

**The teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in
Vhembe, Limpopo**

by

Tshiwela Maria Lethole

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DECLARATION

I, Tshiwela Maria Lethole, declare that *The teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in Vhembe, Limpopo* is my own work and that all sources that I have used and quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: _____

Tshiwela Maria Lethole

Date: _____

Student No: 07288123

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the following persons who played a significant role in my life from my childhood development to where I am today.

My parents, Masakona Lethole, my mother, who always mentioned that “*pfunzo i disa tshedza, nwananga, sedza vhanwe vho funzeaho u vha edzise*”. My mother is not educated but she encouraged me to obtain an education qualification of this stature. My late father Mr Jack Lethole, who provided all his children with all our educational requirement such as paying for the school fees, uniforms, carry-money and others. I am deeply touched by obtaining this master’s degree when my father is no longer living to witness this achievement.

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Abstract

Within the last decade, the level of teenage pregnancy in Southern Africa has been on the increase and as a result, is being seen as a major social problem. This study, which is a dissertation of limited scope, investigates the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District in Limpopo. This study is classified as qualitative research within a case study design. A convenience sampling method was applied in order to select teachers and teenage mother learners for participation in the study resulting in five teachers and five teenage mother learners participating in the study. Participants were interviewed using in-depth interviews. Participant observation and document analysis were other research methodologies included in the data collection process. Participant observation assisted in gathering data in relation to how mother learners interacted with teachers and other peers in class and in the school environment and document analysis was conducted by means of perusing formal records, such as attendance registers, class tests and examination results, medical records, and involvement in extramural activities. Qualitative data analysis was used in order to analyse data collected which resulted in themes and sub-themes emerging. The findings revealed that teenage pregnancy has a detrimental effect on girls' schooling with school attendance and absenteeism affecting performance resulting in poor results and even drop out. Additional factors such as lack of financial support, physical and emotional support from family and friends as well as stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion have a negative effect on learning. Teachers tend to lack the necessary knowledge and skills in dealing with teenage mother learners and are not supported with counselling programmes. Recommendations suggest that teachers are equipped with special skills to deal with teenage mother learners and that learners at school are made more aware of the dangers of early pregnancy and its effects on their education through various programmes.

Key words: Teenage mother learners, teaching and learning process, challenges in teaching teenage mother learners, challenges of teenage mother learners.

Khaedu dza u funza na u guda kha vhagudi vha vhana vha re vho mme zwikoloni zwa sekondari Masipalani wa Tshiřiriki tsha Vhembe, Vunduni ła Limpopo

Mańweledzo

Ngudo iyi, ya desithesheni ya tshikoupu tsho pimiwaho, i khou řořisisa nga ha khaedu dza u funza na u guda kha vhagudi vha vhana vha re vho mme zwikoloni zwa sekondari Masipalani wa Tshiřiriki tsha Vhembe, Limpopo. Ngudo iyi yo khethekanywa sa řořisiso ya khwałithathivi. Kha pulane na nzudzanyo ya řořisiso, ngudo iyi yo itwa zwikoloni zwa sekondari kha Masipala wa Tshiřiriki tsha Vhembe, tshine tsha wanala kha vundu ła Limpopo.

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Tsha u fhedzisela. U saukanywa ha łańwalo ho itwa nga ndila ya u řola rekhodo dza fomała, dzi ngaho ridzhisiřara ya mađele tshikoloni, mulingo wa kiłasini na mvelelo dza mulingo, rekhodo dza mutakalo, na u dzhenelela kha nyitelwannđa na thandela dza mveledziso ya tshitshavha. Vhadededzi vhařanu na vhagudi vha vhana vha re vho mme vhařanu vho dzhenelela kha ngudo iyi. Musaukanyo wa data wa khwałithithathivi wo shumiswa u itela u saukanya data yo kuvhanganyiwaho nga tshifhinga tsha inthaviwu dzo fhelelaho na data ya u sedza ya mudzheneli

Ditlhohlo tša go ruta le go ithuta tša baswa ba baithuti ba e lego bommago bana dikolong tša sekontari ka Mmasepaleng wa Selete wa Vhembe,Limpopo Profentshe

Khutsofatšo

Nyakiřišo ye, yeo e lego disetheišene ya sekoupu se se lekantšwego, e nyakiřiša ditlhohlo tša go ruta le go ithuta tša baswa ba baithuti ba e lego bommago bana dikolong tša sekontari ka

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CRONYMS

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEd.	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CSG	Child Support Grant
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
HONS	Honours
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IUD	Intra Uterine Devices
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SADHS	South African Demographic and Health Survey
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SCK	Subject Content Knowledge
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SMT	School Management Teams
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TOP	Termination of Pregnancy

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Teenage motherhood has become a social problem that is continuing to disrupt the teaching-learning process within Southern African schools. Mkwanzani and Odimegwu (2015:4) report that the level of teenage pregnancy in Southern Africa has been on an increase since 2005 and was at its highest level in 2011 at 28.9%. The most important attributes related to teenage pregnancy at school are its effects, namely school dropout, the cycle of unemployment, lowered socio-economic status of individuals and others. Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2011:382) note that it is a condition which is closely associated with poor school performance, lack of parental control, family disintegration, inadequate sexual education, a lack of concentration, poor classroom attendance, and an absence of acceptance by peers and teachers. Teenage motherhood, defined as teenage mothers who have had their first child under the age of twenty (Luong, 2008:6), is a challenge to teaching and learning in the school environment and in the classroom situation. Age of teenage mothers differs from country to country, with Jacobs et al. (2011:382) reporting that South African society experiences teenage pregnancy rates of learners mainly between the ages of 15 and 19 years. In most nations and countries, women are expected to fall pregnant in their twenties. For example, Settersten (2004) states that in New York, the shared expectation is that teenagers should not get pregnant at all, otherwise they could be negatively sanctioned by individuals and institutions. The expectation of parents is that learners should complete their secondary and tertiary education, start their dream careers, get married and then start families. Teenage pregnancy has become a challenging condition that involves many girls as young as 15 years of age falling pregnant (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:382).

The constructivist theoretical perspective is regarded as the approach which can effectively deal with teaching and learning challenges that teenage mothers experience within the school community environment. According to Jacobs *et al.* (2011:6), the constructivist theoretical perspective within the school system ascribes that learners, including the teenage mother learners, have a democratic right to express their own views without fear of intimidation from either teachers or their peers. In this regard therefore, teenage pregnancy or motherhood is no longer a condition that should be seen as depriving, stigmatising nor excluding learners who

may fall pregnant whilst still attending school. Crossman (2016:3) maintains that according to the constructivist theoretical explanation of the teaching-learning process, learners are taught the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their personal growth and the environment within which they exist. Learners are expected to solve their own personal problems as well as challenges experienced by their respective communities. Teachers are expected to play the role of facilitators assisting learners, including the mother learners, to acquire a formal education. A school curriculum developed according to the constructivist theory is levelled towards the reduction and the improvement of challenges experienced by teenage mother learners within the classroom and the school situation.

The social problem of teenage motherhood is supported by relevant South African legislation. The most important legislation is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). These frameworks fall within the democratic nature of nations, which are globally valued and supported, and which are the guidelines through which the South African school curriculum should be developed. Chohan and Gina (2009:13) maintain that the South African school curriculum is based on the constructivist theoretical approach which emphasises the development of an interactive relationship and mutual construction of knowledge between teachers and learners. This statement entails that the societal curriculum developed for teaching and learning within the school system in South Africa should be guided by the specifications of the principal legislative frameworks, namely the Constitution and the South African Schools Act, as mentioned above.

Contextualisation of teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners is based on the increasing number of teenage mothers at schools within the South African context. Mashishi and Makoelle (2014:375) have identified challenges of teenage mother learners as regular absenteeism from the classroom and school, failure to do classroom tasks and activities and performance is generally found to be poor in comparison to their peers. Teenage motherhood deprives learners of the opportunity to concentrate on their studies. Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod and Letsoalo (2009:13) are of the opinion that girls who perform poorly are more likely to drop out of school and also less likely to return to school following a pregnancy. Teenage motherhood is not only a South African problem, but a universal one (Singh, 2005:iv) and is on the increase, indicating that the society might be populated by more uneducated and poverty stricken individuals.

Teenage motherhood, now considered is a universal phenomenon, has reached a stage on the South African context where it is regarded as a social problem (Dlamini, 2016:27). Events are usually classified as social problems when they affect a large number of families, communities and the society as a whole. Dlamini (2016:23) of the opinion that an increase in teenage motherhood in South Africa is attributed to social and economic conditions within which adolescents find themselves, although there tends to be rises and declines in the fertility rate dependent of a number of factors (Panday *et al.*, 2009:17). In the context of this view, the researcher asserts that teenage motherhood tends to escalate in low-income families, communities and societies. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has indicated that a poor socio-economic background impacts directly on teenage pregnancy (Panday, 2009:3). Although Panday *et al.* (2009:27) report that teenage motherhood in the African continent is on the increase due to the fact that adolescence fertility rates tend to be higher than those in the developed countries, they have confirmed that South Africa has the lowest total fertility rate (TFR) in comparison to other countries falling within the Sub-Saharan continent (2009:28). However, within the South African context, the rates are significantly higher among the African population (71 per 1000) in comparison to other cultural groups, for example Coloured (60 per 1000), Indian (22 per 1000) and White (14 per 1000) (Panday *et al.*, 2009:6). A high escalation rate in teenage motherhood is experienced among girls who are still attending school. The percentage of pregnant learners in the province of Limpopo per 1 000 was recorded at 60.36% during the period 2004-2008 as compared to the Eastern Cape Province which was higher at 68.81% (Panday *et al.*, 2009:41). The HSRC reports that high rates of teenage pregnancy are more prevalent in the provinces of Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal (Panday *et al.*, 2009:6). The South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) recorded that in Limpopo, the Vhembe District's predominantly rural nature is responsible for the escalation of teenage motherhood to the level of 15% during 2009 (Panday *et al.*, 2009:36). Teenage motherhood is a social problem which is continuing to increase in many South African communities, and the Vhembe district is no exception.

Chohan and Gina (2009:4) suggested that teenage motherhood should be drastically reduced as it tends to expose learners to various problems including HIV infection, high school dropout, and poor school performance. Teenage motherhood is therefore a condition which should be addressed at schools, and as a result the increase of teenage motherhood is the focus of this study conducted in the Limpopo Province in the Vhembe District Municipality. This study

investigates teaching and learning challenges faced by teenage mother learners within the classroom and the school situation as a whole.

