls are also not financially stable enough to take care of their child, where many of these girls are left to be single mothers due to immature choices on the part of the father of the child (Ngubane & Maharaj, 2018).

The DoE (2021) has released its Policy on the Prevention and Management of learner Pregnancy in Schools (2021). The policy aims to ensure accessible provision of information on framework for mitigation and prevention, counselling, care and support and guidelines for systematic management and implementation. The policy places on record the commitment of the Department of Education and the various stakeholders to providing comprehensive sex education. The main goal of this is to provide guiding principles to reduce the incidence of learner pregnancy, and to manage its exacerbating factors on learners. Additionally, it places emphasis on the role and functions of principals, educators, school governing body members and members of the Department of Health to ensure that learners are accommodated, and continue with their basic education. Despite the implementation of this policy, teenage pregnancy remains an increasing concern in South African schools.

1.6 Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- 1.To explore educators' experiences of teaching pregnant learners in a secondary school.
- 2.To explore the factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy.
- 3.To explore the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

1.7 Key Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1.What are educators' experiences of teaching pregnant learners in a secondary school?
- 2.What factors do educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy?
- 3.What role have educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling?

1.8 Aim

The aim of this study was to delve deep into the experiences of teachers within the school environment, particularly in their interactions with pregnant learners. It sought to uncover the myriad of factors that contribute to the incidence of teenage pregnancy, a phenomenon that has both social and educational implications. By examining the support mechanisms that educators provide to pregnant learners, the study aimed to understand how these efforts assist these students in continuing and completing their schooling careers. Additionally, it evaluates the existing policies within schools as well as those implemented by the department of education regarding the management and support of pregnant learners. The study endeavors to assess the effectiveness of these policies in making a tangible difference in the educational journey of pregnant learners and the ease with which educators can fulfill their roles. It is crucial to identify the gaps and strengths in the current policy framework to improve the support system for both educators and pregnant learners. Furthermore, by providing insight into the challenges and successes teachers encounter, the study aimed to inform policy revisions and educational strategies. Ultimately, this research sought to contribute to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for pregnant learners, ensuring they have the opportunity to complete their education. Through comprehensive analysis and understanding, the study aimed to offer recommendations for policy enhancements and best practices in supporting pregnant learners in the school setting. Recognizing the significance

of this issue, the study aspired to influence positive change in the educational system's approach to managing teenage pregnancy, thereby impacting the lives of many young women and their educators.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the theoretical perspective of sociologist Peter (as cited in McNames, Gergen, Camaro-Borges & Rasera, 2020), and constructionist theory was used. The study was centred on how meaning and knowledge is created in a social context. A constructionist identifies norms in society that are socially constructed. These social constructs are usually created within a specific culture or institution (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The social constructionist theory holds that individuals and groups interact in a social system, and create, over long periods of time, concepts or representation of others' actions, which eventually become reciprocal roles played by individuals in relation to one another (Vinney, 2019). When these roles are accessed by other members of society to enter into and play their particular role, the reciprocal interactions of others are 'institutionalised'. In this process, meaning is implanted in society. Knowledge and individuals' beliefs and perceptions of what reality is become embedded in society as an institution. Therefore, reality is socially constructed.

Additionally, the theory places emphasis on knowledge emerging out of human relationships, noting that this knowledge is brought about by the interactions of individuals with the social world. With this, the social world successfully influencing individuals resulting in routinisation and habitualisation. Social constructionist theory has been used as a theoretical framework in the study to explore the experiences of educators, as this theory focuses on how individuals develop knowledge and understand their world. The framework suggests understanding of social and psychological aspect that influence the lives of individuals thus being the pregnant adolescent years. The pregnant learners that passed through each educator over the years created information about their pregnancies for their educators via their daily interactions with them. These educators would have observed behaviours, attitudes, entities and events which have provided them with the ability to construct knowledge about pregnant learners. These educators, who will be required to invoke their beliefs and perceptions, and would have had to reflect on how they understand their world as they interact with pregnant learners and engagement of language (conversations) among educators who have shared meaning of such knowledge. They will reflect on the frequently repeated actions of the

pregnant learners, which eventually turn into a pattern in which they have created understanding of knowledge with regards to these learners' culture, history, and social context. There is an apparent paucity of literature and research on rural schools and the perspectives of learners in these schools. The study intended to fill in these gaps in the literature by addressing the experiences of educators in a secondary school in an urban area. Additionally, the study sought to establish the experiences of educators teaching pregnant learners, identify causes and practices of educators with regards to legislation and the gap between the two.

1.10 Methodology

The findings of this study were guided by beliefs, norms, and views of the participants as these consist of participants' experiences. The data generation methods included document reviews, semi-structured questionnaires, and focus group interviews, aimed at exploring educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school.

In addition, this study was anchored in a qualitative approach, which aimed to understand the behaviour of the participants. An interpretivist paradigm was utilised for the study in order to understand human behaviour. The data generated from document reviews, semi-structured questionnaires, and focus group interviews were transcribed into textual data, and interpreted so as to identify themes and patterns of knowledge with the use of thematic analysis.

1.11 Synopsis of chapters

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and background to the study. This chapter outlines the purpose, rationale, significance of the study and presents key research questions that needed to be answered to satisfy the study's objectives. It also includes a brief introduction to the theoretical framework and methodology utilised in the study.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review with extensive analysis of secondary data to highlighting the causes of teenage pregnancy in relation to socio-cultural influences and the impact of teenage pregnancy.

Chapter 3 consists of theoretical framework relevant to the study.

Chapter 4 presents the study's research design which consists of the research design, methodology, research paradigm, research sample and methods used to generate data for the study.

Chapter 5 presents the data generated for this study and research findings

Chapter 6 concludes with the summarised key findings and recommendations of the study.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief background to the study. The background of the study presented the location, purpose and rationale and highlighted key research questions. The following chapter will provide a literature review on the challenge of teenage pregnancy by high school learners.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy presents major interference in the education of a learner. Teenage pregnancy among school-going learners has increased drastically, and at an alarming rate (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). Teenage pregnancy can be defined as the circumstance of a female teenager who has not reached adulthood and has conceived (Bhana, 2013). According to Laldas (2018, p. 1) about 182, 000 teenage girls annually become pregnant before finishing school. Likewise, Statistics South Africa (2022, p.1) reports “a total of 1003 307 births were registered in South Africa in 2020”, where, of that total, it was noted that 33 899 were births that “occurred to mothers aged 17 and younger”. Statistics South Africa (2020) goes on to note that over six hundred children aged 10-13 years had given birth in 2020. Teenage pregnancy is not a new phenomenon, yet it is surprisingly on the increase in a time of vast sexual literacy and contraception availability (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019). The high incidence levels of teenage pregnancy have become a major health, educational, and societal concern.

This literature review will provide an overview of research that has already been conducted to explore the experiences of educators, and those factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy, as well as the role educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling.

The South African Department of Education (2017) defines teenage pregnancy as the circumstance of teenagers who have not yet reached the legal age of adulthood and become pregnant, which usually ranges between the ages of thirteen to nineteen. Females can conceive with sexual intercourse after the onset of their first menstrual cycle. A female’s first menstrual cycle usually takes place from 12 years onwards. However, for some individuals this may vary, and may start at an earlier or later stage in life (Laldas, 2018).

2.2 Legislation on Teenage Pregnancy

The South African government views teenage mother's rights to education as crucial, and may take major steps to protect them. To some extent, South Africa having numerous legislative responses to the teenage pregnancy phenomena. The government places emphasis on education for all people in South Africa, which include pregnant learners. Before democracy could take place in 1994, not all schools allowed pregnant learner access to education, where some pregnant learners were denied an education (Nkosi, 2019).

2.2.1 South Africans Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

The South Africans Schools Act No.84 of 1996 has been formulated to produce a uniform education system for school governance. This places emphasis on equal education opportunities for all learners, thereby removing the exclusion of pregnant learners. The act forbids pregnant learners from exclusion, and permits pregnant learners to continue with their schooling, regardless of being pregnant (Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014). The act clearly stipulates the rights of pregnant learners, however does not adequately stipulate the rights of educators. In response to the alarming rates of teenage pregnancies the Department of Education released *Measures for the Prevention and Management for Learner Pregnancies* in 2007 and have been reviewed in recent years (Ramukumba, 2021). The policy supports the abolishment of learner expulsion due to pregnancy (Veriava, 2013) as cited in Ramukumba 2021). Additionally, *Measures for the Prevention and Management for Learner Pregnancies* (2021) specifies the roles and responsibilities of educators in preventing and managing teenage pregnancy. Educators are expected to provide necessary assistance and deal with pregnant learners in the same manner as other learners in the school environment, even though pregnant learners bring about health issues and other exacerbating factors (Ramukumba, 2021).

2.2.2 Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education

Education White Paper 6 (2001) outlines the Education Department's commitment to the provision of education, specifically for those learners who are experiencing or have experienced barriers to development and learning, or those who have dropped out of schooling due to the inability of the education system to accommodate their learning needs. This paper was publicised in order to address the varying needs of learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning. The aim of this paper is to promote inclusivity in all schools, resulting in schools being inclusive centres for learning, which include pregnant

learners. Pregnant learners are known to find difficulty coping with academic requirements, as they often attend clinic dates during school hours, have to miss school due to their childcare obligations once they have given birth, and find it difficult to cope (Nkosi, 2019). Therefore, the promulgated White Paper 6 identifies these as barriers to learning, and addresses them to include pregnant learners within the education system.

2.2.3 Policy of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy

The Department of Education (2021) released this policy with the aim to provide principles and themes to mitigate and reduce the number of learner pregnancies, and their impact on affected learners and the education system. The policy makes provision for guidance on the reduction of learner pregnancies, and the management of pre- and post-natal management. The policy further aims to ensure that there is accessibility of information for the prevention, care, support and frameworks for impact mitigation. Furthermore, the policy stipulates the commitment of Department of Education as well as the various role players such as principals, educators, and school governing body members in providing comprehensive sex education to protect the learner's sexual and reproductive health rights (UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, it places emphasis on the role and functions of principals, educators, school governing body members and members of the department of health to ensure learners are accommodated and continue with their basic education (DoE, 2021). In contrast, The National Contraception Policy Guidelines, along with a booklet on Preventing Teenage Pregnancy, recommended that condoms be made available to sexually active students. Currently, these policies remain a subject of debate among religious organizations, parents, and educators. Furthermore, the Policy on Measures for the Prevention and Management of Student Pregnancy exacerbates the situation as the government mandates that students may be granted a leave of absence for a duration of up to two years.

2.3 Educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school

Preez, Botha, Rabie and Manyathi (2019) reported on those factors identified by their participants with regard to educators' experiences with pregnant teenagers, in terms of the effect of the learner pregnancies in the classroom, high rates of absenteeism, poor academic achievement and dropping out of school.

2.3.1 Negative experiences for other learners

Learner performance in the classroom as well as the impact of pregnant learners on other learners seems to be an issue. Mpanza (2012) reveals that pregnant learners tend to fall asleep during lesson time, which creates some sense of doubt for educators as to whether these learners gain any concrete knowledge from attending school. Likewise, Preez et al. (2012) alluded to the exacerbating factors that come along with learner pregnancies, as it does not only impact on the educator's lesson, but also the other learners in the class. It was further indicated that pregnant learners experience hormonal changes, and thus, generally display mood swings, which in turn affects their attitude (Manyathi, 2014).

Therefore, considering the respective contributions of Mpanza, Preez, Botha, Rabie and Manyathi, it can be observed that educators have experienced difficulty with pregnant learners' performance in class as well as their attitudes. Additionally, these pregnant learners do not only impact on the educators' lessons, but also impact on other learners in the class.

2.3.2 Absenteeism

Educators perceive learners' school attendance as significantly affected by learner pregnancy. Willian (2013) mentions that adolescent mothers usually display frequent absenteeism, as they experience challenges balancing school and motherhood. Likewise, Malahlela (2012) reports that one of the effects of teenage pregnancy involves grade repetition, a period of temporary withdrawal from school, and high rates of absenteeism. Additionally, Malahlela (2012) reports that it is uncommon for impregnated teenagers to attend school as per normal, where irregular school attendance was closely associated with these learners attending ante-natal clinic consultations; being unwell due to their pregnancy; taking care of their child and the feeling of being unsafe at school.

Similarly, Willian (2013) mentions that adolescent mothers will also display frequent absenteeism, since they will find difficulty juggling school, and taking care of their baby. The DoE (2017) suggests that frequent high absenteeism rates will impact negatively on the academic performance of pregnant learners, as the learner will not be able to keep up with academic requirements, and will miss out on assessment. Likewise, Preez et al. (2012) identified contributing factors to absenteeism as antenatal and postnatal clinic appointments before and after birth; feeling ill due to pregnancy; or having been ashamed of their

pregnancy and the actual birth of their child (Mpanza, 2012). Additionally, Willian (2013) reports the collection of social grants to have been another reason for absenteeism. It was further revealed that pregnant learners were often absent during their first trimester, since they experience vomiting during this time, and for this reason tend to avoid their educator/s (Preez et al., 2012).

With regards to Willian, DoE Malahlela, Mpanza and Preez et al., it can be gathered that impregnated teenagers and teenage mothers will have difficulty attending school frequently as they may feel ill often, have medical appointments, and take time off from school to take care of their child. This results in a high rate of absenteeism, which will result in difficulty in keeping up with academic demands.

2.3.3 Unexpected births and midwifery

Ndlovu (2019) explains that teenage pregnancy causes disturbances, and is identified as problematic in South Africa. Additionally, the study reveals that pregnancy amongst the learner cohort challenges educators, as they lack the skills and facilities required to deal with pregnant learners in their classroom, or at school in general. According to Matlala, Nolte and Temane (2014), educators indicated the lack of skills required to accommodate the needs of pregnant learners, where training would be understood to be beneficial. Additionally, the study revealed the primary role of an educator to be to facilitate learning, where, if they received training to assist pregnant learners, this would result in additional responsibility and roles. In addition, the study notes the numerous roles and responsibilities undertaken by educators, which add to their workload in terms of teaching, administration, dealing with learners and parents, and assisting learners with social problems etc.