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Chohan and Gina (2009:4) state that poverty is closely related to the condition of teenage pregnancy. Teenage motherhood is considered a repetitive cycle as in all likelihood, teenage mothers' children could end up in the same situation (Luong, 2008:6). According to Mashishi and Makoelle (2014:374), individuals who were teenage mothers during their early stage of development are mostly unemployed and if employed, tend to occupy lowly-paid positions. This condition exposes teenage mothers to a condition of poverty, although in many societies, the poor have a tendency of relying heavily on the social welfare system (Breinbauer & Maddaleno, 2005:xvii). It is therefore necessary to address the issue of teenage motherhood in order for these teenagers to work towards developing a higher socio-economic status. Teenage mothers should be encouraged to return to school in order to obtain an education that creates opportunities for betterment and advancement in the workplace. In this way, society could be developed and improved. The strategic interventions suggested by the curriculum, developed according to the constructivist theoretical perspective, help teenage mother learners to internalise, reshape and transform new information to improve their livelihoods and address teaching and learning challenges experienced at school and in the classroom situation (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:41). Mutshaeni, Manwadu and Mashau (2015:101-102) maintain that whereas pregnant teenage learners have a right to education, they regularly experience medical complications, an increased level of absenteeism, poor classroom performance and possible dropout from school. Teachers, therefore, should offer support and ensure that there is a climate of understanding and respect to encourage them to continue with their education. Teachers should protect learners from being discriminated against and help remove the learning barriers that the learners might face. Teachers should ensure that teenage mother learners have access to equal and similar teaching and learning opportunities.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against the background as stated above, the main research question of this study is formulated as follows:

What are the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District in Limpopo?

The main question necessitated the formation of sub-questions. These sub-questions are formulated as follows:

1. What teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners are experienced by teachers?
2. What teaching and learning challenges are experienced by teenage mother learners?
3. What are the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process?
4. Which guidelines do teachers need in order to support teenage mother learners during the teaching-learning process?

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Following the research questions as stated above, the aim of this study is to investigate the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District of Limpopo.

Related objectives to the aim of the study are:

- 1 To explore the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners experienced by teachers,
- 2 To investigate the teaching and learning challenges experienced by teenage mother learners,
- 3 To identify the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process, and
- 4 To recommend support that teachers can provide to teenage mother learners.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design could be viewed as a direction map which the researcher follows in order to conduct a research study in a professional and effective manner. McMillan and Schumacher (2007:20) define a research design as a tool that describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions that data will be obtained. A research design is basically a strategic plan for a research project, setting out the broad structures and features of the research (Gray, 2004:405).

Gray (2004:397) further states that a research design must be viewed as an approach to the collection of data that combines a validity of results with an economy of effort and that such an approach should include decisions on the case site, sample, data collection and analysis. The research design is therefore a plan or a checklist that includes all the most important aspects which are accordingly conducted in order to achieve the research goal and objectives.

This study followed a qualitative research approach. Creswell (2002:46) states that qualitative research is a type of educational research where the researcher relies on the views of participants. In this regard, qualitative research is based on the statements, viewpoints, beliefs and statements provided by the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2007:26) indicate that qualitative research is effective in the analysis of people's behaviours, beliefs, feelings or values. Qualitative research is non-numerical in nature. This means that it does not apply numbers and other qualitative tools in order to measure a social reality. A qualitative research approach is suitable for studies that investigate social phenomena that are new and were not adequately researched in the past. Qualitative research was therefore found most relevant for this study that investigated the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District of Limpopo.

An interpretivist paradigm, which maintains that qualitative research avoids numbers, deals with interpreting social realities, and it is considered soft research (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000:7), underpinned this study. Soft research provides data that are less accurate and cannot be effectively generalised. Most social science research utilises an interpretivist approach in which data are usually collected through open-ended questions. In this regard Creswell (2002), maintains that qualitative research provides researchers with the opportunity to ask open-ended

questions and listen to the views of the participants during interviews. Open-ended questions give the participants the freedom of describing the phenomenon under investigation and explaining their experiences of the phenomenon in the way that they experience it.

Within the interpretivist paradigm, a case study was used. Zainal (2007:1) argues that a distinguishing feature of a case study is that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being loose connections of traits necessitating in-depth investigation into the problem at hand. Case study research consists of an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon under investigation because it is usually conducted at a single and relatively small research unit, such as a school site (Zainal, 2007:3). The case in this study is a secondary school which is situated in the Vhembe District in Limpopo.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods entail a step-by-step procedure of collecting and analysing the data in social science research studies. Gray (2004:401) refers to research methods as a research procedure which is defined as the systematic approach towards the collection of data and their subsequent analysis. The main aspects treated during the implementation of the research methods are themes, entailing the process of identifying patterns that emerge during the qualitative data collection process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:2). In this regard, the research methods were addressed through the three important aspects, namely the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis, and these are briefly discussed in the next section. An in-depth discussion of the research methods follows in Chapter 3 of this study.

1.6.1 Selection of Participants

Selection of participants is also referred to as sampling, which can be defined as a process through which a small number of units of analysis are selected from the general population (Gray, 2004:403). A sample consists of a relatively small number of individuals or other units that are selected from a larger population according to a set of rules (Fisher & Foreit, 2002:63). Samples are few in nature and most social science samples could range from eight to 12 individuals for interviews (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008:2279). Gray (2004:324) maintains that social science research often works with small samples of people, cases or phenomena

rested in particular contexts. Samples were relevant for this study because it conducted in-depth interviews as a method of data collection.

The sampling procedure applied in this research study was convenience sampling. When it is difficult to find the suitable participants, researchers select those who are readily available. Convenience samples are selected from whatever cases happen to be available at a given time or place (Fisher & Foreit, 2002:67). In this research, the researcher selected those individuals who were readily available to her and were willing to participate in the research. Two categories of samples were selected according to the convenience sampling method, namely teachers and teenage mother learners. Five participants from both categories were involved in interviews. Apart from the interviews, participant observation and document analysis were used to gather data.

1.6.2 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was conducted through three instruments, namely in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. A blend of three instruments within a single study afforded a deeper insight into the nature and extent of teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners, which could not have been possible had the researcher applied only one instrument in the study (Dang, 2015:2). The use of more than one data collection instrument in a single study is further referred to as triangulation. Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:40) define triangulation as the process of combining multiple observations, methods and data sources from a single researcher and a single study. Triangulated research instruments of in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis provided the researcher with rich and in-depth information in order to answer the research questions.

The collection instruments used in this research study are briefly defined and discussed in the subsequent sections.

1.6.2.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are conducted in areas of research exploration, that is, where a few or no other research studies were done in the past. Creswell (2002:225-226) maintains that in-depth

interviews occur when researchers ask one or more participants general open-ended questions and records their answers.

An in-depth interview is an alternative approach to interviewing which permits greater depth of meaning in order to seek detailed, open-ended responses to questions from the participants during the interview sessions (Fisher & Foreit, 2002:78). During this type of interview, researchers enter into a discussion with the participants, called interviewees, in order to encourage the latter to explain their feelings, beliefs, opinions and experiences of the phenomenon under investigation.

The participants interviewed in this study consisted of five teachers and five teenage mothers involved in the teaching and learning process at secondary schools in the Soutpansberg-West Circuit, which is situated within the Vhembe District in, Limpopo.

1.6.2.2 Participant observation

In participant observation, researchers and the researched interact with each other giving the former gain an opportunity to gather information related to the culture of the participants (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:56). As researchers interact with people within the selected sites, they gather a large amount of information regarding their relationships, caring, support and other matters (Creswell, 2002:221). On the other hand, Robson (2002:310) contends that during participant observation, people may differ from what they say and the manner of their behavioural standards. This is the kind of information researchers gather during the participant observation process. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009:398) maintain that participant observation provides researchers with the aspect of a reality check. In this regard, researchers are provided with an opportunity to gather as much information as possible about the sampled individuals and their site. The researcher used field notes in order to capture all the activities and aspects related to teenage mothers when attending school. Dang (2015:7) states that fieldnotes are useful during the direct observation process because they increase the chances of improving the gathering of information in a valid and credible picture of the phenomena being studied.

1.6.2.3 Document analysis

Document analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” which is unobtrusive in nature because the document being analysed will not alter its nature due to the reason that it is observed (Robson, 2002:272). In a nutshell, document analysis entails that the data collection process involves researchers gathering information from documents and other records already available at the research sites. Creswell (2008:231) further defines document analysis as a form of data collection which requires the analysis of texts.

Document analysis was conducted through the checking of records within the school management system including attendance registers, and evidence of academic performance related to the participants, the teenage mother learners.

1.6.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of interpreting the research findings, but could be quite difficult to conduct (Gray, 2004:327). However, quantitative data analysis needs to follow a step-by-step process with the first step being transcription of the raw data. Dang (2015:7) explains that transcription involves recording until you get a chance to transcribe the data, that is write down what the recordings contain but to ensure that this is done verbatim. This process was achieved by means of transforming information from audio recording to a written text. The researcher transcribed data in order to begin the analysis. The text was then analysed, meaning that the important and similar themes that appeared in it. McMillan and Schumacher (2007:367) are of the opinion that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships. In this way, data is reduced until they are grouped into categories and themes.

In this study, the researcher followed five steps suggested by Babbie (2008:418) which include transcription of the data obtained through data collection methodologies, coding of data in order to develop themes and categories from the texts, considering emerging themes with relevance to the research problem, Comparing categories with one another to develop central findings that represent the lived ‘interpretive experience’ of the samples and finally, report writing where

conclusions are drawn, recommendations are offered and suggestions for further research are made.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA

Validity and reliability are the most important research concepts to satisfy the construction of the research instruments and the general trustworthiness of the data for the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:105). Research instruments are expressed within the context of thematic analysis. In this regard therefore, Maguire and Delahunt (2017:1) maintain that thematic analysis is part of the qualitative research which can be described as the researcher's ability to understand, describe and interpret experiences and perceptions of participants being involved in the research process. Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008:2279) add other measures of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability and confidentiality, all aspects are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

1.8 ETHICAL MEASURES

Ethical consideration entails not knowingly exposing the research participants to physical, psychological and emotional harm (Babbie, 2008:68). If researchers fail to protect the participants from harm, then the study will be deemed being conducted as an unethical practice. Thus, being ethical limits the choices that can be made in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even in extreme cases (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:56). Researchers are compelled to adhere to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of participants' fundamental human rights during the data collection process. The central ethical issue surrounding data collection through interviews is that participants should not be harmed or damaged in any way by the research. For example, if a participant becomes anxious or upset during the course of an interview, the session should be immediately abandoned (Gray, 2004:235).

The researcher addressed different types of ethical considerations in this study, including harm to subjects by obtaining informed consent, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality and ensuring no deception (see Chapter 3 Section 3.4.6). These ethical issues were identified, defined and described in relation to the problem under investigation, namely teaching and learning

challenges of teenage mother learners. The researcher also obtained ethical clearance from the College of Education, University of South Africa which is attached as Appendix A in this report. The researcher requested for permission to conduct research from the Department of Education (see Appendix E). The Department in response, granted her the permission which is included as Appendix F in this study.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important in that it was aimed at investigating teaching and learning challenges of teenage mothers. Thus, the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study could benefit various school communities, teachers, the school management teams (SMTs), parents and other stakeholders who have an interest in the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners. This study could as well be utilised as starting point from where future research studies could begin.

1.10 CLARIFICATIONS OF CONCEPT

A number of concepts were used throughout the research study. Within the context of this study, the concepts are identified and clarified as follows:

1.10.1 Teenage Mothers

Teenage mothers are women who had their first child (birth) under the age of 20 (Luong, 2008:7). Teenage mothers are usually young girls under 20 years of age who happened to give birth to babies when they were still dependent on their parents and others. Jacobs *et al.* (2011:382) states that these youth are called teenage mothers as many fall pregnant and have babies before they reach the age of 18 years.

1.10.2 Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy can be described as a condition in which the girls below the age of 20 years fall pregnant. McLeod (2013:36) states that teenage pregnancy occurs when a young girl becomes pregnant, a condition is associated with poor knowledge and practices of sexual

education and as such it has become a serious concern at many schools within South African society. Weir (2007:5) defines teenage pregnancy as a health-related problem which occurs when girls as young as 10 years of age fall pregnant.

1.10.3 Teaching and Learning Challenges

Teaching and learning challenges are barriers to effective teaching and learning, meaning all the obstacles that hinder individuals from fully attending schooling (Landsberg *et al.*, 2011:46). Jacobs *et al.* (2011:366) maintain that teaching and learning challenges are in fact all the unexpected and unacceptable behavioural patterns among learners and teachers that might hinder the school performance of learners.

1.10.4 Curriculum

Curriculum is to a large extent a collection of plans about teaching which incorporate plans on a national level (macro-planning), on an institutional level (meso-planning) and on a classroom-level (micro-planning) (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:33). The curriculum is a plan which focuses teachers on the teaching-learning process where knowledge, skills and attitudes are developed in learners either in the context of the classroom or the school environment. Jacobs *et al.* (2011:32) equated a curriculum with “a course to be run” to indicate that a curriculum is some form of a plan a teacher designs before they and the learners start to pursue its intended goals and objectives.

1.12 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The research report for this study is laid out in the following manner:

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and overview of the study. In this chapter, the researcher described certain research concepts related to the teaching and learning challenges experienced by teenage mothers. The chapter incorporated the research problem, the research questions, aims and objectives of the study, a brief review of the literature, a concise description of the research methodology and design of the study. The qualitative research methodology underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm which is concerned with data collection and analysis in a soft nature, that is, in a non-numerical nature. This research approach was attained through

the use of the in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Finally, the researcher utilized the chapter to indicate her adherence to the ethical considerations which form part of the social science professional research and introduce methodological norms. The researcher clarified the definitions of the concepts that are related to the study such as teenage mothers, teenage pregnancy, teaching and learning challenges and the curriculum.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on teaching and learning challenges of mother learners within the classroom and school situation. This chapter was divided into a number of sub-topics, firstly looking at definitions of teenage motherhood as a social problem within South African society, which is closely associated with poor school performance among learners and school dropout. The theoretical framework of teenage motherhood was articulated through the constructivist approach which forms part of the curriculum design and implementation at schools and within the classroom situation. The legislative framework of teenage motherhood within the South African context, which promulgates the nature in which teenage motherhood and teenage mothers are to be treated within the school environment, and stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and related educational legislation, namely; the South African Schools Act, 1996 as discussed. Finally, the effective interventions required to address the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mothers within the classroom and school situations were explored.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology of the study. Qualitative research was identified as a form of research approach relevant for the study because its main aim, namely an investigation into the teaching and learning challenges of motherhood within the classroom and school situation was not conducted in this specific context in the past. A case study was conducted at a selected secondary school in the Vhembe District Municipality in the Limpopo Province. In this regard therefore, teenage motherhood and the challenges teenage mother learners experienced during the teaching and learning process were adequately addressed. Research concepts identified in the chapter include population, sampling, data collection, trustworthiness of the data which was divided into validity and reliability, qualitative data collection and data analysis and the ethical considerations. The chapter also addressed the difficulty in the analysis of the qualitative data, and introduced a qualitative data analysis methodology for the simplification of this analysis procedure.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the empirical research obtained through the three data collection methods, namely in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. The research instruments utilised during the in-depth interview sessions were of an open-ended nature in order to allow participants (teenage mothers attending school) an opportunity to report in own words and style how they experienced challenges related to the condition during the teaching and learning process. Secondly, participant observation was a type of data collection method which concerned the researcher interacting with the participants as well as observing conditions and recording these for the purpose of research. Thirdly, document analysis required that the researcher study a variety of records such as attendance registers, truancy, absenteeism, performance and others for the purpose of gathering data related to the main topic of the study. **Chapter 5** analysed the data, drew conclusions and made recommendations regarding the effective interventions required to address the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at the classroom and school situational environments. This study was conducted according to the qualitative research methodologies, meaning that the data collection of in-depth interviews, the participant observation and the document analysis were accordingly used in order to gather the data for the study. The qualitative data analysis method was used in order to manage the data and present them in a nature that they were understandable to the research audience. Secondly, from these analyses the researcher drew some conclusions related to the most prominent challenges experienced by teenage mothers who were involved in the teaching and learning process at the secondary schools. Thirdly, the researcher offered recommendations regarding the most effective intervention strategies necessary for the reduction of the challenges experienced by teenage mother learners within a school system and/or the classroom situation.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the reader to an investigation into the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mothers. The background and the problem formulation for the study were outlined in relation with the research question and aim of the research. The researcher briefly explicated the research concepts of research design, research methods, population, and sampling and the sampling procedures, data collection methods of in-depth interview, participant observation and document analysis, data analysis and the ethical measures which are specifically addressed in Chapter 3. The following chapter presents the review of the literature for the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at investigating the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mothers in the Vhembe District in Limpopo. This chapter reviews the literature surrounding teenage motherhood, which is an escalating social problem within the South African context. Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:101) report that educators are faced with challenges of teaching pregnant teenagers in the context of the classroom. Teenage motherhood can be described as the phenomenon of young girls below the age of twenty years falling pregnant and becoming mothers. Teenage motherhood affects individuals differently, such as being exposed to school dropout, failing to complete schooling and becoming unemployed in their future adult lives. There are various sociological perspectives found currently in the literature which could be utilised in order to explain social problems including teenage motherhood. The social constructivist theory is embedded in a democratic educational system which emphasises learner-centeredness and the concept of a problem-centred approach (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:6) and it is this theory which can be applied to explain teenage pregnancy with specific relevance to the teaching and learning situation.

In this chapter, legislation frameworks surrounding teenage pregnancy namely the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), Norms and Standard of Educators (RSA, 2000) and the kind of learner and educator that is envisaged in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) are discussed. Policies that are associated with teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood are identified and described in detail in this chapter. The policies, most relevant in the teaching-learning process regard, are also discussed. These include the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) R-9 (DoE, 2002) the National Curriculum Statement Grades (NCS) 10-12 (DoE, 2003) and the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), which were introduced during the years 2002, 2003 and 1996, respectively.

2.2 TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD

Teenage motherhood is a situation in which young girls fall pregnant and deliver babies before they finish school or are married. Luong (2008:7) states that the term teenage mother refers to women who had their first child (birth) under the age of 20. In most nations and countries, most women are expected to fall pregnant after they are twenty years old, although ages differ from country to country. This is supported by Berthoud and Robson (2001:1) who contend that relatively few women conceive and give birth before the age of twenty.

Teenage pregnancy is a condition which entails that young girls, usually of school-going age, systematically have sex and also fail to use preventative measures which predisposes them to falling pregnant, and exposure to the risk of being infected by HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:382). Teenage pregnancy turns young girls into mothers before they attain adulthood. These authors continue to reveal that teenage pregnancy has become a challenging situation that involves many girls as young as 15 years of age, falling pregnant. Teenage pregnancy has become a social problem in that it is now experienced within numerous South African school communities. This problem places unnecessary pressure on the social welfare system as more and more young mothers become the recipients of child-care grants. McLeod (2013:13) views teenage motherhood as being transposed from teenage pregnancy, meaning that teenage girls upon finding that they were pregnant, choose to become mothers. According to the abovementioned author, young girls usually within the ages of 13 to 19 years fall pregnant and become mothers in the process (McLeod, 2013:13). This age could simply be described as below legal adulthood but this varies across nations and cultures.

As the situation of teenage motherhood is experienced in many schools and communities within the South African society, teenage pregnancy becomes a problem as it deprives young mothers the opportunity for education and ultimately better livelihoods. Any teen pregnancy becomes a challenge as in many cases teens lack the skills needed to handle a pregnancy and motherhood (Bodeen, 2015:68). Teenage mothers find themselves in a challenging situation because they have not as yet mastered the skills of looking after themselves and thus, caring for a baby, becomes an additional burden.

Teenage motherhood puts unwanted pressure on young girls. McLeod (2013:36) noted that an individual having a baby as a teenager is more likely to face critical social issues like poverty, poor education, risky behavioural patterns and exposure to poor health issues and welfare. Teenage motherhood is a condition that develops from the interplay of a series of factors such as social, biological, economical, psychological, cultural, and religious and others (Mkwanzani & Odimegwu, 2015:3) and is considered the result of different determinants and cannot be confined to a single factor.

Teenage motherhood is associated with a variety of problems. Berthoud and Robson (2001:1) argue that research in many countries has confirmed that teenage mothers and their families are often at a disadvantage compared with those whose children are born in their twenties or thirties. Once a teen gives birth to a baby, her family becomes affected as everyone is expected to assist in raising the baby in one way or the other. Furthermore, most teenage pregnancies are generally unplanned or accidental in nature or falling pregnant by mistake and therefore unwanted (Weir, 2007:2).

Berthoud and Robson (2001:6) note that teenage motherhood is a concern to governments for two distinct reasons, namely for medical and socio-economic reasons. Chohan and Gina (2009:2) argue that there is no empirical evidence of a link between teen fertility and the Child Support Grant offered in the South African context. Termination of pregnancy has increased over time and therefore there a low uptake of the Child Support Grant among teens has been noticed (Chohan & Gina, 2009:2). In most cases, teenage mothers are not medically fit to withstand the physical demand of pregnancy. On the other hand, teenage mothers show a higher risk of unsatisfactory progress in school than their peers. Most of teenage mothers who fail to withstand the demands of pregnancy end up dropping out of school.

Teenage pregnancy is a social problem that is predominantly experienced in developing countries. Mkwanzani and Odimegwu report that almost 95% of teenage pregnancies occur in developing countries with Sub-Saharan Africa having the highest prevalence (2015:3). “Births to teenage mothers account for more than half of all the births in this region: an estimated 101 births per 1000 women aged 15 to 19. Fourteen of the fifteen countries worldwide that had more than 30% of 20-24-year-olds giving birth before age 18 are in sub-Saharan Africa and include Niger, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda and Cameroon” (Odimegwu & Mkwanzani, 2016:94).

Jacobs *et al.* (2011:382) argue that teenage pregnancy is closely associated with poverty and the lowered socio-economic development status of individuals. Teenage motherhood increases and develops in areas where it is not being discouraged. In 2014 the World Health Organization reported that 11% of all births were due to women aged 15-19, whereas 95% of teenage pregnancies occur in developing Sub-Saharan countries with 36.4 million women becoming pregnant before age 18 (Mkwanaenzi & Odimegwu, 2015:2). On the other hand, Morrell *et al.* (2017:1) indicate that the Department of Education put the number of learners who become pregnant in 2007 at 49 636. These statistics indicate that teenage pregnancy is a major social problem experienced in the South African context. Chohan and Gina (2009:3) report that the majority of pregnant teenagers in South Africa did not plan their pregnancy status and as such, pregnancies were unplanned in nature.