Similarly, Sibeko (2012) reported that the high rates of teenage pregnancy and the unexpected births at school made educators feel overburdened. Additionally, Preez et al. (2019) emphasise the training given to educators within the educational system, and not in midwifery. Similarly, Mpanza (2012) reports on the high expectations of educators to do their jobs in the educational system, and to act as a midwife. Similarly, a study by Preez et al. revealed that educators are not trained for midwifery, and do not regard themselves as either doctors or nurses. Additionally, the study revealed there to be no provision for a birth situation, no availability of gloves, and no skills held by educators to assist with deliveries.

Furthermore, the study reported that there is lack of assistance from other staff members and from emergency medical services.

Educators were expected to use their private vehicles to the hospitals due to emergencies, where such an instance was explained as high risk. Additionally, the DoH (2011) states that there is severe shortage of ambulances, especially in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Preez et al. (2019) reports that educators mentioned it is faster for them to use their personal vehicles to rush the pregnant teenager to hospital instead of waiting for emergency services to take the learner to hospital. Additionally, educators felt uncomfortable about using their personal vehicle to transport the teenager and unborn child, due to the fact that, if anything went wrong, the educator may be culpable for negligence.

Therefore, educators are faced with not only the responsibility of teaching pregnant learners but are also faced with the responsibility of delivering babies or transporting pregnant learners and their unborn babies to the hospital. Educators are not trained to deliver babies and lack the requisite medical knowledge for this circumstance. Such actions required by educators are high risk for the learner and unborn child alike, as the educator lacks the requisite medical skills to assist the learner. Furthermore, the educator is also at risk, since if they take on this responsibility of assisting to deliver the baby or transporting the pregnant learner. If something goes wrong, they can be held liable. As much as educators would like to assist these learners, and have generally good intentions, the circumstances of the learner may ultimately be detrimental to the educator themselves.

2.3.4 Academic Performance

A study conducted by Nkosi (2019) reported the impact of teenage pregnancy on learners' academic performance. The study further reported that reduced grades attend learner pregnancy. The educators in the study revealed that teenage pregnancy does not always end learners' schooling careers. Similarly, Morrell and Shefer (2013), as cited in Willian (2013), provide evidence suggesting that many teenage mothers would return to school or delay their education rather than drop out. Marteleto (2008), as cited in Willian (2013, p. 34), supports the argument that "in South Africa, unlike in most other common African countries, girls commonly continue their education after giving birth action, or [...] drop out of school, which affects their life, and their child's."

According to Nkosi (2019) for learners who do return to school following childbirth, it evidently impacts their academic performance, and sometimes their progress at school. A

study by Nkosi (2019) further revealed that learners miss out on classwork, which in turns results in poor performance. Additionally, learners find it hard to cope with the syllabus, and therefore do not complete class work or homework and assessments, and they are usually sleepy, and find it hard to concentrate. Likewise, Shefer, Bhana, Morrell, Manzini and Masuku (2012) argue that, when learners who are mothers return to school, their academic performance is often affected, and many of the teenage mothers shifted from performing academically well to become average learners or under-achievers, due to the need to balance school and motherhood.

With reference to the above literature, it is evident that pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers will find difficulty with academic work, as they will have high rates of absenteeism due to clinic appointments, feeling sick due to their pregnancy, recovery after birth, and taking care of their child. With high rates of absenteeism, it is surely difficult for the learner to keep up, which sees their academic performance drop.

2.4 Factors Educators Consider as Contributing Towards Learner Pregnancy

2.4.1 Socio-Economic factors

Currie (2016) defines socioeconomic factors as the behaviour of people, including how they interact with one another, or their family structure. Socioeconomic factors are associated with financial and social issues. The socioeconomic status of the learner may serve as a contributing factor to learner pregnancy.

2.4.1.1 Poverty

According to Hussain (2019), poverty can be defined as having insufficient money for basic needs, which consists of food, shelter, and water. Flanagan, Lince, Durao de Menezes and Mdlolane (2013) identify poverty as a main contributing factor to teenage pregnancy.

Cheteni, Khamfula, Mah and Casadevall (2019) report that approximately 57.2 % of South Africa's population are living in poverty, where, additionally, UNICEF (as cited in DoE, 2017) reports that of every ten children, six come from a poverty-stricken home. In addition, 68.3 % of children living in rural areas are faced with multifaceted poverty, into which they are born (Cheteni et al., 2019).

A study by Nkwanyana (2011) revealed that learner pregnancy is common among young people who are from deprived families, who have low expectations of education or employment. Similarly, Nkosi and Pretorius (2019) reports that child-headed homes and

orphans are usually faced with the burden and difficulty of taking care of their families and find difficulty in meeting their basic needs, and this may result in them engaging in transactional sexual activities to earn money, which may further result in pregnancy.

Transactional sex is defined by Hoefinger (2010) as a sexual relationship, where there is an exchange of gifts or money for sexual services. The individuals involved in transactional sex do not view themselves as prostitutes or clients, but often regard themselves as girlfriends or boyfriends, and sugar babies or sugar daddies. Ndlovu (2019) reveals that those living in poverty get involved in serious relationships with sugar daddies in order to receive money to cover their basic needs. Furthermore, the study revealed that poverty affects their self-esteem, resulting in low-self-esteem, believing that they do not 'deserve' protected sex.

A study by Preez, Botha, Rabie and Manyathi (2019) reports educator views that the rights given to learners and the assistance offered to teenage mothers in the form of state grants were identified as a form of encouragement, and therefore problematic. Similarly, Segalo (2020) explains that South African State grants serve as a source of encouragement for young girls to fall pregnant in order to receive a monthly income from the government. The social grants provided defeat the purpose of teaching young girls to abstain from sexual engagement at a young age (Segalo, 2020). Preez et al. (2019) further report that the government can intervene if they are able to revise the rights of learners, as these grants encourage them to fall pregnant.

Makiwane (2010) argues that the fact that lower rates of teenage pregnancy occurred before the child support grants were introduced in 1998 ought to act as supporting evidence against the claim of teenagers getting pregnant deliberately in order to simply gain access to the child support grant.

All authors cited, viz. Nkwanyana, Preez, Botha, Rabie, Manyathi and Segalo reveal poverty to be a contributing factor to learner pregnancy. Learners who come from poverty stricken or low-income homes are vulnerable to engaging in transactional sex in order to receive gifts or cash to either meet their basic needs, or for a 'better life'. Additionally, learners tend to engage in sexual intercourse with the intention of falling pregnant so as to receive monthly state grants. These learners take advantage of the rights accorded to them by having a baby, in order to receive grants as a monthly income.

Furthermore, the research findings of Naidoo, Muthukrishna and Nkabinde (2019) indicate that prevailing narratives of deviance, shame, and stigma significantly influence the social

experiences of young mothers. These individuals encounter minimal assistance from educational institutions in overcoming obstacles related to accessing the curriculum and attaining a quality education. While extended family members and community networks offer some level of support, these resources are often unreliable in environments characterized by poverty and disadvantage. Despite these challenges, the research highlighted that young mothers demonstrate resilience and agency in managing hardships and pursuing the completion of their secondary education, even as teenage motherhood and parenting continue to be viewed negatively within the educational context. Additionally, Skobi and Makofane (2017) advocates for the implementation of supportive measures for young mothers who have resumed their education, guided by principles of social justice in the educational framework.

2.4.2 Peer Pressure

Marquis and Andras (2016) define peer pressure as either a direct or indirect influence of one's social group. Members of the social groups are likely to influence an individual's values, beliefs, and behaviour.

A study by Ndlovu (2019) reports peer pressure to be the main influential factor that contributes to learner pregnancy. Likewise, Thobejane (2015) argues that learners engage in sexual intercourse due to the pressure received by peers. Teenagers identify with their peers. Perci (2017, as cited in Mogotsi, 2021) explains that teenagers spend most of their time with friends and peer groups than with family members, which can have an influence on their decisions. Teenagers tend to go to peers for advice regarding sexual matters, without knowing if the information received is correct or incorrect. Additionally, adolescents harbour a fear of losing their relationships with friends, and crave a sense of acceptance and belonging. Thus, in order to avoid rejection by their social group, they give in to peer pressure.

Mogotsi's (2021) study reveals that educators identified peer pressure as a key factor of influence, as learners asked each other for advice about sexuality, leading to receiving poor advice. Additionally, the study reported, learner pregnancy has been identified as a competition among teenagers, where, if one friend fell pregnant, another would be required to join them, as if a trend. Furthermore, if learners did not engage in sexual intercourse, they were called names, or laughed at. Mogotsi (2021) further reported that learners do things to please their friends, in order to fit into a social group. This is affirmed by Makhitha and Botha (2017), who state that learner pregnancy continues, because teenagers view teenage

pregnancy as fashionable. Teenagers will therefore engage in sexual intercourse simply in order to impress their peers.

The above shows that teenagers consider the information given by peers to be significant and adolescents can make decisions simply to please their peers. This is affirmed by the studies conducted Mogosi, Thobejane and Ndlovu, where educators stress the significance of peer approval, and the importance of fitting in within their peer group. Additionally, educators allude to teenage pregnancy as becoming a competition among girls.

2.4.3 Coercive power

Coercive power refers to the ability to influence someone's decision making with the use of discipline, if that particular individual disobeys an order or instruction. Sexual coercion takes place when an individual is pressured, threatened, or tricked into undesired sexual activity (Raven, 2017). Coercion gives the impression to an individual to think they owe sex to another individual who has potential power over them, such as a boss, teacher, or landlord.

A study conducted by Naidoo, Sartorius, De Vries and Taylor (2017) reveals that South African high school learners are at great risk of encountering forced sex, with a greater prevalence in adolescent females. Similarly, studies done on socio-cultural contexts indicated an imbalance of gender norms for males and females, where traditional gender constructs were still operational and constraining to women (Mantell, Needheem, Smit, Hoffman, Cebekhulu, Adam-Skinner, Exner, Mabude, Beksinka, Stein & Milford, 2009). Women are seen as subservient, while men take on dominant roles, thereby resulting in women having a disadvantage in relation to men (Mantell et al., 2009). Mantell (2009) reports that men are characterised as masculine, being physical abusive, more likely known for rape, and make decisions regarding reincluding the use of condoms. Men continue to maintain power over women, and are regarded as household heads (Mantall et al., 2009). Likewise, a study by Mpani and Nsiband (2015) reported that men use their masculine power to initiate sex among school-going girls.

In light of this, women can be considered to be vulnerable due to their lack of power to negotiate safe sex practices with their partners. It is evident that women are seen as weaker, and subordinate, in communities, and that this role is granted to them by society. It is also clear that, due to their lack of power and masculinity, women generally find themselves in unequal relationships, and cannot make decisions for themselves, resulting in vulnerability. Due to their lack of dominance, they are known to be subservient to men, and tend to do as

they say. They therefore lack the ability to make decisions about sex and contraception, and are prone to sexual abuse.

2.4.4 Lack of education/Knowledge

The lack of knowledge has also been identified as a contributory factor to early pregnancies. Shrestha (2012) states that knowledge plays a fundamental role in an individual's decision making, which influences their health and development. The WHO (2020) alludes to the lack of knowledge on sexual topics and family planning, where many lack the requisite skills to practice knowledge among teenagers, as sex education is still woefully lacking in certain countries.

Despite the efforts of the DoE (2019) to include sex education in the curriculum, Mturi and Beckhuke (2019, p. 1) argue that “teenage pregnancy and prevalence among high school learners are very high in South Africa, despite the introduction of comprehensive sex education in schools since 2002.” The DoE (2019) asserts their position by alluding to the fact that sex education is compulsory within the school curriculum, as every grade is mandated to complete either Life Skills, or Life Orientation (LO). Additionally, comprehensive sex education within the life orientation curriculum aims to ensure that we help learners build their knowledge of concepts, values, content and attitudes linked to sex, sexuality, and behaviour change, as well as encourage them to lead safe and healthy lives (DoE, 2019). However, according to Appalsamy (2015), sex is regarded as a sensitive topic for teachers, as many educators shy away from the topic. In addition, it was also reported that some life orientation teachers intentionally skip certain topics, where they feel uncomfortable when discussing sexual matters in class. Additionally, Mturi (2019) notes that it is usually assumed that any educator can teach life orientation, regardless of their specialisation. Furthermore Mturi's (2019) study revealed the limited extent to which life orientation teachers are trained, by displaying evidence of how school principals do not believe that special training is required in this regard.

Similarly, Mbatha (2020) states that poor access to comprehensive sexuality education has detrimental consequences for teenagers' lives. Teachers find it difficult to deliver such content, as it brings about ethical issues among societies, such as conservative culture, where parents condemn the ‘sex talk’, or where they are inadequately trained to undertake it (Shefer, 2013). Furthermore, in cases where educators are too uncomfortable to deliver content, they may totally avoid the delivery of the topic of sex during lessons, and thereby skip sex

education lessons, or encourage children to read through worksheets independently, which isn't as effective as teaching sex education content (Apalsamy, 2015). Apalsamy, Mbatha and Shefer (2013) argue that it can therefore be deduced that sex education is not taken seriously among the various educational stakeholders. It is either thought of as poor quality, or not thought at all, which in turn impacts on the knowledge a child retains from each lesson. This leaves the child with poor knowledge, to make healthy sexual choices.

2.4.5 Lack of Parental Involvement

Nkosi and Pretorius (2019) note that a lack of parental involvement results in poor communication regarding dating, contraception, and intimacy, and thus limits the individual to information about reproductive health, which are identified as contributing factors to teenage pregnancy. The study by Nkosi and Pretorius goes on to note that sexuality is not a common topic discussed within families. The study reveals that cultural values and beliefs limit parents from talking to their children about sexual topics. Likewise, Magotsi (2021) reports that parents tend to be too shy to talk to their children about sex and pregnancy, due to certain cultural beliefs. Additionally, if parents created an open relationship with their children about sex, that would largely impact their decision-making with regards to dating, sexual intercourse, and contraception, and there would be a decrease in the number of cases of teenage pregnancy. Similarly, Magotsi (2021) reported a lack of parental involvement and guidance as a contributing factor to teenage pregnancy. The study revealed that poor communication was a major concern, where parents do not communicate, talk, and provide guidance for their teenage children about sexual matters. The study reported that many parents work away from home, and are therefore incapable of providing proper guidance and monitoring for their children. Additionally, some teenagers that lack parental involvement, due to their parents working away from home or due to coming from child-headed households without the necessary leadership or discipline. "Parents flocked to cities such as Gauteng for employment leaving children behind to fend for themselves" (Skobi & Makofane, 2017, p.7). Parental absenteeism gives such learners a sense of adulthood as a function of their relative power, and they may allow their boyfriends to stay over at their homes without giving it much thought. When adolescent females are reared in environments characterized by authoritative parental figures, they are inclined to cultivate self-trust as a result of the secure attachment and comprehensive sex education guidance provided by their parents or caregivers (Salami, Ayegboyin, & Adedeji, 2019). Furthermore, Thobejane (2015) notes that teenage pregnancy is influenced by lack of love and affection from parents.