2.3 CAUSES OF TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD

Teenage motherhood is a condition which is determined by a variety of causes. The most common and important causes of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood related to the teaching-learning process are socio-economic deprivation, poverty, environmental factors, behavioural problems, child abuse, peer pressure, lack of knowledge about the use of contraceptives and substance abuse (McLeod, 2013:36). These causes are summarized below. Teenage motherhood is predominantly experienced by people who are socio-economically deprived. Luong reports that in Australia such socio-economically deprived people are people of colour and thus teenage childbearing occurs predominantly among visible minority groups (Luong, 2008:8). The situation in the South African context is the reverse of that experienced in Australia as teenage motherhood currently occurs in the majority groups of the population (McLeod, 2013:29). The rates are significantly higher in the African population (71 per 1000) in comparison to other cultural groups, for example Coloured (60 per 1000), Indian (22 per 1000) and White (14 per 1000) (Panday *et al.*, 2009:6), as previously reported in Chapter 1.

McLeod (2013:36) maintains that children coming from an environment of poverty may be affected by a multitude of social factors, including teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood. The culture of the poor is a main developer and maintenance of many social problems. Jacobs *et al.* (2011:382) are of the opinion that poverty experienced within the family and community, within which the South African youth exist, has an adverse and detrimental effect on their skills

development, their dedication and a desire to study further. Berthoud and Robson (2001:6) contend that teenage mothers and their families experience serious social disadvantages which exclude them from quality education, housing, employment and family income. Luong (2008:8) argues that women of educated families are less likely to be teenage mothers. Most people who are connected to adequate social services show a higher level of achievement with regard to their academic performance, family wellbeing, and so on (McLeod, 2013:35).

The environmental factor is another cause of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood. Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2011:28) contend that the culture of the poor within the South African context manifests in factors such as ill-health, undernourishment, deprivation of privileges, backlogs in education and an unsupportive environment. This situation deprives youth of the love, affection, belongingness and acceptance by parents and other members of the community. The culture of the poor tends to encourage all the negative behavioural patterns that youth exhibit. Behavioural problems are also a cause of teenage pregnancy in that it concerns the nature of how children are reared and disciplined within their respective families and communities of origin. Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (2008:116) note that certain children (or learners) experience a vast number of behavioural problems which are attributed to the nature of their family and community backgrounds. Several young people become truants and display deviant behaviour towards the school authorities and enter into early sexual practices that are defined as unsafe and risky (Chohan & Gina, 2009:2). Other behavioural problems could include deviancy, bullying, gangsterism, abuse of substance, promiscuity, and so on. Deviant behaviour such as early sexual practice, unsafe sex, promiscuity leads to teenage pregnancies which bring with them challenges in the teaching and learning process.

Child abuse is one of the crimes committed by parents and has become a major concern within South African society (Landsberg *et al.*, 2011:34). Youth who lack love and a feeling of belonging are more prone to become deviant. In the culture of the poor situation, parents tend to continually order, direct, command, criticise, devalue, ignore and put-down their children (Thompson & Henderson, 2007:10). Child abuse is not only physical but also verbal and emotional in nature. Breinbauer and Maddaleno (2005:xxii) maintain that a hard-to-quantify proportion of births from teenage mothers is the result of sexual violence and abuse, usually an adult, having taken unfair advantage of the girl. Most teenage mothers have fallen pregnant after they had sex with adult persons, in some instances the adult being their blood relatives

such as uncles and brothers. According to Weir (2007:7), young girls are usually given presents and favours which are used as tools to control them. Once they fall into the trap, teenagers are induced into having sex, usually unprotected, and this can lead to early pregnancy. Most unwanted pregnancies in teenagers occur in this fashion. Chohan and Gina (2009:4) are of the opinion that most girls, who fall pregnant prematurely, do so because of their poor socio-economic status (SES).

Peer pressure is another cause of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood because as teenagers interact with each other and develop relationships, they are exposed to other exotic relationships which are controlled and maintained by what is referred to as peer pressure (Luong, 2008:9). Peer pressure is a process through which individual youth influence each other to behave in ways their respective groupings require and expect them to behave. Panday and Arends (2008) believe that peer pressure is the driving force behind school dropout in the South African society.

The lack of knowledge with regards to contraception such as the use of oral contraceptive pills, contraceptive injections, contraceptive patches, intra uterine devices (IUD), diaphragm and condoms or even the emergency contraception pill (the ‘morning after’ pill) is a cause of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood among learners. The Family Planning Association (2015) states that a lack of knowledge about contraception is evident in most teenage pregnancies, particularly as girls have the opportunity to use contraceptives which they obtain free of charge from clinics. However, they may not know about them, when to use them and how to apply them.

In addition, teenagers who have tested and abused illicit substances have a high probability of becoming involved in unsafe sex, and as such, many end up being prematurely pregnant (Clarke, 2007). Substance abuse is defined as a process through which individuals rely heavily upon substances in order to enhance their physical, psychological, sexual and emotional functioning (Clarke, 2007:82). Substance intake is therefore connected with teenage pregnancy in that individual teens tend to practise risky sexual practices once they are under the influence of toxic substances. Clarke (2007) argues that substance intake is an important factor that is responsible for the high rate of teenage pregnancy in most South African communities. Illicit

and harmful substances encourage teens to become involved in certain behavioural patterns including engagement into early sexual relationships.

Teenage motherhood is a complex condition that interplays with other societal factors which are not addressed in this chapter because they are not the focus of this study. Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood have a negative impact on teaching and learning at school and in the context of the classroom. The impacts are identified and described as the effects of teenage motherhood in the subsequent section of the chapter.

2.4 EFFECTS OF TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teenage motherhood has negative effects on teaching and learning at school and within the context of the classroom. The effects include school dropout, lowered socio-economic status, disorganisation of the family, stressful lives in general, medical attention, baby care and attention, exclusion as well as exposure to HIV/AIDS infections and other sexually-related diseases (Hubbard, 2008:236).

- **Contribution to school dropout**

Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood are closely associated with a high dropout rate among learners. School dropout is defined as prematurely leaving schooling due to some reasons which place learners in a negative situation where they cannot access employment opportunities and actively participate in economic programmes of their respective communities. Panday and Arends (2008) state that school dropout is in fact referring to young people who are able to get to a secondary school level, but are circulating in the system for a lengthened period and as such cannot make it through to matric. Once teenagers find that they have fallen pregnant, their next step is considering exiting the school system (Bodeen, 2015:46). On the other hand, Luong (2008:9) maintains that teenage mothers tend to have more difficulty completing high school because of the time off required for pregnancy, recuperation and childcare. School dropout is a serious negative consequence because it deprives the teenage mothers of the opportunity to complete their education and embark on careers.

- **Lack of employment opportunity**

Berthoud and Robson (2001:5) suggest that most teenage mother learners are most likely to be poverty-stricken or poor in the future. A contributing factor is that they lack educational achievements, such as a matriculation certificate or a school-exit certificate, which could connect them with employment opportunities in future. However, in order to continue with their schooling, Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:102) suggest that teenage mothers are most likely to have a variety of educational needs because they lack time and effort to concentrate on their study programmes.

- **Contribution to poor socio –economic status**

Teenage motherhood is closely associated with the lowered socio-economic status of individuals. Hubbard (2008:234) is of the opinion that many learners of low socio-economic family backgrounds tend to prematurely fall pregnant in order to obtain financial income from fathers of their children. Teenage pregnancy therefore deprives learners of the necessary resources they need to support them in the learning process, which means that teenage mothers tend to have inadequate education and training to provide access to future employment opportunities and as such they remain poor in their respective livelihoods. Luong (2008:10) suggests that teenage childbearing continues to be a significant indicator of lower socio-economic outcomes. The lower socio-economic status (SES) is defined by an individual's ability to take charge of their own livelihoods and often means that individuals with lower SES tend to occupy what is usually termed low-skilled jobs.

- **Potential of single –parent families**

Teenage motherhood has the potential to lead to future single-parent families. Learners who become pregnant at their earliest stages of development tend to put aside the acquisition of an education which they replace with further childbirths (Hubbard, 2008:228). This situation impinges on the fruitful teaching and learning process and as such leads to learners dropping out of school and becoming full-time mothers. In this regard, teenage mothers, because of their lowered socio-economic status, tend to remain unmarried. Breinbauer and Maddaleno (2005:xxiii) emphasise this aspect when they report that teenage mothers have a higher risk of

being single mothers, faced with absence and irresponsibility on the part of the fathers. Single parenthood is a condition that leads to more social, economic and emotional demands, particularly as very few people come to the rescue of the teenage mothers during the process of pregnancy and child-rearing (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:383).

- **Contribution to divorce**

Another aspect identified in this review of the literature is that teenage motherhood is a condition that may lead to a series of divorces. Once one becomes a teenage mother, it is more likely that she may get divorced. Luong (2008:11) is of the understanding that teenage mothers were almost three times more likely to report marrying more than once than their counterparts, who married later in life.

- **Contribution to stressful life**

Teenage motherhood is closely associated with a number of social, economic, physical, psychological and emotional problems and therefore it is a condition that leads to a stressful life in general (Berthoud & Robson, 2001). Whittington *et al.* (2007:15) noted that teenage mothers remain the largest group within a population whose coping energies during pregnancy prevent them from concentrating during the teaching and learning process. This lack of coping could lead to poor performance and failure in the classroom context and the school in general. Stress develops and can lead to depression. Whittington *et al.* (2007:145) explain that depressive learners are individuals who cannot concentrate during the teaching and learning process and as such, they normally perform poorly in the classroom and at the school. Depression is a difficult concept to measure and define in the abnormal psychology context. This was noted by Weir (2007:6), who stated that the scientific literature uses a number of terms to describe psychological distress such as depression, anxiety and negative effect. This is due to the reason that individuals who experience high levels of psychological distress also tend to report more physical symptoms in all situations. Depression is not only a condition defined by a person's emotional maladaptive behaviour patterns, it can also be defined by the person's withdrawal into making social contacts with others and even failing to eat at regular times. Depression is a good example of stress outcome that is determined by a complex interaction between genetic or biological vulnerability, individual vulnerability, social factors and

environmental factors (Steptoe & Ayers, 2004:185). Usually some individuals who succumb to the challenges of depression end up committing suicide. Van Niekerk and Hay (2009:113) note that there is a high rate of suicidal attempts among the youth including the pregnant teenage mothers today. In many instances, these are teenagers who do not receive adequate support from those around them when they experienced depression.

- **Negative impact to the whole family**

Teenage motherhood not only affect the young mothers themselves; it also affects their significant others as well. Berhoud and Robson (2001:10) point out those families with a teenage mother were indeed worse off in several respects than families whose mother had had her first child after leaving school. This means that once a baby is born from a teenage mother, it tends to become the responsibility of everyone within the household to care for and raise the child. Individuals who are commonly involved with child-rearing are teenagers' parents, usually the mothers. These parents are grandparents to the babies, which means that the child-rearing grandmothers are responsible for looking after the children because in this situation, the fathers and/or partners are absent. In many instances, fathers take no responsibility for the children they have produced with an adolescent woman (Breinbauer & Maddaleno, 2005:6), which increases the financial pressure and care load for the grandparents and other members within the family household.