Due to sex being a taboo topic in many households, in turn, these teenagers consult with their friends, and lean on social media and the internet to determine their own behaviour. Although there are clinics and hospitals where they can obtain information, teenagers do not use these facilities, due to the fear of being labelled as sexually active (Nkosi & Pretorius, 2019).

Nkosi, Pretorius, Magotski and Thobejane respectively show that parental involvement is essential in keeping teenagers from succumbing to early pregnancies. In line with this view, from previous studies it is notable that children rely on their parents to provide guidance, love and morals and values that will assist them through life. When such guidance is not provided, teenagers go to their peers or online for advice or information, which sometimes does not provide the correct information. Additionally, the studies place emphasis on the importance of parental involvement, where, without adult supervision, teenagers tend to be undisciplined, which can result in sexual activity.

2.5 Roles educators have taken on to ensure learners continue with schooling.

Educators can be and often are enablers for impregnated learners to continue with their schooling, and return after childbirth. According Segalo (2020) in the prenatal stage of pregnancy, monitoring was done by health practitioners at clinics, result in pregnant learners being absent from school for many days, and falling behind with lessons, with some educators not willing to provide extra classes. The study by Segalo (2020) reports that, although a few educators will want to assist pregnant learners with extra lessons, it is not always possible. Very few learners pass at the end of the year, and only a few return in the following year to repeat the failed grade, where in some cases, learners change school due to the stigma associated with early motherhood. Willian (2013) has revealed that educators offered support to pregnant learners by helping them feel comfortable being pregnant. This role of support assists learners to deal with stigma associated to pregnancy, and is reported as being important to the girls. Additionally, some educators were understanding about pregnant learners and mothers having to take time off, especially to take care of their child. These educators would provide assistance for the learner to catch up with their work.

In a study by Chohan (2010), a participant reported that her educator gave her clothing for her baby in winter. Similarly, Willian (2013) reported that educators allowed learners to return to school. Additionally, a participant who was a learner reported that she did not want to go back to school, noting that her educator encouraged her to return to school, however, the learner could not return, due to being the only person who could look after her child.

Mpanza (2012) explains a study conducted on educators to show support and willingness to assist both pregnant learners and mothers. Educators explained that the institution ought to be equipped to cater for pregnant students and teenage mothers.

Matlala (2016) revealed, providing social support to expectant learners is a need for facilitation of social support to keep expectant students in schools. Additionally, educators who form part of SBSTs are meant to provide social support, which pertains to a network comprised of professionals, family members, neighbors, friends, and community members who are ready to provide physical, psychological, and financial assistance. Social support encompasses relationships characterized by communicative strategies that enhance esteem, coping abilities, sense of belonging, and competence via the distribution of physical or psychological resources. Social support acts as a form of assistance aimed at aiding individuals experiencing psychological difficulties (Matlala, 2018). In contrast, Matlala, Nolte, & Temane (2015), have unveiled a concerning trend regarding expectant students' experiences within educational settings. These findings show that expectant students are not receiving satisfactory social support from their educators and close relatives, a crucial element necessary for their ability to remain in school and pursue their education. The lack of an adequate support system not only hampers their academic performance but also affects their mental and emotional well-being. Recognizing this gap, there is a pressing need for professional nurses and educators to step in and facilitate the required social support for expectant students. By doing so, these professionals can play a significant role in ensuring that expectant students are given a fair chance to continue their education without interruption, thereby safeguarding their future and the well-being of their unborn children.

The above literature evidences that educators can be supportive, and can also be enablers. It also reflects that while educators' support is crucial, there are other important factors that need to be considered, such as whether there is someone who could look after the baby or money for child care. Additionally, educators are willing to assist, however, they experience a lack of skills and support.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of literature on learner pregnancy legislation, educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school, and role that educators have taken on to ensure learners continue with schooling. The review explored existing research and knowledge conducted in developing and developed countries. Particular attention was given to South Africa, which is the context within the case study site is situated. I have positioned the study in a manner that adds value to the identified knowledge gaps. This chapter provides a discussion and justification for the theoretical framework that supported the study.

The proposed study was anchored in the social constructionist theories of Burger and Luckmann (1966). Social Constructionism is a theoretical framework in sociology, communication theory and social ontology, which forwards certain ideas about physical reality being developed from collaborative consensus, rather than from pure observation. The theory is grounded on the idea that meaning is developed in collaborate consensus, instead of individually (Andrews, 2012).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), central concepts were identified to be that individuals and groups who interact in a given social setting create, over a period of time, ideas or mental representations of the actions of others, and that these ideas result in being habituated into reciprocal roles played by other individuals in relation to others. When such roles are made accessible to other individuals of the social system and allowed to play out, the reciprocal interactions are institutionalised, suggesting that they become embedded in the social system. Knowledge, ideas, and beliefs of the nature of reality become implanted in the specific institution, and it is thereby understood as constructed.

3.2 Origins of Social Constructionism

In the 18th century, Friedrich Neitzsche wrote that "Facts do not exist, only interpretations do" (as cited in Burr & Dick, 2017). Additionally, Walter Lippmann (1992) stated that the real environment is far too complex and too brief for direct acquaintance between individuals and their social setting. Individuals construct a fiction that is put through a biased and shortened mental representation of the world, and to an extent, individuals' fictitious

environment can only be understood to be a mere fiction. Individuals live in a given world, however they think and feel in different worlds (Lippmann, 1996). Lippmann's environment/social setting is also referred to as reality, and the term fictitious/pseudo-environment is equivalent to what we call constructed reality.

Social constructionism has been rooted in 'symbolic interactionism', which is a sociological theory generated from practical considerations, and highlights the communication and interaction of people to make images and implications (Smith, 2018). Berger and Luckmann (1991) supported the social construction of reality as a concept. After much research and theory, it was pledged to the basic belief that individuals create their own social and cultural worlds and at the same time these worlds also create them (Gail & David, 2010).

The theory put forward the term 'taken-for-granted-realities', which stem from interactions between individuals and groups, and among other aspects, social agents. Additionally, reality is not waiting to be discovered as an objective truth via a positivist inquiry. Instead, multiple realities exist, and compete for legitimacy and truth.

3.3 Key Features of Social Constructionism

According to Galbin (2014, p. 82), social constructionism is a "theory of knowledge of sociology and communication that examines the development jointly constructed of the world". Andrews (2012) explains that constructionists view truth and views all meanings of knowledge as created and not discovered. The Social constructionism theory is generally fixed and natural, however, they are not natural. Instead, they are the creation of a given society or population and thus do not precisely reflect reality. Social constructionists view the theory on the following main points:

3.3.1 Knowledge is Socially Constructed

Social constructionists view knowledge as emerging out of human relationships. Therefore, what we gather to be true and objective is the outcome of social processes that occur in a specific context. In the domain of the sciences, this means that as much truth can be attained within the limits of discipline, there is no single comprehensive truth that can be understood to be more valid than any other (Vinney, 2019). It is believed that ideas are constructed, rather than discovered, yet they correlate with a phenomenon in the real world. This resonates with the work of Berger and Luckmann (1991), and the realism of Hammersley (1992), who argue that reality is socially defined but note that this reality refers to the personal experience

of everyday life, which provides an idea of how the world is understood instead of an objective reality of a naturalistic world. According to Andrews (2012), knowledge is created by the interactions of a specific group with society. This knowledge is brought about by the interactions of individuals with the social world, where this social world successfully influences individuals, resulting in both routinisation and habitualisation. This suggests that frequently repeated actions turn into a pattern, which can be continuously produced without any effort. After a period of time, habitualisation becomes a routine, creating a general store of knowledge. This is established as a convention in an organisation or society, to the extent that generations to come will experience the same type of knowledge as an objective (Andrews, 2012).

Knowledge and systems depend on communities of shared intelligibility. Therefore, they are governed to a large extent by norms and historical cultures. Thus, a social constructionist does not claim to provide ‘truth’, however, does claim that the criteria for individuals who are called on to identify behaviours, entities, or events are largely restricted within the limits of culture, history, and social context. Therefore, a social constructionist “locates meaning in an understanding of how ideas and attitudes are developed over time within a social context” (Gablin, 2014, p.85).

In this case, knowledge is created by educators as they interact with learners who find themselves pregnant. Educators spend approximately seven hours with learners, which enables educators to identify frequently repeated actions that eventually turn into patterns displayed by learners. Thereafter, habitualisation occurs, and educators are able to store knowledge and construct meaning of concepts. This theory enabled the researcher to understand how educators’ ideas and attitudes of teenage pregnancy are shaped over time within their social context, viz. their relationship with the impregnated learners in the classroom.

3.3.2 Language is central to social constructionism

Language plays a crucial role in the analysis and integration of data of an individual’s everyday reality. Language connects common-sense knowledge with a limited knowledge. Language has the ability to transcend the reality on one’s everyday life. It can refer to experiences concerning finite provinces of meaning, reach discrete spheres of reality, and reach aspects of life that are unavailable to daily experience (Elster, 2017).

According to Galbin (2014), identities originate from social realm, and not from inside a person. Socialisation occurs through others, who mediate objective realities and provide meanings, and it is eventually internalised by individuals (Berger & Andrews as cited in Andrews, 2012). It is language that enables structuring for the way in which the world is experienced.

Conversation is identified as the most important method of maintaining, altering and reconstructing subjective reality (depending on the mind). Subjective reality comprises concepts that can be shared with others. Thus, meanings and understanding are shared, to the extent that concepts do not need redefining each time they arise in everyday conversation, where meaning amounts to an assumption of reality which is largely taken for granted (Andrews, 2012).

According to Burr and Dick (2017), the core principle of the social constructionist theory is that how individuals understand and even recognise their world, concepts and objects (including other people) and events, does not always reflect the nature of that specific world, instead it could represent a product of how that world is represented or produced via language.

Therefore, for example, what is perceived as a tree, is, from a social constructionist perspective, mainly the a result of how classifications (such as weeds and flowers) are constructed through language, other than being a natural outcome of perceptual capabilities. This does not mean that trees do not have “natural” characteristics that can be identified and recorded, but rather, that what is regarded as the defining characteristics of trees is a primary product of the use of language. This suggests understanding phenomena are social, rather than natural.

While all people and objects in the world have specific properties, viewed from a constructionist approach, what is of greater interest is why specified characteristics assume importance and, critically, how they are used as a grounding for social and scientific evaluation.

3.3.3 Culturally and historically specificity

How the world is identified and classified differs culturally (in different places) and historically (over time). For example, we are aware of the European societal class system which categorises individuals into the middle or upper class. However, if we reflect on the

past (200 years), the middle class was not in existence, such a category was raised during the industrial revolution as a result of novel forms of ownership of property (Stallybrass & Whyte, 1986). Likewise, if one reflects on the past century, it was found to be highly unusual for women to enter tertiary institutions, or further their studies. Burr and Dick (2017) note how this was closely associated with changes in society, notably the increasing population, industrialisation and urbanisation. Such changes give rise to the need for more stringent forms of “governance”, defined as the ways in which populations are controlled and governed. Foucault (1977) argues that such governance processes were a direct impact and responsible for creating categories of “being” that is taken for granted in the current period of time, such as for example the concepts of mental stability, academic ability, sexual orientation etc. Foucault argues that these categories were not existent earlier, it merely means they became central and significant characteristics of the current or modern epoch for a specific reason. Modern categories of being are closely associated with the needs of private enterprises, and the need for people to become productive in a physical and biological manner.

3.3.4 Discourse and Disciplinary Power

A social constructionist refers to discourse as a set of ideas which hold cultural significance or what could be known as a “broad meaning system”, and can be used to understand the world and the events that take place within it (Burr & Dick, 2017). Therefore, it is common in the current society to understand what people do and say via the discourse of “personality” or through “disposition”, namely behaviour as a result of internal traits or motivation that are either inherited or learned. Every idea does not count as a discourse. Therefore, for example, the concept “fruit” is not always identified as a discourse although it is a category which raised from language that we use to categorise specific edible matter. The differentiation between discourse and ideas is its *productive power*. Which means that discourses do not provide a description of the world, a person or events, but instead, influences what we do and how we act (Knights & Morgan, 1991)

For example, the most significant contemporary explanation for the causes of individual behaviour “personality”, we view individuals as responsible for their destiny and well-being in life. Acceptance takes place only when an individual lacks such responsibility if they are identified to be incapacitated in some way, or mentally ill. Therefore, when a crime is committed, society responds with some form of punishment, and attempts to rehabilitate the

individual in order to correct a presumed internal fault. However, scholars highlight the point that the criminal behaviour appears to be the result of a lack of education, poverty, and unemployment (Burr & Dick, 2017). When these criminal activities are acknowledged, the “personality” discourse means that the interventions that are adopted are targeted at improving the individual, rather than designed to target the root of the criminal activity such as poverty.

Another aspect of discourse arises from *disciplinary effects*. Foucault (1977) has argued that an effective mode of modern governance is the disciplinary power or the desire of people to conform to societal norms. The discourse of personhood, for example, produces ideas about what “normal” individuals ought to be like. In the present day, for instance having a body mass index above 25 is understood to be “overweight”. Because body size is such a defining characteristic of personhood, this will produce behaviour targeted at reducing one’s body mass index, such as exercise routines, and a diet. Some individuals may resist such characteristics, and possibly embrace and celebrate larger sizes, however, culturally produced discourses may make it difficult to feel a sense of ‘fitting in’ or ‘being beautiful’. Such processes of conformity and resistance result in the proliferation of social categories.