- **Medical checkup**

Teenage pregnancy requires additional medical attention. The medical attention crucial in this regard entails that both the teenage mother and the offspring require regular check-ups and treatment by the medical staff at places such as community clinics and hospitals. According to Whittington *et al.* (2007:46), pregnant learners spend a large amount of school time at these service centres. The teaching and learning process is as such adversely affected in this regard. Medical problems experienced by most teenage mother learners are usually associated with low levels of health conditions, which are especially prevalent during the early conception period of pregnancy (Berthoud & Robson, 2001:10). The early stages of pregnancy are a stage that requires regular medical attention, care and support as well as good nutrition. Teenage mothers must be encouraged to attend ante-natal treatment at their local clinics, hospitals and private

surgeries. Bodeen (2015:68) reports that teenage mothers may at times experience medical complications but due to a number of reasons, fail to seek adequate medical care during their pregnancy. Medical complications may develop because of smoking and drug use during teen pregnancy (Bodeen, 2015:68). Some teens consume illicit and harmful substances which could be highly detrimental to them and their unborn babies. All the medical attention mentioned in this paragraph simply indicates that once teenagers fall pregnant prematurely, they deprive themselves an opportunity to study and obtain an education of their choice (Wittington *et al.*, 2007:46)

Teenage mothers learning programmes are often interrupted and disturbed as they are expected to take care of and pay attention to their respective children. Once the babies are born, teenage mothers may want to return to school but some may want to start working to support their child. The Family Planning Association (2015) asserts that this is a critical stage which places increased demand upon social, health and education services, as well as their own families through the requirement of having someone look after the new-born. Teenage mothers may find it difficult to find people to look after their babies. And again, once the baby is born, teenagers may not be willing or able to give it the undivided attention needed (Bodeen, 2015:67). In some instances, a teenage mother may not be an adequate mother because she is overwhelmed by the constant needs of the baby, who requires many different and expensive amenities during his/her development. Bodeen (2015:66) contends that financial difficulties may arise during teen pregnancy or after the baby is born. Most teenage mothers do not work and as such, do not earn money.

- **Social exclusion**

Teenage mothers often find themselves in a position of social exclusion - most are poor, undereducated (and prevented from continuing their education), unmarried and without a partner (Breinbauer & Maddaleno, 2005:30). Mkwanzani and Odimegwu (2015:1) state that becoming a teenage mother within the South African context is one of the barriers to education experienced by many young girls who are currently involved in the teaching and learning process at schools. This process is affected once pregnant learners and mothers are not provided the necessary care, support and the relational interaction with teachers and peers. It has been reiterated that most teenage mothers are without husbands or partners. Males who are

responsible for their pregnancies often abandon them as soon as they learn about the condition. Teenage mothers are therefore generally excluded, stigmatised and even isolated.

- **Contribution to sexually transmission diseases**

Teenage mothers are often exposed to diseases such as HIV/AIDS infections and other communicable illnesses and are at risk. Mkwanzani and Odimegwu (2015:4) are of the understanding that teenage pregnancy reflects a pattern of sexual activity which not only puts teenagers at risk of pregnancy but also of infection by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Where there may be an occupational risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV infection, appropriate precautionary measures should be taken to reduce such risk, including clear and accurate information and training on the hazards and procedures for safe sex. This information is not readily imparted to or received by teenagers and as a result, they fall pregnant. Lansberg *et al.* (2011:31) state that HIV/AIDS, potentially the biggest threat to the socio-economic condition of most communities within South Africa, including teenage mothers, is also closely related to high levels of rape promiscuity, unsafe sex and teenage pregnancy,

The effects of teenage motherhood are also accordingly explicated through the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework, related to the teaching and learning process which addresses the situation of teenage motherhood in the context of the classroom and at school, is identified as the constructivist theory developed by Vygotsky. This theory, underpinning the study, is detailed in the next section.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical explanation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom is addressed through the two types of constructivism, namely cognitive or individual constructivism, developed by Piaget and social constructivism which depends on Vygotsky's theory (Powell & Kalina, 2009:241).

Cognitive constructivism entails a language development theory which explains that thinking precedes language development (Powell & Kalina, 2009:241). Amineh and AsI (2015:2)

maintain that cognitive constructivism explains that learning is a process of constructing meaning and as such, it explains how people make sense of their experience. On the other hand, social constructivism is a theory of knowledge in sociology and communication that examines the knowledge understanding of the world developed jointly by individuals (Amineh & AsI, 2015:5). The most important properties of social constructivism include the assumption that understanding, significance and meaning are developed in coordination with other human beings and that it is a highly effective method of teaching where learners benefit as collaboration and social interaction are incorporated (Powell & Kalina, 2009:243). In this instance therefore, the researcher selected a social constructivist theoretical approach to underpin the study, as it is relevant for the investigation of the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools. As indicated above, a theoretical explanation of teenage motherhood, in relation to teaching and learning at school, is addressed by Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Lev Vygotsky was a philosopher known for his belief that learning does not occur passively but rather occurs by active construction of meaning (Amineh & AsI, 2015:10). Liu and Matthews (2005:392) maintain that Vygotsky's constructivist theoretical approach takes into consideration important elements of teaching and learning, namely the environment, the learner and the teacher. Learning, according to Vygotsky, must be directed at solving personal as well as societal problems on the part of learners (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:40). In this regard therefore, Amineh and AsI (2015:9) assert that Vygotsky developed the social constructivist theoretical approach for the purpose of solving the problems of traditional teaching and learning. In this regard therefore, the social constructivist theory describes the way learners can make sense of the material and also how the material can be taught effectively. Social constructivist theory encourages active learning on the part of learners.

According to the social constructivist theory, learners construct their own knowledge by comparing what they encounter in the physical and social world with their existing knowledge (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:5). Constructivism entails that learners are no longer passive recipients of an education but instead are active participants during the teaching and learning process and learning by interacting with each another. The social-constructivist theory provides an assumption that is closely related to the concept of learner-centeredness, which basically entails that teachers should first consider their learners' knowledge and allows learners to put that knowledge into practice (Amineh & AsI, 2015:10). Learners are hereby regarded as the sole

interpreters of how the teaching and learning process should take form in the context of the classroom. According to the social constructivist theory therefore, learners control their own learning (Amineh & AsI, 2015:10; Liu & Matthews, 2005:392). Learners who are capable of controlling their own learning are seen as being actively involved. Liu and Matthews (2005:388) concur that constructivism incorporates a learning process wherein students draw their own conclusions through the scaffolding of the teacher in the role of a facilitator. Learners take the lead in the learning process whereas teachers encourage, steer, and facilitate the process. The constructivist theory further encourages reflective and critical thinking on the part of the learners (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:6). Thus, participative learning is obtained through learners being critical thinkers and teachers on the other hand correcting their misconceptions. Learners' needs are important aspects which are addressed in the curriculum developed according to social constructivist theory. One such foundational notion is that students will learn on demand (Amineh & AsI, 2015:10). Liu and Matthews (2005:388) state that tenets of the social constructivist theory include teachers seeking and valuing learners' points of view, teachers structuring lessons to challenge learners' suppositions, teachers recognising that learners must attach relevance to the curriculum, teachers structuring lessons around big ideas rather than on small bits of information, and teachers assessing learning in the context of daily classroom investigations, not as separate events. Andrews (2012:44) is of the view that social constructivist learning is a coordinated action between teachers and learners within the context of the classroom. This coordinated action entails that learners in general, and teenage mother learners specifically, need specialised support during the teaching and learning process which includes the protection from discrimination and stigmatisation by others, referral to the medical practitioners, if necessary and counselling services, consistent guidance and motivation and active involvement of parents in their learning (Mkwanzani & Odimegwu, 2015:2). The curriculum and teaching methods, designed according to the social constructivist theory of learning, adequately address barriers to learning experienced by teenage mother learners (Liu & Matthews, 2005:388). In this regard therefore, the coordinated action contributed by Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:103) maintain that teachers will always avail themselves in addressing the teaching and learning challenges which might be experienced by teenage mother learners in their respective classroom situations.

Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood, in relation to teaching and learning, are addressed by the legislative frameworks and other related policies. Legislative frameworks are the Acts

whereas the educational policies become the guidelines and principles of how the former could be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. The legislative frameworks and policies interpreted and implemented within the teaching and learning and within the classroom, schools and in the South African context, is explicated in the subsequent section of the chapter.

2.6 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK RELATED TO MOTHERHOOD

Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood, in relation to teaching and learning, is explicated in the South African context through the two legislative frameworks, namely the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). South African society since 1994 has been democratic which today eliminates all forms of discrimination, stigmatisation, deprivation and exclusion (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:17). The educational system must therefore ensure that learners are not discriminated against due to their medical conditions such as falling pregnant and becoming teenage mother learners. Teenage mother learners should not be stigmatised, deprived and excluded from gaining an education meant for all. In this regard therefore, several sections of the above Acts were identified and described in relation to the management of teenage mother learners within the context of the classroom.

Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:101) state that pregnant girls have a right to education and therefore can neither be denied admission to study nor be expelled from the school on account of pregnancy. In support to this statement, Section 5 (9) (a) of the Act stipulates that admission to all public schools is based on the equitable basis, meaning that all learners, including the teenage pregnant girls must be admitted to a school without a consideration of their physical, psychological and emotional states. Pregnant girls must be admitted to a school if they are willing to attend. Hubbard (2008:231) admits that all persons have a right to education. Berthoud and Robson (2001:3) state that most teenage mother learners come from a low socioeconomic background. Teenage mother learners should be encouraged to continue with their education. Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015) suggest that classroom teachers should create a warm and tolerant climate which encourages teenage mother learners to continue with their education.

The Constitution addresses the question of discrimination against all persons within society. This also includes pregnant learners because according to this legislative framework, the school

management system may not directly or indirectly discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their pregnancy status (Act 108 of 1996, Section 9 (3). Section 5 (9) (b) of the Act insists that public schools may not unfairly discriminate against learners whether they are pregnant or not. Both legislative frameworks, however, indicate that the South African societal make up does not discourage learners from becoming pregnant. Schools are expected to avoid all forms of discriminatory policies that could result in teenage mother learners dropping out of school (Mutshaeni *et al.*, 2015:102). Pregnant girls and those who have given birth should not be unnecessarily harassed and intimidated by teachers and other peers. Hubbard (2008:233) suggests that schools should develop measures to encourage regular attendance at school and work in order to counter drop out. In addition, parents and legal guardians of teenage mother learners must ensure that the learners attend school regularly and that they complete school tasks and assignments as expected by classroom teachers (Mutshaeni *et al.*, 2015:102). Section 3 (1) of the Act stipulates that every parent must allow the learner for who they are responsible to attend a school throughout the school calendar year. This statement indirectly maintains that parents of the pregnant teenagers must ensure that their children attend schooling like any other scholars. This implies that pregnant teenagers are expected to continue with their education even though they are pregnant.