3.4. Relevance

Social constructionism is grounded on the principle of knowledge being created and not discovered. Additionally, the theory places emphasis on social constructionists’ understanding that knowledge emerges out of human relationships, and is brought about by the interactions of individuals with the social world. With this, the social world successfully influences individuals, resulting in routinisation and habitualisation. Social constructionism was used as a theoretical framework in the study to explore the experiences of educators as it focuses on how individuals develop knowledge and understand their world. With reference to knowledge being socially constructed, the pregnant learners that passed through the classes of each educator over years created information about their pregnancies for their educators via their mutual daily interactions. These educators would have observed behaviours, attitudes, entities and events which have provided them with the ability to construct knowledge about pregnant learners. These educators were required to invoke their beliefs and perceptions and would have to reflect on how they understand their world as they interact with pregnant learners and engage in shared meaning of such knowledge among other educators. They will reflect on the frequently repeated actions of the pregnant learners, which

eventually turn into a pattern in which they have created understanding of knowledge with regards to these learners' culture, history, and social context.

With reference to language, central to social constructionism **is that** educators have daily conversations with learner within their lessons, and outside of the classroom. Socialisation will take place with the pregnant learners, where the educator will mediate their objective realities, provide meaning and will be eventually internalised by the educator. This provides a structure for the topic under scrutiny (teenage pregnancy).

With reference to culture and historical features, the experiences of educators and causes of teenage pregnancy have been previously identified, however this varies temporally. As observed by Foucault (1977), direct governance processes need to be identified in order to understand the current categories of being (experiences of educators, and causes of teenage pregnancy) in the context of the current time. Similarly, the experiences of educators and the roles taken on must be revised along with the school's teenage pregnancy policy and the Policy of the DoE the Prevention and Management of Teenage pregnancy in order to identify the major gaps between policy and practice. A gap certainly exists due to the research done, and policies that have been released. Further investigation, however, needs to take place in order to bridge the gap regarded as normal in society (Burr & Dick, 2017).

Similarly, with regards to discourse and disciplinary power, teenagers engage in sexual intercourse, and when associated with "personality and deposition", this suggests that such systems create the idea of internal traits or motivation, which are either inherited or learned by the teenager. The theory suggests that we know that teenage pregnancy is on the increase, however, we should look at the underlying conditions or motivations that result in teenage pregnancy. This study sought to do this by adopting semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with educators, who spend many hours with these learners and who has socially constructed knowledge of these concepts from their social interactions with learners.

There is a paucity of literature focusing on rural schools and the perspectives of learners in them. The proposed study intends to fill in these gaps in literature by addressing the experiences of educators in a secondary school in an urban area. Additionally, the study sought to explore the experiences and practices of educators with regards to legislation, and the gap between the two.

3.5 Conclusion

The chapter presented and discussed the theory of social constructionism which was deemed appropriate for this particular study due to its nature, centred on social interactions and the construction of concepts. The current study includes the constructed knowledge of teenage pregnancy by educators. The following chapter presents the research the research design and methodology underpinning the study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Bertram & Christiansen note that “A research design is a systematic plan of how the researcher will generate data that is needed to answer the research question” (2014 p. 40). Chapter Four will discuss the research approach, justify the use of the interpretivist paradigm, research design, sampling and research instruments used to generate data for this study. Moreover, this chapter will outline the trustworthiness of the data generated, as well as ethical considerations and limitations encountered within this study.

4.2 Qualitative Approach

The study utilised a qualitative approach as “a qualitative approach aims to understand social behaviour, and how people make meaning of their experiences” (Bertram & Christiansen 2014, p. 34). This form of approach was suitable for this study, as it aimed to describe, understand and make sense of educators’ experiences of teaching pregnant learners. One of the pros of qualitative research is that it enables the researcher to use a variation of research methods to gather data. Qualitative data often requires a small number of participants, who provide rich data of a certain quality. Thus, using the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to access primary data, which is open-ended. Therefore, this method of data generation was considered most suitable, as it aids the exploration and understanding of factors educators consider to contribute towards learner pregnancy and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

4.3 Paradigm

The study was supported by an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm seeks social research and is used to understand the meaning informing human behaviours. Bertram & Christiansen argue that “The interpretivist paradigm does not aim to predict what people will do, but rather to describe and understand how people make sense of their worlds, and how they make meaning of their particular actions” (2014, p. 26). The purpose of using the interpretivist paradigm is to gain deeper understanding of how individuals make sense of a specific context in which they live. Interpretivists aim to describe and understand; therefore, this paradigm was most appropriate, as the researcher sought to understand the factors

educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling. This paradigm aided to understand educators' experiences of learner pregnancy in a secondary school, within the context of their context of reality.

4.4 Research Design/Style

The study used a single case study. Yin (2018) defines a case study as qualitative approach which allows the researcher to explore a contemporary, real-life system (being the case) or multiple systems. The use of a single case study enabled the researcher to describe and understand what it's like for educators in their specific context, in this particular instance, their experiences of teaching pregnant learners. With regards to the case study method, it enabled participants to share their experiences and views on the phenomena. Bertram notes in this regard that "The researcher aims to capture the reality of the participants' lived experiences of and thoughts about a particular situation" (2014, p. 42).

4.5 Selection of Participants

Murjere (2016, p.108) defines "a group of people [as] objects or items that are taken from a large population for a measurement." The author further explains the sampling process as the selection of a noteworthy population which have particular characteristics for the research under scrutiny.

Purposive sampling was utilised in the proposed study to select four educators from one secondary school which depicts high rates of teenage pregnancy in the Umlazi District, situated in Chatsworth, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define purposive sampling as a method of sampling that enables the researcher to make specific choices about which people to include in their sample. The researcher made a specific choice on which people and school will be used in the study. Purposive sampling enables researchers to select participants whom they regard to provide the most able insightful information required to be answered for the study (Chivanga & Monyai, 2016). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to use participants suitable for the purpose of the research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The small sample size ensured that the study's aim was to generate rich data of quality that adequately addressed the research question (Connelly, 2016).

The recruitment phase of this study consisted of, the researcher setting up a meeting with the principal of the sample school, where the nature of the study was described. The principal then requested to assist in the selection of educators as participants. The principal identified four Life Orientation educators and use the school's pregnancy statistics to identify educators who have taught those learners in the past five years. Thus, these educators were best suited as they had significant experiences of teaching pregnant learners and also had insight as to life orientation and comprehensive sex education.

4.5.1 Target Population

Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010, p.2) define a target population as a “defined population from which the sample has been properly selected”. The target population consisted of four Life Orientation educators who have taught learners who are pregnant, or have been pregnant previously. The researcher used educators as participants who have been identified by the principal to have taught the greatest number of learners who are currently pregnant or have previously been pregnant, this was established by looking at class divisions that display high pregnancy rates. The school's pregnancy statistics and past records of the school's time tables served as a tool to identify the target population. The researcher used educators who have taught or currently are teaching pregnant learners to ensure the investigation of specific situations rather than to simply generalise.

4.5.2 Sampling Procedure

The study used a non-probability sampling procedure to select participants. According to Bacher, Lemcke, Quatember and Schmich (2019), a non-probability sampling procedure relies on the researcher in order to make a judgement to choose criteria or variables to denote the sample population. The primary investigator identified variables for the sample thus participants consisted of the following criteria: educators of the subject Life Orientation and who have taught or currently teaching pregnant learners. The reason for this criterion was to ensure that participants already have experiences of teaching pregnant learners and would serve as information-rich participants. One educator was identified from Grade 8 to eleven, who participated in the semi-structured interviews. Once all the participants were identified, the researcher provided them with a participant information sheet and consent form (Appendix A), and explained the nature of the study. I, the researcher, placed emphasis on the study being voluntary, and the participant withdrawing from the study at any time. The

educators were also provided with consent forms to sign, to provide permission to be audio-recorded.

4.5.3 Recruitment Phase

I set up an appointment and met with the school's principal. I then provided the principal with the participant information sheet, and explained the nature of the study, thereafter requesting permission from the principal to meet with the educators, provided them with the participant information sheet, and enlightened them as to the nature of the study. The educators were required to sign a consent form in order to grant the researcher permission to audio-record them.

4.6 Data Generation Methods

Data generation can be defined as the methods and theory utilised by researchers to gather data from a sampled source (Bertram, 2014). The proposed research used questionnaires and interviews as a means to generate data.

4.6.1 Interviews

According to Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015) a semi-structured interview consists of a mixture of structured and unstructured interviews. This is different from structured interview, in which the questions will require close-ended answers. Additionally, unlike an unstructured interview, the interviewer introduces a topic, and the participants will answer in the way they see fit (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Semi-structured interviews are a flexible form of attaining primary data, as they include specific, predetermined questions that will be asked during the interview, while also incorporating the opportunity for a detailed response (Arhlin, 2019). The probing, open-ended questions allow for the respondent to share their independent thoughts (Newcomer et al., 2015).

The semi-structured interview utilises a two-way method of communication, which is advantageous to the researcher and participant alike. With the use of probing questions, the researcher is able to obtain more insight from the participants' responses that may arise during the interview process, and the open-ended questions allow for the participant to express both their experiences and their opinions. With reference to the key research questions of the proposed study, semi-structured interviews were considered a favourable method of data generation, as predetermined questions, probing, and open-ended questions were used, allowing the researcher to explore the factors that educators consider to contribute

towards learner pregnancy, and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

The semi-structured interviews were captured by a smartphone audio recorder. Data was gathered, analysed, and transcribed. A semi-structured interview schedule had been used to guide the interview process. The interviews comprised of the following composition: one educator from Grade Eight to Grade Eleven. All participants were given informed consent forms to sign, giving the researcher had permission to audio record. All participants were interviewed individually so as to ensure confidentiality. The duration of the individual interviews was approximately 20 minutes. All interviews were conducted on the school premises, at the end of the school day, and once learners had been dismissed.

4.6.1.1 Sample of semi-structured interview wording:

Appendix 2-Semi-structured interview instrument for participant

Questions asked in the interview:

1. Briefly describe pregnant learners during your lesson time.

Probe questions: Comment on pregnant learner's attention span, social interaction, academic performance and rate of absenteeism.

2. What factors do you consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy in this particular school?

Probing Questions: Do you think they are adequately educated on sexuality by the curriculum?

Do you think the curriculum influenced their pregnancy?

3. What role did you take on to ensure these learners continue schooling?

Probe Questions: What strategies did you implement in order to assist these learners in continuing with their schooling?

Do you think these strategies are enough for learners to continue schooling?

4.6.2 Focus Groups

Gundumogula and Gundumogula (2020) defines a focus group as a semi-structured data generation method, which consists of participants who are purposely selected due to their experienced and knowledge about the specific topic, and can contribute to the topic with rich data in order to gather data for the intended purpose. These small groups are led by a

facilitator. This particular method is common in participatory research and allows the researcher to gather rich data faster from a target audience.

The reason for using this method in this study is due to its effective method to gather individuals with similar experiences (educators) to discuss their experiences and understandings of teenage pregnancy in a secondary school. An advantage of focus groups is that it saves time, compared to individual interviews of a group. Additionally, it was suitable for this study as the researcher wanted to gain understanding of the culture of a group. Furthermore, wanted to explore the degree of consensus on a topic, thus, being the experiences of educators. Using a focus group, it influenced other group members by responding to the opinions and ideas discussed. This method allowed participants to either agree or disagree with each other, thereby resulting in more data. Focus group discussions enabled the researcher to use probing questions, and to interact with the participant. The researcher devised a set of predetermined questions in order to initiate a group discussion. The Focus group discussion was focused on the school's policy, and The Department of Basic Education National Policy of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (2021).

4.6.3 Document Analysis

According to Bowen (2017, p.2), document analysis "is a systematic procedure for reviewing or analysing documents- both printed and electronic (computer based or and internet transmitted) material." Documents can be utilised to explore characteristics within a specific context (Palaiologou, Needham & Male, 2015). Document analysis consists of skimming, reading, and interpretation. Bowens (2017) explains that documentation analysis is used with another qualitative research method, in order to allow for triangulation. With triangulation, it enables the researcher to provide a convergence of evidence that supports its credibility.

Two documents were analysed based on the verbatim meaning of the text and the interpretation of the written words. The Department of Basic Education National Policy of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (2021) was analysed, as was the school's pregnancy policy. The 2021 National Policy of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (NPPMLP) had been selected as the last policy published by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and is most likely to be implemented by the case school. Using the NPPMLP (2021) provided insight as to what the DBE states on paper, and what is in reality of the implementation of the policy. By analysis and interpretation of the

NPPMLP policy other than its literal text, insight was sought through the experiences of educators within the case school. Additionally, document analysis of the school's pregnancy policy provided insight as to the attitude of the school and educators towards teenage pregnancy. The focus group discussion also touched on the school's pregnancy policy to gather insight on educator's implementation and challenges. The data that was gathered from the document review provided support to confirm findings of the semi-structured interviews.

4.7 Data Analysis

The study utilised inductive data analysis. Inductive analysis can be described as the method the researcher uses to deal with primary and detailed data of quality generated from participants. Additionally, the study used thematic analysis that involves a systematic process of transcribing of data, generating initial codes, defining interpretive codes for the data that was generated to set them into themes, identifying of patterns that derived from the themes and interpretation of findings.

4.8 Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability were utilised in the study in various ways.

4.9 Credibility

Credibility refers to trust that can be placed in the truthfulness of the findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). The study ensured credibility by using relevant participants for the phenomenon under scrutiny. Additionally, the researcher took the participants' experiences into account, and drew from these experiences.

4.10 Transferability

Connelly (2016) defines **transferability** as the capacity of transferring research methods and findings from one group to another. The researcher ensured transferability by using research methodologies that were common and easy to use. The research methods that were used can be applied to other educators in another school, which reflect similar situations and experiences as the participants in the study. Burchette et al. (2013) explains that transferability can be obtained through the use of purposive sampling. By making detailed descriptions of participants available, including how they fit a certain criterion thus, purposely selected. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to pay attention to crucial sources, who are specifically well informed about the phenomena under scrutiny.

4.11 Dependability

Dependability refers to the uniformity and reliability of the study's findings, and the extent to which research procedures are similar (Selvi, 2019). The study ensured dependability by making reflections on the effects of the philosophical preference. This ensures that the results are based on the experiences and preferences of the participants, rather than the researcher.

4.12 Conformability

Conformability refers to degree of confidence that the study's findings are based on the respondents' narratives and spoken words, rather than on a biased view from the researcher (Connelly, 2016). The researcher ensured conformability by using a smart phone voice recorder during interviews. This enabled the researcher to capture the exact words of the participants, which can be converted into textual data, allowing for themes to arise.