Section 9 of the Act promulgates that learners who commit serious misconduct should either be suspended or be expelled from the school communities. This ruling does not include pregnant girls because falling pregnant before the maturity stage of development is not considered a case of serious misconduct. Hubbard (2008:233) is of the opinion that school girls tend to make unwise decisions particularly if they are coerced into having sex against their will by means of physical force, economic pressure or peer pressure. Section 12 (2) (a) of the Constitution stipulates that all individuals have a fundamental right to make decisions concerning their reproduction. A young girl is therefore given the right whether they want to fall pregnant or not. This section of the Constitution entails that nobody is responsible for a girl's decision in becoming pregnant, and this includes the parents.

Young people are encouraged to take control of own bodies and security without being subjected to other people's judgement and concerns (Section 12 (2) (b) of the Constitution). The Constitution states that parents are no longer responsible for deciding how teenagers should control their respective sexuality and behaviours. McLeod (2013) maintains that an increase in

the rates of teenage pregnancy and motherhood is attributed to the socio-economic outcomes dependent on government and society's response to teenage motherhood. In this regard therefore, government policies provide learners with the freedom to engage sexually without concern of how they might be treated within the school environment once they fall pregnant. School management systems within the South African education are not allowed to expel learners who fall pregnant and or have given birth to children.

The question of consent is addressed in this section of the chapter. Within South African society, any individual reaching the age of 16 is regarded as an adult and should take charge of his/her own development (Mkwanzani & Odimegwu, 2015:2). On the other hand, Berbound and Robson (2001:10) argue that adult ages differ from one nation to the other, with girls aged 19 and above being regarded as adults in most European countries. This includes deciding whether to fall pregnant at any stage in time. Teenage motherhood has however, an increasingly negative effect on the teaching and learning process as well as on society and it is a condition that must be regarded as morally unjust (McLeod, 2013:12). Taking this view into account, parents and legal guardians of teenage mother learners and learners themselves must be held accountable for any aspects considered within the question of consent. A young girl falling pregnant is still regarded as underage if their chronological age is taken into consideration (Weir, 2007:7). Teenage mother learners tend to take the responsibility to decide on their own rights but they should be assisted by parents or legal guardians who give consent on their behalf.

Section 5 (9) (f) of the Act further stipulates that everyone, including adolescents have a fundamental right to their physical, psychological and mental development. This entails that all individuals including the teenage mothers have the right to bodily and psychological integrity. These items suggest that adolescents have the right to decide their own physical, psychological and mental developmental, including falling pregnant of their own free will without reliance on others such as parents and significant others.

Teenage mother learners should receive adequate information regarding sexual behaviour, prevention of unwanted pregnancy and other sexually-related illnesses including HIV/AIDS (Hubbard, 2008:237). According to the DBE, comprehensive sexuality education was introduced in 2000 within the subject of Life Orientation and Life Skills to ensure that learners do not get confusing and misleading messages on sex, sexuality, gender and relationships.

Section 16 (b) of the Constitution states that all persons are free to receive or communicate information or ideas. This means that teens are free to communicate every aspect of sexuality between themselves without being hindered by either their parents, the school management system or the community.

Teenage mother learners may regularly need some form of medical attention and support from the school management system. Section 27 (1) (a) of the Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care. The Constitution in this regard, maintains that even teenage mothers are free to obtain reproductive health care services. This has the potential of encouraging teenage motherhood with the knowledge that health care services are usually free and provided by the state. Cook and Ezenne (2010:34) contend that most teenage mother learners have the tendency to play truant. These individuals have the persistence, habitual and unexplained absence from the school. Most become absent during the periods of the months when they collect their Child Support Grants. However, Chohan and Gina (2009:2) argue that teenagers in the South African context do not get pregnant for the sake of obtaining the child support grants.

Policies are guidelines and principles which teachers, learners and other educational stakeholders are required to be aware of and adhere to in order to realise the contents and requirements contained in the Acts of law. In this context, three educational policies were identified and discussed in relation to the research topic.

2.7 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES RELATED TO MOTHERHOOD

In this section of the chapter, educational policies related to addressing the teaching and learning challenges of teenage motherhood at schools were identified as the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (DoE, 2003), the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), the Revised National Curriculum Statement R-9 (DoE, 2002) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011).

Firstly, the National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12 (2003:4-5) states that the outcome-based curriculum aims at envisaging the kinds of learners and teachers who are capable of developing the values, education and democracy within the South African context. In this

regard therefore, the kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution (DoE, 2003:5). On the other hand, the Revised National Curriculum Statement R-9 (DoE, 2002:11) indicates that learners who are envisaged by the South African curriculum should be critical thinkers who are able to:

1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking,
2. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community,
3. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively,
4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information,
5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/ language skills in various modes,
6. Use Science and Technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others, and
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Secondly, National Education Policy, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) and the National Curriculum Statement 10-12 (DoE, 2003:5) state that the kind of teachers envisaged by the South African outcome-based curriculum includes those who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring, with teachers' qualifications, competence, dedication and care being measured by the respective norms and standards. Teachers who develop and implement a curriculum that adheres to the principles of constructivism, fulfil a number of different roles at different situations in time, including those of mediators, interpreters and designers, leaders, administrators and designers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and subject specialists. Roles are not rigid but can change when the challenges at hand change. Teachers act as a "guide on the side" providing students with opportunities to test the adequacy of their current understandings (Amineh & AsI, 2015:10). Amineh and AsI (2015:10) maintain that teachers as mediators of the learning programme are expected to be tutors; that is, they act as a coach when learners are involved in project work or self-study. Teachers are expected to find the relevant instructional materials needed by learners during the teaching and learning process. Teachers need to link teenage mothers with other student.

Secondly, Liu and Matthews (2005:394) maintain that teachers should design and develop the curriculum for the right level, mostly aligned with the reduction of learning barriers on the part of learners in their classroom situation. Thirdly, teachers must become leaders, administrators as well as managers adequately professionalised in the management of teenage mother learners both in the classroom and school environments. Fourthly, teachers are lifelong learners and researchers who are capable of not only identifying the causes and effects of teenage motherhood in their specific contexts, but are able to employ effective teaching and learning approaches in order to assist teenage mother learners with their respective educational needs (McLeod 2013:2). Fifthly, as a community member, citizen and a pastor, Jacobs *et al.* (2011:5) and Liu and Matthews (2005:388) contend that teachers encourage learners to bring forth changes in themselves as well as the community within which they exist. Sixthly, a teacher plays the role of an assessor. Amineh and AsI (2015:10) take the position that assessment of learners' performance must be attributed to the knowledge, understanding and their capability to complete the programmes outlined in their educational learning materials. And lastly, teachers as subject specialists entails that they control the classroom situation with both subject content knowledge (SCK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to ensure an effective teaching and learning process (DoE, 2003:5).

According to CAPS document, teachers are supposed to design specific teaching methods that are learner-centred in order to address the educational needs of all learners both in the classroom situation and at the school and to develop the assessment standards that encourage these learners' quest for learning (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:50-52). In this instance therefore, teachers are expected to establish, develop and maintain supportive relationships with learners who happen to fall pregnant during their learning at school.

The constructivist theory, the legislative frameworks and educational policies were included above in the explanation of the challenges of teaching and learning of teenage mother learners in the classroom situation. In the subsequent section of the chapter, measures needed for addressing the challenges of the teaching and learning of teenage mother learners are identified.

2.8 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS

The most important measure on conveying of learning content is suggested by the national Curriculum Statement 10-12 (2003), Liu and Matthews (2005) and Amineh and AsI (2015). Education is a priority for all South African children, with learners being provided with equality in education, ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think. The educational needs of learners must be adequately addressed, be learner-centred and activity driven. Teachers must consult with other professionals in order to improve teaching and learning of learners with barriers to learning including teenage mother learners. In this regard, learners with physical, psychological and emotional problems must be provided with support systems, basic and relevant teaching methods aimed at addressing their barriers to learning.

Teenage mother learners are facing a number of challenges during their school both during pregnancy and then as young mothers. These challenges are discussed below.

2.8.1 Exclusion, Stigmatisation and Deprivation

The most important challenge faced by teenage mother learners are exclusion, stigmatisation and the deprivation of learning process (Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014). All three concepts impinge on the rights of children to a quality education. Exclusion from school means that learners are not allowed to attend school for a specific, reason and in this case because the learner is pregnant or a mother. Stigmatisation is the action of regarding someone as being in disgrace for something that they have done against the norms or rules of society and deprivation means that a denial of education, which is considered a necessity and a right. As previously discussed, South Africa is a democratic society which means that all forms of discrimination, stigmatisation, deprivation and exclusion are not tolerated (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:17). Liu and Matthews (2005:392) maintain that Vygotsky's constructivist theoretical approach takes into consideration important elements of teaching and learning, namely; the environment, the learner and the teacher. Learning, according to Vygotsky must be directed at solving personal as well as societal problems on the part of learners (Jacobs *et al.*, 2011:40). In this regard therefore, Amineh and AsI (2015:9) subject that Vygotsky developed the social constructivist theoretical approach for the purpose of solving the problems of traditional teaching and learning. Teachers should level the ground for both teenage mothers and their counter parts by

eliminating stigmatization and applying various teaching method and providing learners opportunity to reflect and create meaning to the new content learned.

According to the Revised National Curriculum Grades R-9 (DoE, 2002:7), the school environment must be designed in such a manner that it ensures that every South African, including pregnant learners, is given the opportunity to learn to read, write, count and think. For this reason, pregnant teenage learners cannot be excluded from continuing their education at school. A consideration of education as a priority was indicated by Skosana and Monyai (2013) that the new perspective of the government, that has implications for the curriculum, is that education is a societal priority and must involve learners, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. Education is therefore important to meet the learning needs of all, necessary to improve the livelihoods of communities, increase income and boost economic growth.

2.8.2 Educational Needs

Teenage mother learners find it difficult to learn at the same pace as other classroom peers. This is due to the fact that many usually miss classes because of medical reasons or other requirements of the children they parent. Gray (2004) maintains that educational curricula and teaching methods are changing so the educational needs of all learners, including teenage pregnant learners, are addressed. Jacobs *et al.* (2011:6) explain that curriculum development is a process through which teachers develop high standards for all learners within the context of the classroom and schools. Teachers are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum which requires them to provide learners with independent learning, instructions and assessment standards. The South African educational policy stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Grades 10-12 (DoE, 2003:2) states that outcomes-based education (OBE) encourages a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education. This entails that every aspect of the teaching and learning process in the context of the classroom should be aimed at supporting the learner. Teachers should ensure that learners are taught from their pre-existing knowledge to abstract, an approach of simple to abstract should be applied.

2.8.3 Management

The South African policies regarding the management and treatment of learners who are pregnant or have given birth to babies are different from other national states. Settersten (2004) found that in New York, pregnant learners are sanctioned by individuals and institutions. Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:102) reports that the South African education system's reaction towards teenage motherhood recently appears to have taken a step towards a less restrictive approach. Pregnant learners are admitted and educated within the school communities throughout the country, and therefore teachers are expected to provide them with adequate support to ensure their effective learning.