4.13 Ethical issues considerations

Ethics Reference Number: HSSREC/0004870/2022

Resnik (2018) defines ethical considerations as the moral principles that ought to be adhered to when conducting research within social science. According to McMillian and Schumacher, (2010, p.117), "Research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing archival data". In line with research ethics this study ensured that the sample school and participants were treated in a manner that regarded this study ethically and morally approved through the consideration and respect for the constitutional rights of all participants. The researcher required a clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which granted permission to conduct the proposed study. Additionally, the researcher required written permission from the principal and Department of Education to conduct research at the school. The autonomy of the participants were respected, as they were asked to sign a consent letter to ensure that their participation was voluntary and to authorise their interview for recording. The participants' identities were protected and undisclosed when displaying findings. The name of participants have not be disclosed, however have been substituted for aliases, such as participant A, B, or C, to ensure confidentiality of the participant. Participants had been informed about the purpose of the research and what methods would be used to generate data.

4.14 Limitations

Limitations are factors that the researcher has no control over. These factors can influence the result. The limitation of this study was that not all educators from the school were part of the sample population. Additionally, educators from only one high school were used in this the study. This could limit the experiences and views captured by the researcher. Additionally, educators were unable to wait for the researcher after school to conduct the individual interviews. This was due to them finishing school at 15:30, as they held a daily intervention programme for learners. Therefore, the researcher conducted the individual semi-structured interviews telephonically, and recorded each interview with a smart phone recorder.

4.15 Conclusion

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, which was the most effective way to delve deeper and understand the experiences of educators who teach impregnated learners and understand the teenage pregnancy phenomenon from an educator's view. The research instruments utilised to gather data to answer the research question were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Purposive sampling was adopted during this study. Permission from the DoE and ethical clearance was obtained to commence with the study and consent forms were signed by participants. The limitations of the study included using a small sample size to generate data, and that not all high school educators were included in the study. The next chapter will present the data generated, analysis of data, and findings of the study conducted.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology and design that was used for the generation of data to answer the research questions of this study. This chapter presents a thematic discussion on the results that have emerged. Semi-structured interviews, document reviews and a focus group discussion have been utilised as data generation methods. The presented discussion of data includes the product of the integrated literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two, and the theoretical framework that informs this study.

This chapter is separated into two parts, the first being the themes raised from individual semi-structured interviews and the latter being the focus-group discussion based on the two documents reviewed. Participant responses are transcribed verbatim.

5.2 Themes

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>
PART 1- Individual semi-structured interviews	
5.2.1 Educators' experiences of pregnant learners.	5.2.1.1 Poor attention and negative impact on lesson. 5.2.1.2 High rate of absenteeism. 5.2.1.3 Limited social interaction
5.2.2 Factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy.	5.2.2.1 Poverty 5.2.2.2 Peer Pressure 5.2.2.3 Lack of knowledge
5.2.3 Role educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling.	5.2.3.1 Social support 5.2.3.2 Access to work and material
PART 2-Focus-Group Discussion	
5.2.4 Department of basic education following formality.	5.2.4.1 Lack of skills and support from the education department.

5.2.1 Educators' experiences of pregnant learners

5.2.1.1 Poor attention and negative impact on lesson

Mpanza (2012) has reported that pregnant learners tend to fall asleep during lesson time which creates a doubt for educators as to whether these learners are gaining any knowledge or just biding their time in attending school. Most educator participants were concerned about the poor attention pregnant learners pay to their work in the classroom. As much as these learners are present at school, many of them question their reason for being in the classroom.

Interviewee A remarked that: *“From my experience pregnant learners attention span is very short, uhm.. they are permanently tired and often they fall asleep in class so their attention span is very short... and as a result they lose out on a lot of work.”*

Interviewee B responded that: *“I find like they have very little attention span they don't even pay attention to the lesson. They seem to be ... in their own world, okay and sometimes ... even if they are paying attention they not completely focused on the lesson. Probably they are experiencing labour pains or you know some issue relating to the pregnancy itself so... I find like in class their attention span is very, very little or none at all.”*

“And then also what effects their attention span is most of them, they feel like they got to go continuously to the toilet and you know the urge to go to the toilet takes their focus away.”

Respondent B goes on to report, *“Sometimes they have headaches and they just want to put their heads on the table and sleep. Sometimes it's a major, major problem, the sleep aspect; because while you are teaching, you hear them in a deep sleep snoring and it disturbs the class.”*

Another Interviewee indicated that: *“During lesson when they come in, you'll find them that they focused they pay a lot of attention during the beginning of the lesson, but as the lesson progresses, you'll notice that there's uh...energy levels. They tend to get sleepier, obviously because of the pregnancy contributing to that. They get tired, they don't pay attention for a long time, they are very irritated very quickly...”*

“And when they are tired of the lesson and tired of the teacher teaching whatever it is, they are tired from probably the pregnancy, they find that they are falling asleep, they’ll put their head down... if you tap on them or talk to them, they get annoyed or irritated because they are tired. Sometimes they are hungry, they want to eat during lesson time which shifts attention from the uh...lesson itself.”

Several educators expressed that these learners are physically at school, however that their minds were not at once focused on the lesson topic. Most of them fall asleep during lesson time, and have other factors to attend to, such as pains, going to the toilet, or hunger, that results in them losing focus. Additionally, these pregnant learners who fall asleep or continuously go to the toilet tend to cause disruption during lesson time. A study by Preez et al. (2012) highlighted that pregnant learners in class tend to disturb the teachers’ lessons, as well as the rest of the learners in the classroom. Another participant mentioned learners being irritable. A study by Manyathi (2014) supports this statement as it revealed, when an individual is pregnant, they undergo hormonal changes that can result in mood swings or affect their attitude. It is clear that these learners can be in class physically, yet absorb no knowledge, however, they sometimes disturb other learners who actually want to learn.

5.2.1.2 High rate of absenteeism.

All four interviewees perceived pregnant learner school attendance to be strongly affected by their pregnancies. This knowledge has been created by their interactions with learners on a day-to-day basis. They were able to monitor the progress of learners who attend school regularly, and those that are frequently absent, in this case, being the pregnant learners. According to Andrews (2012), when rationalisation and habitualisation take place, this suggests frequent repeated actions that turn into patterns, which can be continuously produced.

Participant A revealed: *“And absenteeism is another problem. They are, they stay away quite often for various reasons, example: clinic visits and morning sickness and just other ailments associated with pregnancy and so in that respect they lose out on a lot of work academically and this obviously uh... effects their performance at school.”*

Participant B reported: *“In terms of absenteeism... great, great, great absenteeism. Sometimes it goes on for weeks at a time, months ... many of them choose not to come to school that could be maybe because they are tired or not well or they do not have money.”*

Participant C Responded: *“Okay the rate of absenteeism is very bad they hardly come to school. They feel like they can come when they want to...because they feel like they are too big firstly. Secondly they also feel like uhm school is now a waste of their time because they are ... going to be a mother so they don’t need an education.”*

Participant D remarked: *“There is a very high absenteeism with pregnant learners because of them getting sick very often, going for their frequent check-ups at the clinic especially when they are uh... far long in their pregnancy like from seven months onwards, so they have to visit clinics and hospitals more frequently so they tend to stay away.”*

The DoE (2017) and Preez et al. (2012) support the above statements, as these studies revealed that high rates of absenteeism will impact negatively on learners’ academic performance. Additionally, some contributing factors to absenteeism are antenatal and postnatal clinic appointments before and after birth, feeling ill due to pregnancy, or being ashamed of a pregnancy.

5.2.1.3 Limited Social Interaction

Pregnant adolescents tend to draw attention at school. The DoE (2014) states that pregnant adolescents are much more visible in the community and school compared to their peers, however being highlighted in these contexts also comes with stigmatisation. Likewise SmithBattle (2020), highlights the stigma attached to teenage mothers, as their pregnancies are identified as devaluing certain race groups, and being a violation of age norms for parenting. Stereotypes of teenage mothers continue stigmatisation by prevention campaigns, sex education programmes, professionals, television shows, and the general public.

Interviewee A: *“I find that their circle of friends become smaller, eventually they just have a few friends that stand by them throughout of their pregnancy.”*

Interviewee B: *“Sometimes they are quiet. They don’t interact with the rest of the children maybe they embarrassed about the pregnancy or maybe ... they are in some form of pain and don’t want to be harassed or disturbed by the other children.”*

Interviewee C: *“Their social interaction with regards to me... they... sometimes are rude, sometimes arrogant and sometimes they open up.”*

Interviewee D: *They are not very social. They don’t socially interact a lot with the others probably because of how they are feeling about themselves, they are afraid that other*

teenagers would judge them for their situation that they are in at the moment, that's being pregnant. So they'll want most of them to be left alone. Some of them sit by themselves."

A study by Singh and Naicker (2019) supports these statements. There is stigma attached to pregnancy and motherhood, where the girls shared that they were faced with a variety of different responses at home as well as in school, including being identified as different and being judged by family, peers and teachers. Consequently, these young girls who are infected with HIV/AIDS will also experience stigma from the community and learners at school. The stigma will also lead to social exclusion (Naicker 2014).

Teenage pregnancy also impacts on an individual's future marriage. In particular, in black culture, a women's *lobola* decreases if she is not a virgin (Willan, [0o2013). Ngubane (2018) reported that teenage girls are often single mothers, as men often reject them due to their early pregnancies. In addition, Boath (2013) mentions that adolescent mothers are more likely to experience emotional breakdowns due to their failed relationships with their child's father, noting that teenage mothers may also be faced with postnatal depression, due to the dramatic alterations required in her life. Postnatal depression refers to depression after one has given birth, which arises from the pressures of motherhood, hormonal changes, and the psychological adaptations of maternalism (Elnagar, 2018).

Elnagar (2018) states that adolescent years are known as the years of 'crisis'. According to Skinner (as cited in Elnagar, 2018), it is a stressful time for adolescents as they are undergoing development of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Erikson's (1963) theory suggests that at this stage of their lives, adolescents are pressured by change in their mental state, due to both emotional and hormonal changes.

From a social constructionist point of view, knowledge emerges out of human relationships. Therefore, what we gather to be true and objective is the outcome of social processes that occur in a specific context. It is believed that ideas are constructed, rather than discovered, yet they correlate with phenomena in the real world. This corroborates Berger and Luckmann (1991) and the realism of Hammersley (1992), who argue that reality is socially defined, but note that this reality refers to the personal experience of everyday life, which provides an idea of how the world is understood, instead of an objective reality of the naturalistic world.

According to Andrews (2012), knowledge is created by the interactions of a specific group with society. This knowledge is brought about by the interactions of individuals with the social world, with this social world successfully influencing individuals, resulting in

routinisation and habitualisation. This suggests that frequently repeated actions turn into a pattern, which can be continuously produced without any effort. After a period of time, habitualisation becomes a routine, creating a general store of knowledge.

Therefore, educators have developed meaning of these social behaviours based on the patterns observed. This particular institution has identified the knowledge, ideas, and beliefs and this has continued over the years. The educators have observed learners over the years, the display of their habitualisation (repetitive behaviour) of limited social interactions, smaller groups of friends, moodiness, and wanting to be alone, and their individual interactions with these learners have given them insight and constructable knowledge, based on the way in which their pregnant teenage learners feel. These learners have turned to limited social interactions, due to the stigma attached to them once they have fallen pregnant. Many of them shy away, due to their fear of being judged or mocked based on their decisions. Their poor attitude in terms of rudeness and arrogant behaviour could be seen as a method of reducing social interaction.

5.2.2 Factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy

5.2.2.1 Poverty

Poverty has been identified as one of the leading causes, due to the fact that all educators made some reference to this factor. The following are the responses from participants:

Interviewee A indicated: *“I think poverty also, because many of, being, School A being a Socio, socio economic area. Many learners do not come to school, due to a lack of funds. The child wouldn’t have bus fare and would stay away until he/she can afford or obtain the bus fare, and, in that time, they are idle, and I am sure given the chance they will experiment with sex, especially if they are not being monitored by their parents, and they are left or gone to work, so they are left to their own devices, they are bound to do this.”*

Interviewee B responded: *“Some of them be poverty stricken and they might meet a ‘sugar daddy’ or a ‘baby daddy’ who promises them, let’s say money and care if they have their children or if they carry the baby. So, I think that’s another factor. But I find the issue of baby daddy/sugar daddy becomes a major reason for them falling pregnant, because they got somebody to now feed their habits to feed their need for nice clothes etc.”*

Interviewee B goes on to state: *“And then I also feel many of them go for the child support care grants. For them that three or four hundred rands seems so much that they’ll fall*

pregnant have the child, but when you've got the child that money is like literally nothing to have. So... they would have the baby leave it with their parents, their grandparents etc. and they keep the money which they use on themselves."

"In terms of poverty maybe these girls are prostituting themselves. They don't use the correct contraceptives and that could be the reason why they are pregnant. They got money for their acts, but the consequence is a pregnancy, which they don't take precaution against."

Interviewee C stated: *"They also come from poverty-stricken backgrounds. They, they some are child-headed homes they come from, so they are have, they are taking care of their siblings, which means they need to find means to provide for their family, Be it prostitution, be it finding men that are wealthy, and much much older than them, uhm they give them money, they give them food, they buy them things in return for sex."*

Interviewee D reported: *"Poverty is another that contributes to this, where many of these girls look to older guys for uh... money and them to be taken care of, okay."*

Interviewee D continues... *"Social media is another factor that puts pressure on poorer societies where they expect people to have a certain level of things. These girls now uhm looking at social media and other teenagers that are their age and wanting to have what others have, tend to turn to going into relationships with older guys, which actually causes them to get into situations like there are now like the pregnancy. Many of them uhm are unaware of the dangers and consequences of being with older men."*

Nkosi and Pretorius (2019) support the concerns expressed by the educators in this study that child-headed homes and orphans are usually faced with the burden and difficulty of taking care of their families, and find difficulty in meeting the basic needs of their families, which may result in them engaging in transactional sexual activities to earn money, which further results in pregnancy.

This specific factor can be linked by a social constructionist as culturally and historically specific. Burr and Dick (2017) note that this gives rise to change in society. Foucault (1977) argues that changes occur and constitute a direct impact responsible for creating categories of "being" that are taken for granted in the present, which merely means that they become central and significant characteristics of the current or modern era for a specific reason (Foucault, 1977); modern categories of being are closely associated with the needs of people to become productive in a physical and biological manner.

In this case, it can be deduced that learners have found methods to sustain poverty/cope with poverty, and that these methods have become central to the culture of these learners. Due to the significance, it has been closely associated with the needs of these learners. These educators have identified these acts, such as the sugar daddy phenomena, social grants, prostitution etc., as major causes of pregnancy. These educators have been in conversation with these learners, interacting daily with them, and have observed and constructed such knowledge about the topic at hand.

5.2.2.2 Peer Pressure

Another leading cause of pregnancy indicated by participants at the site school is noted to be peer pressure. The interviewees reported that these learners engage in sexual behaviour to fit into their peer groups, and to abide by peer norms. The following were views of participants:

Participant A shared: *“So, irrespective of whether you have the knowledge of what’s going to happen you, will want to experiment, especially if your friends are doing it.”*

Participant B reported: *“and then often... you find girls and boys coupling you know... and ... maybe desire sets in and they pregnant after that. So the desire to have sex to try it out to ..to be with the crowd I think that could be a major factor as well. So... I think these girls have the urge to be a part of the crowd, of their circle there are other girls who might be pregnant etc.”*

Participant C asserted: *“Also it could be like influence, I mean with their friends, like peer pressure. Their friends are doing it, so they feel they need to do it, and they don’t pay attention in class, therefore they do not know the consequences of having unprotected sex, yeah.”*

Perci (2017), as cited in Mogotsi (2021), supports these claims made by educators, noting that teenagers spend more of their time with friends and peer groups than with family members, which can have an influence on their decisions. Mogotsi (2021) pointed out that teachers identified peer pressure as a key factor of influence, as learners asked each other for advice about sexuality, and usually received the wrong advice. Additionally, learner pregnancy has become identified as a form of competition among teenagers.

Peer pressure can be closely associated, when viewing peer pressure via the social constructionist theory, with discourse and disciplinary power. Burr and Dick (2017) explain that a social constructionist refers to discourse as a set of ideas that hold cultural significance

and can be used to understand the world and events that take place within it. Thus, it is common in current society to understand what people do and say via discourse of personality through deposition. Knights and Morgan (1991) suggest that people's behaviour is a result of internal traits or motivation that is either learned or inherited. Discourse influences what we do and how we act.

This study provides insight of present day causes that is due to individuals personality. Additionally, the theory gives rise to the aspect of disciplinary effect. Foucault states (1977) that an effective mode of modern governance is disciplinary power of the desire of people to conform to social norms. Thereby, giving people a sense of what is 'normal'. In this way, peer pressure can lead to pregnancy through risky sexual behaviour.

5.2.2.3 Lack of knowledge

One of the questions posed to participants focused on the cascading of adequate knowledge to learners by the curriculum. Some participants agreed that knowledge is sufficient, with some stating that these learners are not adequately educated on the topic. The participants explained the way in which comprehensive sex education shapes learner behaviour.

Interviewee A reported: *"I really don't think so. I think that the curriculum has educated the child but the decision to have sex is an individual one and the child out of curiosity uh would want to experiment with sex. So although the curriculum informs."*

Interviewee B stated: *"Not adequately, because sometimes the educators are shy to speak on sexual issues. So, if you are shy as an educator, you are not going to impart that knowledge. So in terms of sexuality and I curriculum, I don't think we adequately equip them. And then also the children in the class are childish so when you start talking about sexuality they start laughing and making jokes of it so the actual ... information that you want to pass on them, the advice the do's and don'ts, it does not fall through, because of the attitude of the children, childish behaviour, maybe they don't want to hear, because in the family home or whatever, they have been told 'don't talk about sex'. So they shut out and that's how I feel the curriculum, as much as it caters for it, we don't do justice to it, because it's difficult to teach such a concept to the children."*

Interviewee C shared: *"yes! I think they are. being an LO teacher uh... I myself in the curriculum I teach them about protecting themselves, I teach them about the consequences of*

having unprotected sex, which is not just teenage pregnancy, it's also illnesses that they can pick up, such as aids, and STDs. They are well-equipped with this from the curriculum."

Interviewee D responded: *"Yes and no, okay. So the curriculum is, uhm, is very vast and throughout their schooling, starting from primary school going up they are taught about accepting themselves, but they, we speak to them about preventing and we speak to them about birth control and all other preventative measures. However, some cultures prevents them from practicing things we might teach in the curriculum, so even if we teach them that they should abstain or take birth control, if they are sexually active, belonging to a certain cultural group sometimes prevents the children from taking the birth control, which causes them to fall into these situations. No matter how much the curriculum or the school teaches them, I feel that when they go home, they unlearn everything, trying to follow their culture or the values that are set by their family, because. they don't look at our schooling curriculum as something that going to assist them or the information that's going to assist them; it's mostly their culture and the influence of parents, home and society that plays a bigger role than the curriculum would."*

Participants partially felt that the curriculum adequately equips learners with the necessary information to prevent them from early pregnancy. This view is supported by the DoE (2019), which highlights the fact that sex education is compulsory within the school curriculum, as every grade is mandated to complete either Life Skills or Life Orientation (LO). Additionally, Beckhuke (2019, p. 1) argues that "teenage pregnancy and prevalence among high school learners are very high in South Africa, despite the introduction of comprehensive sex education in schools since 2002."

Conversely, some educators have contradicting views, as they suggest that certain educators do not teach certain sections that make reference to sexuality, due to them being less skilled or shy to cascade knowledge on such a topic. Appalsamy (2015), supports this view by mentioning that sex is regarded as a sensitive topic for teachers, as many educators shy away from the topic. Additionally, the study revealed that educators request that learners read through worksheets based on the section on sex independently to avoid discomfort, leaving it ineffective. Teachers find it difficult to deliver such content, as it brings about ethical issues among societies, such as conservative culture, parents condemn the 'sex talk' or teachers are inadequately trained to do so (Shefer, 2013).

The reality of these educators is that they are socially defined by their personal experience of everyday life, which provides them with an idea of how the world is understood instead of an objective reality in a naturalistic world. This is established as a convention in this institution to the extent that generations to come will continue to experience it. Due to their daily experiences and social interactions with these learners, they have constructed the above, regarding how adequately equipped these learners are.

5.2.3 Role educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling

5.2.3.1 Social Support

Many educators indicated that they personally give advice and counsel these learners, and request further parental involvement once they determine that these learners are pregnant, in an attempt to ensure these learners continue their schooling. The following were responses from participants:

Interviewee A reported: *“I am always instilling in them the importance of education more so now that you are a mother you have to ensure that you continue with schooling, make a success of your life so that child has a bright future, because if you give up and leave school you will have numerous problems to deal with example: poverty, lack of education so I am very supportive of pregnant learners, I encourage them to come back to school.”*

Interviewee B shared: *“Okay... when I discover girls in my class are pregnant, I talk to them, I advise them, and then I tell them, “When you have the baby, you got to come back to school, because you need a matric certificate.” Without a matric certificate, you not going to get a good job and if you are going to be a parent to this child you’ve got to be able to support that child.”*

“You know... we try to get the parent to come to school and we discuss the pregnancy with the parents and we ask the parents to send them back to school when the pregnancy is over. “However, currently, with the new laws set about by the health department. The pregnant girl has to go off when she’s eight months pregnant, she’s got to have conceived her baby, and only come back to school after four months of being at home.”

Interviewee C reported: *“Okay. Personally, I speak to these girls. I, I, I have a one-on-one with them, I give them advice, I explain to them,, that even though they are pregnant and that they will be a having a child, it does not mean they must stop their education. I explain to them that having an education will ensure their child will have a better future, because they*

would be able to get a better job and earn a better salary, and it will stop this cycle; but if they don't, then the cycle will continue, because then this child will grow up in poverty and then this child will then turn to doing things their parent has done.”

Participant D shared: *“Okay, so most of the time we have ... encouraged learners to come back, we speak to them about coming back and continuing school after they have their children and uh... when they are absent for a certain amount of time we do send home worksheets and work and ... assessment to be done at home and sent to school.”*

“So, most of the time we encourage them, we explain to them the importance of finishing school okay... they always have that doubt and that extra responsibility once the baby is born so the only thing we can provide is like counselling via the school and as a teacher. We do provide counselling to them, we do encourage them and speak to them about the importance of schooling, and coming back to school and their future.”

“And we actually speak to the parents as well. We ask the parents to come in and we have a chat with their parents to help assist them in catching up in whatever their needs to catch up with school.”

This theme reflects that educators supported the pregnant learners, and it indicates that educators could provide better support to pregnant learners if the parents came on board and cooperated and communicated with the educators. Social support is a communal activity.

Constructionist theory gives rise to language as central. Conversation is identified as a crucial method of maintaining, altering, and reconstructing subjective realities and compromises concepts that can be shared with others (Andrews, 2012). In this regard, educators utilise language (conversations) with pregnant learners as a method of maintaining, altering, and reconstructing subject realities. These learners may find themselves in a stressful situation. According to Boath (2013), adolescent mothers are more likely to experience emotional breakdowns, due to their failed relationships with their child's father, where teenage mothers may also be faced with postnatal depression, due to the dramatic alterations she has to make to her life. Elnagar (2018) states that the adolescent years are known as years of crisis. According to Skinner (as cited in Elnagar, 2018), it is a stressful time for adolescents, as they undergo development that helps them transition from childhood to adulthood. In this situation one may feel as if it is the end of their schooling career, due to responsibility and stress. Educators take it upon themselves in an attempt to alter the minds of these learners, by highlighting and explaining the importance of an education. Educators attempt to change

their mindset regarding their life decisions and now highlight that, if they do not complete school, they will not get a good job, and will not be able to provide for their child, or alleviate their poverty.

Additionally, educators mention that further communication with parents is crucial to altering the minds of parents. Educators call in parents to inform them about their role in assisting in the process of ensuring this learner continues schooling and request that parents support the learner through this difficult period.

5.2.3.2 Access to work and Material

Educators indicated that they go out of their way to ensure that pregnant learners are not further disadvantaged by missing out on work done in class while attending clinic visits, or while on maternity leave. The following were the responses of participants:

Interviewee A shared: *“I’ve also, if the child doesn’t know where to get the work from, I will take a child’s, another responsibility pupils book, and tell them, here’s the book, copy the work. I will give them the missing worksheets etc. and if they do not understand any of the sections that have been covered.”*

“And I even help them with resources that they may need example study guides, even if I have to purchase it, and I have done that in the future, specifically for matric learners, sorry, in the past, I have done that especially for matric.”

“The intervention classes where they can catch up on work that they have missed out, I tell them when they have free time in school, they must come and sit during the breaks etc. and catch up with work. And our school also provides the learners with the opportunity after school for two hours to do any work that you may have.”

“I will give them missing worksheets etc. and if they do not understand any of the sections that have been covered this is pertinent to my subject, I will teach it to them in my free time.”

Interviewee B responded: *“I send work home with the other kids in the class if they live nearby or with their friends, I ask them to take pics of it, and WhatsApp it to them etc. Because we want them to still come back to school, and when they come back, the work must not be daunting or too much.”*

Interviewee C shared: *“I did assess them when they were not able to come to school be it certain days when they went to the clinics or they needed to go to the hospital. I would then*

go back and uh actually do the work with them ... one-on-one, and uh, help them out, where they needed help if they found it difficult to understand the, the lesson that has passed when they weren't there in my own time. ... I also like make booklets and stuff for them that when they needed to take days off for clinics and stuff like that they would have their booklets to work with."

Interviewee D explained: *"When they are absent for a certain amount of time, we do send home worksheets and work and uh... assessment to be done at home and sent to school."*

This theme stands in contrast with literature presented by Segalo (2020), which indicates that some educators are not willing to provide extra lessons to assist these pregnant learners in catching up with their work. In this study, educators were identified as supportive of pregnant learners, and were not simply willing to provide extra lessons to assist learners in catching up with missed work, however they went beyond this by trying their very best to ensure the work that has been missed is sent to the learner to work with at home, by means of WhatsApp or peers.

When viewed through the lens of the social constructionism, educators located the meaning and understanding of teenage pregnancy in a specific period of time, as involving poverty, peer pressure, and lack of knowledge. In this respect, educators have identified education as a method of correcting the actions that have already occurred or improving their unplanned pregnancy. Educators have identified that, if education continued, and these learners obtained an NSC certificate, that this would increase their chances of finding a job that pays a decent salary, which they can use to provide for the needs of their child. In doing so, their child would not be faced with poverty, and can reduce their chances of falling into a repeat situation as that of their mother (seeking financial assistance to alleviate poverty, which could also result in a pregnancy or criminal acts).

PART 2-FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

5.2.4 Department of basic education following formality

5.2.4.1 Lack of skills and support from the education department

The following is the analysis and findings from the focus group discussion based on the document reviews.

Despite the DoE's release of The Department of Basic Education National Policy of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, and the implementation of comprehensive sex education, the focus group discussion revealed the following regarding educators feeling unskilled and unable to deal with sexuality in the curriculum:

With regards to training and skills received to ensure comprehensive sex education

Interviewee C stated: *“We go for workshops but that’s basically for our syllabus it does not explain in detail how to teach on sex education”.*

Interviewee D shared: *“We also don’t have professional knowledge on how to administer those things to them, we can deliver content-driven stuff that is in our textbooks and stuff, but we don’t have the knowledge on how to handle the health care part of distribution and proper sex education.”*

The following response referred to the Life orientation curriculum, **Interviewee B**

responded: *“No, it’s not and I’ll tell you why, we don’t have a specific life orientation teacher who has been trained and given the skills to teach the children on sex education. In our school timetable, whenever there is a vacancy in a teacher’s load, LO is given to that teacher so not everybody that’s teaching LO is fully equipped to teach the subject.”*

In contrast, the DOE (2021, p.28) policy states “Initial Professional Education of teachers will be supplemented by recurrent Continuous Professional Development (CPTD) provided by the DBE to cover adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) education and learner pregnancy prevention, including contraceptive methods.”

Mturi (2019) supports the views mentioned above, as the study states that it is taken for granted by principals that one does not need to be a specialist in terms of LO, where any educator can teach this subject, regardless of their specialisation. This results in poor sex education.

Therefore, it can be deduced that despite the DOE's policy, stating CPTD sexual matters and prevention of pregnancies will take place. Educators shared that this is not being done therefore their inability to deal with the topic and provide learners with comprehensive education.

These educators make reference to discourse and disciplinary power, which is grounded on a set of ideas which hold cultural significance. The broad meaning of LO education is taken lightly by principals and educators in relation to other subjects. Taught as they are by semi-

skilled or unskilled educators, it results in poor quality of sex education. As a result, learners also view this subject as less important, and fail to take it seriously.