2.8.4 Lack of Necessary Knowledge and Skills

The challenges experienced by teenage mother learners during the teaching and learning process are largely unaddressed due to teachers' lack of the necessary knowledge and skills in dealing with teenage mother learners. In this regard therefore, teachers should consult with other professionals such as medical practitioners, nurses and social workers when dealing with teenage pregnant mother learners because these individuals tend to experience teaching and learning challenges that are complex in nature. Jacobs *et al.* (2011) maintain that teachers need to approach the teaching and learning challenges of teenage motherhood through different interventions including the curriculum, instructional methodology, student motivation and student developmental readiness, for example. Students' learning encompasses emerging understandings about themselves, their relationships, and their relative place in the world (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Teenage pregnant learners and mothers should be protected from discrimination, intimidation and exclusion by others.

Teachers need to create opportunities for active engagement on the part of their students. As Craig (1996:48) has put it "Action enables seeking for that which will turn the unfamiliar into familiar" in that way learning will be full field

2.8.5 Lack of Teaching Methods

Teachers were only trained to provide teaching to learners without considering pregnant and motherhood conditions. Teachers are expected to use specially crafted teaching methods that are effective in addressing the teaching and learning challenges of teenage motherhood (Mogashoa, 2013). Teaching methods that are learner-centred are highly recommended in this instance because teenage mother learners are learners with special needs due to the challenges of parenthood which they encounter, and that such methods should include teaching methods and approaches that are learner-centred are highly recommended in this instance, and that such methods should include aspects of culture, context, literacy, language, learners' interests and needs, personal experiences, interpretation of reality, as well as the application of knowledge (Mogashoa, 2013).

2.8.6 Parental Involvement

The most important challenge in the teaching and learning process involving teenage mother learners is that their respective parents and/or legal guardians are less involved in their education. Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015) are of the opinion that parents and guardians must ensure that tasks and assignments are done during the pregnant learner's absence, are completed and returned to the school for assessment. This also means that teenage mother learners should be encouraged to complete their schoolwork on a regular basis. Pregnant learners and those who are already mothers spend much of the academic time absent from the classroom. Teenage mother learners should provide the school with a record of health clinic attendance and other medical information required for their assistance by the teachers and the school management system (Mutshaeni *et al.*, 2015:102). In this regard, absenteeism and truancy could be effectively addressed.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the literature review surrounding teenage motherhood. Teenage motherhood has been described as a condition of a young girl of below twenty years falling pregnant and becoming a mother. A theoretical perspective of social constructivism was found to be relevant in addressing the problem of teenage mother learners during the teaching and

learning process both in the context of the classroom and at school in general. According to this perspective, teachers and the school system are required to protect teenage mother learners from discrimination and stigmatisation by others, to refer teenage mothers to medical practitioners and counselling systems, to provide these learners with consistent guidance and motivation and to ensure an active involvement of parents in their learning. Legislative frameworks surrounding teenage pregnancy were identified in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). Policies that are associated with teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood were identified in the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (DoE, 2003), the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (DoE, 2002) and the National Education Policy, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) were detailed in this chapter. The succeeding chapter presents the research methodology used to guide the research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology which consists of the research design and research methods in this study. The most important items that need to be included, defined and described in relation to the study to investigate the teaching and learning challenges of teenage motherhood in a classroom situation are the following: rationale for empirical study, research design, research methods, and the ethical considerations. This chapter is therefore regarded as a social scientific research guideline to enable the research to achieve the aim and objectives of the research project.

3.2 RATIONAL FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Teenage mother learners experience a large amount of challenges during the teaching and learning process. Apart from taking care of their own health and development, these learners are expected to care and support own children which is a condition that deprives them of adequate learning. Teenage mother learners' academic performance is compromised due to their increased absenteeism both in the class and at school. These leads to a high failure rate among the teenage mother learners which are also responsible for their dropping out of school before they complete their studies. This study was undertaken to identify effective interventions for encouraging teenage mother learners to continue learning as well as obtaining an education like their classroom peers.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

It has been indicated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.6) that this research study is confined within the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is usually conducted within the social science research studies because they tend to describe social phenomena in a non-numerical nature. Qualitative research applies people's opinions, beliefs and statements in order to describe the social problems under investigation. Creswell (2002:46) defines qualitative research as a type of educational research where the researcher relies on the views of

participants. In this regard, qualitative research is based on the statements, viewpoints, beliefs and statements provided the researcher by the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2007:26) explain that qualitative research is a research methodology that is effective in the analysis of people's behaviours, beliefs, feelings or values. Qualitative research is non-numerical in nature which means that it does not apply numbers and other quantitative tools in order to measure a social reality.

Research methodologies that are non-numerical in nature are usually categorised under what is considered as an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research uses statements, beliefs, opinions and other detailed descriptions in order to identify and understand the social problem the researchers are researching. De Vaus (2001:11) contends that qualitative research adopts an interpretive paradigm to data, as it studies things including people within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people attach to their experiences. Indeed, an interpretive paradigm is an important element of qualitative research. Qualitative research is classified under the research concept of interpretivism. Interpretivism maintains that qualitative research avoids numbers, deals with interpreting social realities, and is considered soft research (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000:7). Soft research applies the soft data that are non-accurate to describe a social reality.

Qualitative research, the approach followed in this study, identifies and describes the complexity of social problems, it identifies the anticipated outcomes of policies, the inconsistencies and conflicts in the policies, it identifies how policies are damaged as they are implemented at various levels, it helps find the natural problems and it provides a way to study problems in cases in which experiments would be unethical (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:15). It is non-experimental in form because it is conducted in social settings within which people really exist. People cannot be denied certain basic living requirements for the purpose of study. In this regard, it is only qualitative research which could be conducted in a non-experimental manner for the purpose of achieving the research goals and objectives.

Qualitative research is contextual in nature entailing that qualitative research is usually conducted in natural settings and often over long periods of time, a research method that incorporates people's own motivation, emotions, prejudices and incidents of cooperation and conflict (Gray, 2004:320). Unlike quantitative research, which conducts surveys over a short

period in time, qualitative research requires added time for social science researchers to interview participants in their own natural settings. Qualitative research is conducted on social problems that are new and were not investigated in the past.

Qualitative research is usually conducted through data collection methods of interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Creswell (2002) maintains that qualitative research provides researchers with the opportunity to ask open-ended questions and listen to the views of the participants during interviews. Open-ended questions give the participants freedom of describing the phenomenon under investigation and explaining their experiences of the phenomenon in their own language, manner and style.

Open-ended questions are applied in interviews where participant's experience allows them to tell as much as possible about themselves in light of the topic (Zainal, 2007:1). Open-ended questions are directed at the participants in a manner that permits them to say what they want without being channelled by an interviewer and is aimed at gathering data or information about the participants' thinking. According to Zainal (2007:3), open-ended questions are utilised in order to ask the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. In this arrangement therefore, the question of meaning is not one of satisfaction or reward but what the participants report. Open-ended questioning provides an adequate platform wherein the researchers and the participants discuss matters related to the problems under review in an understanding manner. In this regard, the open-ended inquiry is best carried out in a structure that allows both the participant and the interviewer to maintain a sense of the focus of each interview in the series (Roberts *et al.*, 2014:3). Open-ended questioning is the most utilised data collection method applied in qualitative research.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Most social science research studies are guided by their research designs. A research design can be regarded as a type of a checklist which contains all the aspects the researcher needs to address in order to attain the aim and objectives of their research study project. Babbie and Mouton (2001:75) view a research design as the types of measurement, sampling, data-collection and data analysis methods that researchers employ in a particular type of research study. A research design provides the researcher with focus, that is, a sequential format in which the research

process could be employed. A research design is some form of protocol aimed at describing the research problem by providing the research study with a series of evidence.

De Vaus (2001:9) further explains that the main function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. Social science problems are clearly stated and as such they address the condition of ambiguity. In this regard therefore, a research design is used to obtain relevant evidence needed to answer the research question, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately describe some phenomenon.

A research design for this study addressed the important aspects mentioned above in this chapter and was focused on a case study. A case study is a research type within qualitative research which is conducted within a small site that is similar to other sites drawn from the general population (Kumar, 2011:65). This means that from a population, the researcher can decide to select a few samples during which empirical investigation is conducted within a selected number of units of analysis derived from samples. Naturally, case studies are used to look at both the micro and macro level impacts (Zainal, 2007:3) but this depends on the type of research study being carried out by the researcher. Ultimately, most social science research is confined within the microscopic level of investigation. That is, case study is usually applied on a small area of investigation.

Robson (2002:183) is of the opinion that a case study is conducted at an individualised site that features the characteristic representative of other members of the sample. Social science researchers utilise the statement, remarks, beliefs and opinions suggested by the participants in order to generalise the research findings in this regard. In this study, therefore, a case study was utilised for research at a secondary school falling within the Soutpansberg-West Circuit in the Vhembe District of Limpopo.

Roberts *et al.* (2014:3) maintain that a case study is a process of combining different research methods to compile a holistic understanding of individuals, households, communities and so on in a single study. Indeed, a case study could be utilised to combine research methods such as interviews, participant observation, questionnaires and others, for example. In this way data can be triangulated.

Triangulation means the use of a variety of methods or data sources to examine a specific phenomenon either simultaneously or sequentially in order to improve the reliability of data (Gray, 2004:406). The triangulated research procedures could be applied either simultaneously or in a sequential manner. In this research study, the researcher applied a triangulation research by means of applying different data collection methods simultaneously namely in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. That is, participants were interviewed whereas some were observed and at the same time documents related to their respective behavioural standards were analysed.

Chapter 1 Section 1.6 of the study introduced the case study. Case study research could singularly be subjected to research a certain type of samples, such as groups of individuals. These groups will also need some type of data collection methods in order to gather information related to the research problem being investigated. Zainal (2007:2) considered that case study research is an effective social science research needed to study and observe groups or communities. Case study research was relevant to this study because it addresses the challenges of the teaching and learning experienced by teenage mother learners and teachers within the context of the classroom.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

This section focuses on the area or environment where the research investigation was conducted, namely; secondary schools in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The most important research concepts identified and described under this heading included selection of the participants, sampling of participants, pilot study, data collection and data analysis.

In Chapter 1 Section 1.7. The researcher described the research methods. In this regard therefore, research methods entail a step-by-step procedure of collecting and analysing the data in social science research studies. Gray (2004:401) refers to research methods as research procedure which is defined as the systematic approach towards the collection of data and their subsequent analysis. In this regard, the research methods were addressed through the three important aspects, namely, selection of participants, data collection and data analysis.

The concept of research methods in social science research is divided into a series of attributes which need to be addressed for the achievement of the research study projects. Such attributes could include the selection of research participants, piloting, sampling of the research participants, participant criteria and data collection procedures.

3.5.1 Selection of Participants

Section 1.7.1 of the study introduced the selection of the participants. A research participant is someone well versed in the social phenomenon that you wish to study and who is willing to tell you what he or she knows about it. Participants are also called the key informants. Key informant interviews can provide rich and spontaneous replies to open-ended questions and as such interviews can provide a better view of the social reality of a person, his/her place and interactions (Elmendorf & Luloff, 2001:142). Participants and/or key informants are individuals who interact with the problem under investigation. They are also affected by the problem in their daily living.