Participants further state that the DBE failed to provide them with support that was desperately needed in order to reduce and manage teenage pregnancy. Evidence from the group discussion suggests that the DOE did not fulfill their functions, as stated in the policy.

Interviewee C responded: *“No, this is not happening because if they were given condoms, I don’t think so many of them will fall pregnant as they are.”*

Interviewee D agreed by sharing: *“It is not happening at our school. Sometimes ... I feel that distribution of condoms at our school sometimes may feel that ... from the schools side we are encouraging sexual behaviour as well and to some extent with teenagers, I feel that having condoms at school might also, uhm. Encourage them to now to engage in sexual activities, because they want to experiment with the stuff that’s given to them at school, okay.”*

This response was in respect of the question that asked interviewees if male/female condoms were accessible at school, as stipulated in DOE policy. Despite the policy, no such provisions were in place. Additionally, another participant shared that if these condoms were actually given to learners, they would be able to use it and practice safe sex, which could possibly reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies.

In view of social constructionism, theory, these educators have created their own social and cultural worlds. Culture and historical features, the experiences of educators, and possible causes or influences of teenage pregnancy have been identified by these educators within the culture of the educational institution, as well as their social worlds. Their daily interaction and the implementation of the policy reflects that the DoE does not provide these resources for learners and so it can be asked, how are they supposed to use them? In respect of educators trying to prevent teenage pregnancy, they lack the skill to be educating learners on sexuality, and additionally, do not receive training. However they do try to teach what they can. Furthermore, since these resources are not provided them, they believe they are doing everything in their power to prevent teenage pregnancy, however they lack support from the DoE, who ought to be advocating for further prevention.

5.2.5 Impractical Policies

5.2.5.1 Challenges and increased responsibility

Participants shared that the policies were impractical, and created additional responsibility and workload.

One participant shared: *“Okay, in terms of support, right. In class, when we are doing a special aspect of work, we do give the friends, the neighbours etc. Copies of the work to take home, however, we cannot go back and explain the work when the child comes, because we have moved on to a new section, so we don’t have time to retract and to do work done already for this child that’s come back. We are hoping the child will have sufficient material with them at home to go over the work on their own.”*

Another participant shared: *“Also, the work that is sent home is not facilitated to the child, its merely just worksheets ... notes and ... other materials sent home; it’s not facilitated by a proper teacher, or with somebody with content knowledge to the child; so the child only grasps what they can from ...the documents, materials, and whatever we send home; it’s not facilitated to the child, and when the child returns, like ‘ma’am is saying...’, we then now have no time to now go back and facilitate that section for that child that missed out.”*

Another interviewee shared: *“Also, the overcrowded classrooms and the enormous administration work that we have to do makes it impossible for us to give that one-on-one interaction with the learner.”*

Additionally, another shared: *“We cannot only focus on the pregnant learner throughout the time and the pregnant learner herself becomes an issue for us to deal with in the class falls off to sleep, complains of pains, aches which we can’t handle, so we are not equipped for these things, and as such we shouldn’t be asked to support pregnant learners.”*

The School Policy states in this regard that “learners will be provided with support and counselling by psychological services.”

One participant shared: *“For our school, we are not provided with a psychological services person who’s going to be there with the child, talking them through that process, right. When the children come and tell us that they pregnant, we don’t even know how to handle the issue.”*

Another participant mentioned: *Sometimes, our kids also feel, ... ashamed, and they don't want to speak to us. If a nurse was available to them, I think they will be more open and able to speak up about what they've been going through and the nurse could help them.*

One participant shared: *"For our school we are not provided with a psychological services person who's going to be there with the child talking them through that process, right? When the children come and tell us that they're pregnant, we don't even know how to handle the issue."*

Another participant mentioned: *Sometimes our kids also feel ... ashamed and they don't want to speak to us. If a nurse was available to them, I think they would be more open and able to speak up about what they've been going through, and the nurse could help them.*

Additionally, educators made mention of another impractical statement in the school policy "Learners/parents will be requested a medical certificate giving the estimated date of confinement and the date from which it will be medically acceptable to return to school" (The School Policy, 2010, p.1).

One respondent shared: *"Yes, it is because learners stay at home from the eighth month, and then, but afterwards, no, they don't come back with any medical certificates or that sort. They just deliver the baby, and come back, they do not stay at home for the stipulated four months that they are supposed to be with their child. Many of them return as early as one to two weeks after giving birth, because if it's during exam time, some of them can come back within a week of delivering that baby so that they can write that exam."*

Another mentioned: *"Also in terms of...the medical certificates, by law, the parent and the child has to...provide one, because we've got to make sure that according to the requirements of the Health Department, the child has stayed away from eight months and come back after the baby is four months old that's a Health Department requirement. Education Department requires the child to be in school all the time for a full year ... attendance at school so that the curriculum is ... delivered to that child. Now in terms of that medical certificate of four months, they don't produce it, we cannot do anything we've just got to accept the child back at school."*

With regards to the implementation of the DoE policy, and the school's policy the interviewees had the following to say:

“so some of us, some of the teachers are unaware of what’s in that policy, cause there’s not there’s no regular workshops on these policies. So... some teachers haven’t been workshopped at all on these policies and they don’t know what’s in these policies. That is the reason, like even if there’s changes and updates made to the policy us as teachers are unaware, because we don’t.”

Knowledge and systems depend on communities of shared intelligibility. Therefore, they are governed by a large extent by norms and historical cultures. A social constructionist does not claim to provide ‘truth’, however claims that the criteria for individuals who are called on to identify behaviours, entities or events are largely restricted within limits of culture, history, and social context. Therefore, a social constructionist “locates meaning in an understanding of how ideas and attitudes are developed over time within a given social context” (Gablin, 2014, p.85).

These educators have identified aspects of policy that are impractical at school, where they deal with pregnant learners and their interactions on a daily basis. The educators feel that they cannot simply focus on the pregnant learners, due to the fact that they are already bombarded with so much work, and note that when learners are pregnant, they have additional work as they have to try to assist them. Additionally, educators feel the above-mentioned statements from school and DoE policy, however are not practiced in the school environment, due to a general lack of awareness of the policy, which results in poor implementation by the school and the DoE alike. Furthermore, the DoE puts plans on paper, but does not consider that this contradicts with what is actually being done at schools. These educators have to allow the child into class, regardless of whether or not they produce a doctor’s certificate and serve a full accouchement leave. These educators express that these are simply on paper however their impracticality makes their jobs ever more challenging. Some educators expressed that they were unaware of the policies, but did not know what to practice, since none of the policies were available to them, making it difficult to deal with pregnant learners at school.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data generated in the study was presented and discussed in view of the social constructionist theory, utilising semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data was presented across five main themes, each with sub-themes that were further discussed. The findings made mention of the following key points: educators experienced pregnant learners displaying poor school attendance and high rates of absenteeism, which

resulted in them missing out on work and assessments, which impacting negatively on their academic performance. Educators identified peer pressure, poverty, and lack of knowledge as key contributors to teenage pregnancy. Educators tried their best to assist pregnant learners while on maternity leave, taking on the role of counselling these learners in an attempt to ensure that they continue with their schooling career. Additionally, educators requested that parents were called into school, and pleaded for more parental support for the learner in order to complete their schooling. Furthermore, educators tried their best to get study material and assessments to learners, so that they would not fall behind, and could work with it while being at home. The focus group discussion shed light on the lack of skills and support educators receive from the department. Educators felt they were incapable of dealing with pregnant learners, as they were not trained to do so. Furthermore, educators felt that policies were in place that made it impractical or at least very challenging to practice, as they had so many other duties in a day, instead of simply focusing on their pregnant learners. This resulted in further responsibility for them. The following chapter provides a summary of the study and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

STUDY SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter thematically discussed the data that was gathered using semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion, and document reviews. This chapter presents the crucial findings of the research. Based on these key findings, recommendations will be made.

6.2 Limitations to the study

Limitations are factors that the researcher has no control over. These factors can influence the result. The limitation of this study was that not all educators from the school were part of the sample population. Additionally, educators from only one high school were used in this the study. This could limit the experiences and views captured by the researcher. Additionally, educators were unable to wait for the researcher after school to conduct the individual interviews. This was due to them finishing school at 15:30, as they offer a daily intervention programme for learners. For this reason, researcher conducted the individual semi-structured interviews telephonically, and recorded each interview with a smart phone recorder.

6.3 Summary of the study

This study has explored the experiences of educators teaching pregnant learners in a high school in the Umlazi District. This was the case based on the educators, comprising of four educators who teach or have taught Life Orientation previously within one school in the Umlazi District in KwaZulu-Natal. Chapter One outlined the background to this study, the study site, rationale, problem statement, the rationale of the study, research questions, and objectives. Chapter Two focused on the literature reviewed in this study. Chapter Three provided the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. Chapter Four presented the research design and methodology utilised to answer the research questions. Chapter Five highlighted the data, which was organised into themes, and discussed further with sub-themes. The final chapter presents a summary to the study and presents a synthesis of the key findings of the study, and provides recommendations based on the key findings.

6.4 Research questions restated

1. What are educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school?
2. What factors do educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy?
3. What role have educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling?

6.4.1. What are educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary school?

The data has shown that, within case school's context, educators mainly experienced high absenteeism rates at school, poor attitude, and pregnant learners limiting social interactions. The educators highlighted the various experiences they had with pregnant learners both during and after lesson time. They also expressed how the learner's poor attendance created much more responsibility for them, as they had to send work to those learners who were absent, and who tried to teach content that the learner had missed while being absent. Additionally, they described the poor attitude of learners. Some pregnant learners would fall asleep during lesson time, which disturbed lessons, as they would even snore in class. Additionally, learners would display a poor attitude if they were woken up by the educator. Pregnant learners were also identified to be leaving the classroom far too frequently to use the bathroom, which tended to disrupt lesson time. Pregnant learners have a very short attention span during lesson time, which resulted negatively on their academic performance. More details about this issue can be found in **Section 5.2.1 in Chapter 5**.

6.4.2 What factors do educators consider to contribute towards learner pregnancy?

The data indicated that educators identified poverty, peer pressure, and lack of knowledge as key contributors to the rise of teenage pregnancy.

One of the key factors in this regard, poverty was linked to learners being driven to engage in sexual activity with older men in order to receive either gifts or money in exchange. The sugar daddy phenomena was identified by a few participants, and seems of serious concern. Additionally, teenagers were attracted to the state grants given to mothers in order to support their child, where they fall pregnant and give the responsibility of taking care of their child to their parents or grandparents, while they get to spend the state grant on themselves. The

educators did indicate that the state grant is insufficient for childcare, but noted that these learners fall pregnant simply so as to receive this money for self-care.

Educators identified peer pressure as another leading factor, as teenagers prove to be curious, and tend to experiment. When they find out that their friends are engaging in sexual activities, in an attempt to fit into the group, these learners engage in sexual activities with their partners, and tend to fall pregnant. Furthermore, in an attempt to alleviate poverty, young girls were identified to be partaking in prostitution in order to sustain their lifestyles, as they came from poverty-stricken homes. Additionally, learners lacked knowledge on sexuality. Despite the introduction of comprehensive sex education within the life orientation curriculum, educators explained that they were not trained by the DoE to deliver content on sex education. They explained that it's a hard topic to teach, and that learners behave in an immature manner during these lessons. Furthermore, they indicated that Life Orientation was not identified as a specialist subject within the case school, where any educator could teach it, because it is designed as a filler subject to get educators to their allocated teaching load, thereby placing emphasis on the poor quality of sex education delivered in the school. More details about this issue can be found in **section 5.3 in Chapter 5**.

6.5 What role have educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling?

The data showed that educators took on the roles of counselors so as to ensure that learners continued with their schooling. Educators highlighted the importance of an education, completing school and obtaining a Grade 12 certificate to learners. Additionally, the importance of completing school in order to obtain a job and take care of their child was also communicated to learners as a motivation to complete school. Educators also made an attempt to communicate with parents in order to support the pregnant learner and their child. Parents were called in to school to work with the educator in an attempt to motivate learners, and keep the learner in school after birth. Despite the absence of psychological services as promised by the DoE, educators made an attempt to provide social support for these learners, even in their busy day.

6.6 Focus group discussion on document reviews

The data showed that there is serious lack of skills and support provided by the DoE. The educators have expressed the importance of having support from the DoE to mitigate teenage pregnancy cases. They further expressed that psychological services ought to have been

accessible at school, however there was in fact no access to this service. There was also access to condoms for learners, despite the policy to provide them. They expressed that learners did not have access to condoms, and that this could also cause unwanted pregnancies. Furthermore, the DoE states that educators ought to support learners, despite their pregnancies, where in this case, educators provided learners with material and assessments to work with at home, and attempted to cover content they had missed during their free time, while struggling to complete teaching content and administrative tasks. It was further identified that the DoE provided no formal training to deal with teenage pregnancy at school. Workshops were attended, however, this did not equip them with any of the requisite skills to deal with what they encountered with learners. Additionally, the data showed that educators were unaware of both school and DoE policy. They expressed that these policies were not cascaded, or brought to their attention in anyway. The DoE has, against its own mandate, failed to provide support to educators to address the high number of teenage pregnancies. Ultimately, teenage pregnancy has increased workload, and responsibility for educators, who felt it should not be supported by the DoE, since much of their time is dedicated to helping pregnant learners, while spending less time assisting other learners. The findings suggest that the Department of Health and Department of Education are not tied up with institutions that provide them with support, where it is suggested by educators that these are. Policies are in place however it's impractical for educators as they cannot do it alone or with their increased duties on a daily basis. The findings suggest that there are a number of relevant factors within the school context, where the teachers cannot eradicate this on their own, without the support from the DoE and the DoH.

6.7 Recommendations

This study has made a set of recommendations related to the workload of educators and the support learners receive from them. Additionally, there is an appeal by educators for greater support from the DoE and the DoH.

6.7.1 The need for the School Management Team to reduce the workload of educators

The findings from this study revealed that educators make every effort to assist and support pregnant learners, which includes preparation of supplementary materials for home study. Additionally, educators are faced with enormous amounts of administrative tasks and overcrowded classrooms, which makes it very difficult for them to undertake a one-on-one interaction with the pregnant learner. Educators are not refusing to assist learners, however,

with the increased workload of assisting these pregnant learners and completing their normal allocated tasks. It becomes much more difficult to assist these pregnant learners. As part of the DoE and SMT support programme, the SMT should revisit their allocations to these educators, and should revisit the methods used to assist these teachers in reducing their administrative tasks, such that these educators can assist pregnant learners on their return to school. Employment of additional SGB educators can assist in a reduction in class sizes, which will allow educators to provide better individual or group assistance for pregnant learners. Additionally, this provides these educators with full-time assistance in order to help them complete the administrative tasks allocated to them.

6.7.2 The Department of Basic Education's Role in providing support and skills for educators

The data has shown that there is lack of practical and constructive support from the DoE. It is therefore recommended that the DoE partners up with the DoH in providing critical support and empowerment for these educators, such as the condoms for learner use. The Department should send out a nurse who will have the skills to administer such resources to learners and answer questions related to sexual health. Additionally, the introduction of other contraceptives should be done at school, for example, providing young girls with the injection or oral form of contraception so as to mitigate the number of teenage pregnancies. It is also recommended that the DoE put in place proper workshops so as to equip educators with the skills required to deal with sexuality in the classroom. Educators did mention that they are not equipped to provide comprehensive sex education, which is required to deliver specific content. The DoH ought to partner up with the DoE to provide workshops for educators and learners so as to provide better knowledge and awareness. Furthermore, the DoE ought to provide psychological services as mentioned in the policy. It is noted that the DoE makes mention of all these support services, however, that the school receives none. Additionally, it is suggested by educators that a nurse be placed at such schools that have high pregnancy rates, in order to advise and assist these learners through their pregnancies. This presents an appeal to the Department to be actively involved in the holistic development of the child.

6.7.3 Recommendations for pregnant learners and their parents.

The responsibility, does not lie solely with educational institutions. Parents play a critical role in supporting and guiding their children through the complexities of teenage pregnancy. An

essential aspect of this support includes making their children aware of the consequences of sexual intercourse. Parents need to be actively involved in their teenagers' lives, guiding them towards prioritizing their education and future prospects. Having open and honest discussions about sexuality, responsibility, and the importance of education is fundamental.

Additionally, attending regular talks provided in the community to empower parents should be attended. Ultimately, a collaborative effort among the Department of Basic Education, schools, parents, and the community at large is necessary to ensure pregnant learners receive the support and care they need to succeed both academically and personally.

The unfortunate truth is that the stigma attached to pregnancy in schools can manifest in various forms, from whispered judgments among peers to overtly hostile behaviors.

Educators and school administrators play a crucial role pregnant learners should be empowered to continue their education without fear of judgment or hostility, knowing they have the strength and resources to overcome these challenges. By fostering a more inclusive and supportive school environment, we can ensure that all learners, regardless of their circumstances, are given the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a summary of the study undertaken, which was followed by the key findings of the study, based on the research questions posed. This chapter has provided recommendations for the SMT and the Department of Education alike.

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APPENDIX A



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1063

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/41136

Miss TM Mari
111 Lemuria Grove
CHATSWORTH
4000


Dear Miss Mari

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EDUCATORS’ EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING PREGNANT LEARNERS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE UMLAZI DISTRICT”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 19 September 2022 to 31 August 2025.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMLAZI DISTRICT


Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 22 September 2022

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX B



25 January 2023

Trishantha Mari (214574197)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear T Mari,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004870/2022

Project title: Educators Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary School in the Umlazi District.

Revised title : Educators' experiences of teaching pregnant learners in a secondary school in the Umlazi District

Degree : Masters

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 19 January 2023 to our letter of 07 December 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 for one year until 25 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 Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

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

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX C

The principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am presently studying towards a Masters in educational psychology degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. I am in the process of conducting research for my dissertation titled: *“Educators’ Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary School in the Umlazi District”*. I request your permission to conduct research at your school. Educators will be requested to form part of a focus group discussion and individual semi-structured interviews, which will take place after school at a convenient time for the educators. The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for the purpose of this study only. Participation will take place on a voluntary basis and the educators will be free to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences.

For more information and any questions about this study, you may contact me at:

Cell: 073 696 0165 or Email: trishamari23@gmail.com

You may also contact:

- 1.) My supervisor: Dr. V. Jairam at: Tel: (031) 260 1438 or Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za
- 2.) The HSSREC Research Office (UKZN) – 031 260 3587/8350/4557

Yours sincerely

Trishantha Mari

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: _____

Greeting: Dear Educator,

My name is Trishantha Mari (214574197). I am educator and currently studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus towards a master's degree. The title of my research is:

Educators' Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary School in the Umlazi District. I am interested in your participation in this research to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research which will explore educators' experiences of learner pregnancy in a secondary school. The aim and purpose of this research is to explore the factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

The study is expected to enroll one life orientation educator from grade eight to eleven who has previously or currently taught a pregnant learner. There will be only one school involved. It will involve the following procedures; participants will be enlightened on the study and why the researcher requires their participation. Additionally, participants will be given a consent form to be filled and sign consent on their own behalf. Participants will be required to answer questions in an interview setting and participate in a group discussion with other educators from the same school, based on their experiences of teaching pregnant learners and the implementation of the school policy and the National Policy of the Prevention and

Management of Learner Pregnancy. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be approximately four days. The study is funded by the researcher and no bursary was granted.

I hope that the study will create the following benefits; understand the factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC/00004870.2022: approval number).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher on email: trishamari23@gmail.com /0736960165

Supervisor Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Educational Psychology, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email jairam@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: 031 260 1438

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za , Phone number :031 260 3587/8350/4557

Participation in this research is voluntary (and that participants may withdraw participation at any point), and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur any penalties, impact on their work environment. If a participant would like to withdraw from the study, the individual should bring it to the researcher's attention and they may do so. The participant may provide the researcher with a reason for leaving the study, however reasoning is not compulsory. The researcher will terminate the participate from the study under the following circumstances: great discomfort caused by the research or the participate wishes to withdraw from the study.

Zero costs will be incurred by participants. All costs will be incurred by the researcher.

The anonymity will be ensured where appropriate, participants' names will not be disclosed. Names will be replaced with aliases in order to protect confidentiality.

Data will be recorded via an audio recorder from a smart phone which is password protected and stored on the researcher's password protected harddrive. Any printed copies of raw data/transcripts of interviews will be securely locked away in a cabinet and after 5 years will be shredded. All digital audio files, as well as all other electronic data will be stored on the

hard drive of the password-protected personal computer of the researcher. This data will be deleted after 5 years from the researcher's computers.

CONSENT

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled Educators' Experiences of Teaching Pregnant Learners in a Secondary School in the Umlazi District by Trishantha Mari.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study. I understand the aim of the study is to explore educators' experiences of learner pregnancy in a secondary school, the factors educators consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy and the role educators played to ensure these learners continue schooling.

Additionally, I fully understand the procedures involved in the process of data generation. I understand that I am required to answer interview questions which will be audio recorded by the researcher and I will remain anonymous.

I have been given an opportunity to answer 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 the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher on 0736960165 or on email at trishamari23@gmail.com.

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 researchers then I may contact: 0736960165 or on email at trishamari23@gmail.com.

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

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KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview

YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator

Date

(Where applicable)

APPENDIX E

Semi-structured interview instrument for participant

Questions to be asked in the interview:

1. Briefly describe pregnant learners during your lesson time.

Probe questions: Comment on pregnant learner's attention span, social interaction, academic performance and rate of absenteeism.

2. What factors do you consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy in this particular school?

Probing Questions: **Do you think** they are adequately educated on sexuality by the curriculum?

Do you think the curriculum influenced their pregnancy?

3. What role did you take on to ensure these learners continue schooling?

Probe Questions: What strategies did you implement in order to assist these learners in continuing with their schooling?

Do you think these strategies are enough for learners to continue schooling?

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Discussion Questions

The following questions are with regards to the school policy and the Department of Basic Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools and the school policy.

1. "Schools will ensure the retention of pregnant learners during the course of their pregnancy and make provision for their absence during the term of their pregnancies. After giving birth the learner may return to school to continue the appropriate grade. The principal, educators and staff will take on all reasonable steps to accommodate the learner's basic education".

What are your thoughts and feelings about the above policy statement?

2. "Reasonable access to male/female condoms as well as information and other services will be made available to learners of 12 years or older. If unavailable to be accessed at school, the integrated school health policy nurse"

Do you think this is happening? Explain why or why not.

3. "Life orientation and other subjects, through the provision of comprehensive sex education, should contain material that is interactive, learner centered and delivers skilled-based pedagogies, delivering quality, age-appropriate sexual reproductive health information".

Do you think this is currently happening within the school?

Probe questions: Comment on the skills of educators, are they trained on delivering comprehensive sex education?

What type of development or training do they receive to attain these skills?

4. The school policy states that "learners will be provided with support and counselling by psychological services".

Do you think this is happening and to what extent is it happening?

5. The school policy states that "The learner/parent will be requested to obtain a medical certificate giving the estimated date of confinement, the date from which it would be medically advisable for the learner to be at school before confinement and the date from which it will be medically acceptable to return to school".

Is this being done at school?

What are your thoughts about learners attending school while pregnant?

6. Do you think the implementation of the both policies are being done effectively and explain why or why not?

Probe Question: do you face any challenges, briefly explain them. (With regards to aiding assistance to learners, providing counselling, providing condoms at school or comprehensive sex education)

7. What do you think should be done by the department of education to improve the implementation of the policy?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX G

Instrument for Document Review

Document 1:

Title of the document: Department of Basic Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of learner Pregnancy in Schools (2021)

Date of Review: 03 August 2022

Type of Document: Public

Author/Persons Responsible for the Document: Department of Basic Education

Location/Source of Document: 222 Struben Street, Pretoria.

What are the main topics or content of this document?

This policy stipulates guiding principles for impregnated learners with regards to access to education, access to comprehensive sex education, counselling care and support, teenage pregnancy prevention and roles and responsibilities of schools, principals and educators in conjunction with various health stakeholders.

Brief description of the document:

The policy aims to ensure accessible provision of information on framework for mitigation and prevention, counselling, care and support and guidelines for systematic management and implementation. The policy places on record the commitment of the Department of Education and the various stakeholders to providing comprehensive sex education and their role functions. The main goal is to provide guiding principles to reduce and manage the number of learner pregnancy incidence and its exacerbating factors on the learners. Additionally it places emphasis on the role and functions of principals, educators, school governing body members and members of the department of health to ensure learners are accommodated and continue with their basic education.

Main target groups/audience as described in the document: Principals, educators, school governing body members.

How does this document relate to this study?

The study focuses on educators' experiences of learner pregnancies, educators' views of causes and the roles adopted by educators to ensure learners continue schooling. Thus, this document has been reviewed to examine whether educators are implementing the aims of the policy. Additionally, as much as the department of education have published the policy it is questionable as to what is going on in schools as teenage pregnancy is on the rise. This study will explore the various experiences of educators while attempting to implement policy with regards to practicality. Additionally, educators will provide input towards this phenomenon as to what could be done to reduce the number of teenage pregnancy incidence or the implementation of the policy.

Reflection of this document

The policy can be used as powerful tool within a schooling environment if implemented correctly and efficiently. This will definitely assist pregnant learners in continuing their basic education. Educators are main role players in the implementation of the policy therefore, they would be the suitable candidates to provide insight on the practicality and success of the policy.

Document 2 :

Title of the document: Learner Pregnancy Policy (2016)

Date of Review: 03 August 2022

Type of Document: School Based Document

Author/Persons Responsible for the Document: Glenover Secondary School

Location/Source of Document: 75 Glenover Road ,Chatsworth,Durban,4092

What are the main topics or content of this document?

This policy stipulates guiding principles for impregnated learners with regards to access to education confidentiality, support and counselling.

Additionally, the policy stipulates learners are to complete all assessments and they will be informed about examinations.

Brief description of the document:

The policy aims to ensure pregnant learners' confidentiality and the provision of support and counselling. Additionally learners will be allowed to attend school once they provide a medical report stating it is safe for them to attend school.

Main target groups/audience as described in the document: Principals, educators, school governing body members.

How does this document relate to this study?

The study focuses on educators' experiences of learner pregnancies, educators' views of causes and the roles adopted by educators to ensure learners continue schooling. Thus, the school policy has been reviewed to examine whether educators are implementing the aims of the policy. Additionally, as much as the school has developed the policy it is questionable as to what is going on in school in terms of implementation and the challenges faced. This study will explore the various experiences of educators while attempting to implement policy with regards to practicality. Additionally, educators will provide input towards this phenomenon as to what could be done to increase the effectiveness of the policy.

Reflection of this document

The policy lacks detail. The policy is very brief and does not stipulate roles of educators or relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the policy focuses on grade 12 learners. The policy does not mirror the Department of Basic Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of learner Pregnancy in Schools (2021).

APPENDIX H



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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
A major psychosocial challenge facing teenage girls in the 21st century is the high rates of sex
pregnancy. Inevitably mothers and mothers to be, acknowledging that every child is a
miracled event, and it is so, educators and the various stakeholders who take learners on a
meaningful journey of learning, from which our learners will arise with wisdom, knowledge
and skills necessary to respond better to challenging changing times. The study I had
undertaken sought to explore educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a secondary
school, the factors educators, consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy, the role
educators play to ensure these learners continue schooling.

This chapter commences with a brief background of the study. In this chapter I will discuss
the location of the study, purpose and rationale, highlight the key questions of the study and
conclude with an overview of the study.

1.2 Location of the study

This study was carried out at a secondary school in Chatsworth, south of Durban. This
educational institution provides education to learners from grade eight to twelve. The area the
school is located in an area that has residents that display poverty; many residents occupy
sub-standard flats with large families. Many residents are unemployed. Violence, drugs and
alcohol consumption appear to be rife in the area. There is a lack of parental involvement.
The area is fully equipped with facilities such as state clinic, hospital, a youth centre, police
stations and social welfare offices. The location was selected based on the high rates of
teenage pregnancies at the school.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore educators' experiences of pregnant learners in a
secondary school. The study aimed to develop an understanding the factors educators,
consider as contributing towards learner pregnancy, the role educators played to ensure these
learners continue schooling.

Through the use of document reviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews
this study sought to identify intervention strategies to addressing the problem of teenage



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APPENDIX I

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This serves to confirm that the document entitled:

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TRISHANTHA MARI

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Genevieve Wood
PhD candidate
Wits University