Elmendorf and Luloff (2001:142) maintain that key informants are spokespeople, who, because of their participation in and knowledge of an area of research are asked to describe events, actions and beliefs as well as their attitudes towards them. Participants are individuals who are involved in the research studies who happen to inform research studies about their experiences of the problems through the means of participating during the interviews. A participant is an individual who interacts directly with a researcher during the data collection process, and therefore is different from the respondent who answers the research instruments of the researcher without contact them (Elmendorf & Luloff, 2001). There were two types of research participants involved in the interview sessions in this study, namely; teachers and teenage mother learners. Five participants were sampled from each category.

3.5.2 Sampling of Participants

A sample consists of a relatively small number of individuals or other units that are selected from a larger population according to a set of rules (Fisher & Foreit, 2002:63). Samples are few in nature and most social science samples could range between eight and 12 individuals for interviews. Gray (2004:324) contends that qualitative research works well with small samples

of people drawn from the general population. A large amount of qualitative data could be collected from a few individuals but this process usually requires a lengthy effort on time, travelling and other financial resources during the data collection period.

Qualitative sampling methodology is usually conducted within the non-probability sampling. Non-statistical samples, which cannot ensure the equal and known chance of inclusion in the samples of the elements in the population, are called non-probability samples. Non-probability sampling refers to the selection of a sample that is not based on known probabilities. Non-probability sampling is a simplified type of sampling which requires less effort on the part of the social science researchers and is distinguished from probability sampling by the fact that subjective judgements play a role in selecting the sampling elements (Fisher & Foreit, 2002:67). This means that the researcher's decision plays a major role on who and how many to include in the sample. Non-probability sampling is less scientific in nature because it is determined by what the researcher prefers rather than the requirement of a statistical composition of the population.

Techniques used to draw a sample in such a way that the findings will require judgment and interpretation before being applied to a population, are confined within the non-probability sampling methodology and procedures (Gray, 2004:402). The researcher's judgement plays an important role in the selection and composition of qualitative samples. Cohen *et al.* (2000:102) contend that the selectivity which is built into a non-probability sample is derived from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population and as such that particular group of individuals simply represents itself. Less effort in the sampling process provides the researcher with an opportunity to compose research samples without difficulty.

Chapter 1 Section 1.7.1 of the study also introduced the type of sampling called a judgemental sampling. Non-probability sampling is conducted within different sampling methodologies which include judgemental sampling which is also referred to as purposive sampling and convenience sampling, which is also called accidental sampling. Snowball sampling, which is also purposive sampling, is also referred to as referral sampling or quota sampling (Kumar, 2011:189). Judgemental sampling is the most utilised form of sampling within the social science research because it falls within the non-probability sampling, which is defined by its feature of

being judgmental. Fisher and Foreit (2002:67) are of the argument that purposive samples must be applied by social science researchers because it consists of units deliberately selected to provide specific information about the population.

Convenience sampling was used in this study instead of judgemental sampling because the latter was found to be less relevant to the study. The choice of convenience sampling is supported by Fisher and Foreit (2002:67) who explain that when it is difficult to find the participants who have the necessary characteristic aligned to the study, researchers select to use those who are readily available to them. Such sampling is called the convenient sampling, a type of the sampling procedure that provides the researchers with an opportunity to select whatever cases happen to be available to them at a given time and place. Convenience sampling is determined by the aspect of availability meaning that researchers conducting this sampling method select any unit of analysis which is nearest to them for inclusion in the sample

It has been indicated above that convenience sampling was found to be the most applicable and relevant sampling procedure for the research. Convenience sampling was applied in order to select two (2) types of samples for involvement in the study, namely teachers and teenage mother learners at a selected school in the Soutpansberg-West Circuit of the Vhembe District in Limpopo. Two categories of participants involved in this research study, namely teachers and teenage mother learners, five participants from each category were involved in the interviews. Teachers who interacted with pregnant and/or teenage mother learners in their teaching and learning process in the class situation were the first category while teenage mother learners were individuals who continued to attend school after they experienced a teenage pregnancy or were teenage mother learners, were the second category. Teenage mother learners are individuals who continue to attend school even after they have experienced a teenage pregnancy or were teenage mother learners who require teachers' continuous care and support.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

The construction of in-depth interview schedules is a lengthy process because along the way, the research instruments need to be refined in order to check their validity and reliability status. Social science researchers need to share the contents of their research schedules with others, such as research experts, research promoters, colleagues, and even posing these questions to

people who might not become their participants in the actual study. This process is called piloting. Pilot testing is the process through which the research instruments are modified so that they are accurate, unambiguous and simple to respond to (Gray, 2004:205). Research instruments subjected to piloting have a high probability of collecting data that are accurate and relevant to the research problem. A pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and predictability of the research questions (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:260).

At the time of the research, the researcher was a school principal at a school in the area not involved in the research. She conducted a pilot study in a secondary school different from the one in which she intended to conduct her case study. The piloting of the interviews allowed the researcher the opportunity to refine and address issues in the in-depth interview schedules, the manner of attempting the non-participant observations and how to compile the document analysis records contained in the fieldnotes. The piloting process prepared the researcher for the actual conducting data collection with refined instruments.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this study was conducted using three instruments; in-depth interviews non-participant observation and document analysis (see Chapter 1 Sections 1.7.2.1, 1.7.2.2 and 1.7.2.3, respectively).

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews aim to expose the complexity and in-process nature of meanings and interpretations that cannot be examined using positivist methodologies (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:56). These authors argue that interpretivism forms an important part of participants' description of social problems that they experience. In this regard therefore, in-depth interviews provide research studies with a large amount of information in the form of detailed statements, beliefs, opinions and feelings which the positivistic approach is unable to provide.

In-depth interviews are more like conversations than structured questionnaires (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:56). Researchers applying in-depth interviews enter into formal discussions with the participants. Researchers require the interviewees to explain as much as possible on how

they experience the social problem under investigation in their daily living requires interviewers to ask interviewees for clarification into what they have said. In this regard therefore, probing is another way of asking the participants to look deeper and dig deeper giving a more detailed explanation or description. Creswell (2002:225-226) indicates that probing is a process which could be attained through an exploratory research. Taking this idea into account, probing allowed for points to be picked up, clarity given and further discussions held which supplemented the information gained from the questions asked in the interviews. In a nutshell, probing means the process of asking for more information from the participants. When research participants provided the researcher with few remarks during the interview session, she asked them to say as much as possible till their responses were adequately gathered.

In-depth interviews are formal discussions which takes place between two and more individuals, with the researcher acting as an interviewer and collecting data from the responses the participants have to provide them during the interview sessions. Audio-tape recording is necessary during the sessions because it allows the researchers an opportunity to gather precise information provided by the participants.

The interviews with both teachers and teenage mother learners began with discussing the purpose of the research. The interviews were guided by schedules created for each participant interview (see Appendices I and J). Obtaining informed consent from participants for their participation in the research as well as for audio-taping (Nassar-McMillan & Borders, 2002), as recording of interview sessions requires consent on the part of interviewees. The use of a tape recorder is vital for conducting interviews because not only does it record the essential data, it permits the interviewer to concentrate on the process of listening, interpreting and re-focusing the interview (Gray, 2004:227). Audio-tape recording has become the most utilised form of recording during many types of interview sessions. It is indeed the most effective method used in order to replace the note-taking which is closely associated with numerous limitations, including missing out the interviewees had said, distracting the interviewer from concentrating on the interviews and time wasting. Appendices B and C were included as in-depth interview schedules for teachers and teenage mother learners in this study, respectively. In this study interview took thirty minutes per participant and it was conducted at the school but only two participants were interviewed at their respective homes.

3.6.2 Participant Observation

In participant observation, researchers and participants interact with each other whereas the former gains opportunity to gather information related to the culture of the participants. Kumar (2011:125) explains that the key features of observation are seeing and listening and that observation provides the opportunity to document activities, behaviour and physical aspects without having to depend on people's willingness and ability to respond to questions. Researchers conducting observation rely heavily on looking at the physical activities that people perform, and it also entails the listening to them when they interact with each other. Observation is different from interviewing in that people are not asked to respond to the research instruments during the process.

Observing the management operations and procedures may provide better information than relying on reports of key informants (Pouezevara, Pflipsen, Nordstrum, King & Gove, and 2016:3). During participant observation, the researcher looked at what people do, how they do and when they do. It is the recording of people's activities in their natural setting that forms observation. A researcher can observe the organisation by only looking at how people, who belong to it, operate. He/she can tell whether all is well by only observing the operations and procedures conducted by its employees and management.

Observation is conducted through a number of different activities. Kumar (2011:125) believes that the possibilities for observation are almost limitless, and that they include people, behaviours, reactions, physical settings, environmental features, record keeping systems, project reports and more. Everything that we come across in an organisation could be recorded under the aspect of observation.

Observation is limited in that social science researchers are not provided with adequate research tools to apply when conducting it. Kumar (2011:125) observed this limitation because participant observation is an underused method for collecting evaluation information. In this regard, researchers do not have the standards with which to compare certain behavioural patterns; for example, if they say that such a culture is evaluated as maladjusted,

A checklist was developed for capturing information related to how teenage mother learners interacted with the teachers as well as other peers (see Appendix L). During the participant observation process, the researcher looked at a series of aspects related to teenage motherhood within the context of the classroom. They are as follows:

The first attribute of teenage mother learners in the classroom situation was to identify the type of peers they were likely to interact with during the teaching and learning process. In Chapter 2 (Section 2.3), Luong (2008) suggests that teenage mother learners are most probably been influenced by peer pressure which could be positive as well as negative. The second area of observation during the participant observation required the aspects of teenage mother learners' social, psychological and emotional standing as they interact with peers and teachers during the teaching and learning process in the context of the classroom. Chapter 2 (Section 2.3) indicates that these individuals tend to be excluded by others, including teachers. As a defence mechanism, teenage mother learners seek the social, psychological and emotional engagement with those other students who share the same social problems and challenges, namely teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood.

The third area of observation recorded the nature of care and support systems provided to the teenage mother learners within the context of the classroom. Chapter 2 addresses this matter in that it specifically indicates that the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners could be effectively addressed by a number of approaches subscribed within the social constructivist theoretical perspective. The fourth area of observation recorded in this study concerned the possible challenges experienced by teachers during the teaching and learning process with teenage mother learners in the classroom situation. Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) of the study enlists a number of challenges that are experienced by a large number of teenage mother learners who currently attend schooling. The challenges may include a lowered socio-economic status, recycling of poverty in their respective homesteads, stressed and depressive, and almost usually excluded by peers.

The fifth area of observation in this study sought to find out whether teachers take time in order to address the teaching and learning needs of teenage mother learners in the context of the classroom.

3.6.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis is defined as a process through which social science researchers read through written documents and other recorded manifestations in order to find how they tend to answer the research question of the study (Kumar, 2011:249). Thus, document analysis methods may be applied to virtually any form of communication being written, filmed and so on (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:383). Types of communication in this regard may include artefacts such as books, records, magazines, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, minutes of meetings, laws, constitutions and others. Document analysis entails the type of social science research method which is applied to artefacts which do not change their behavioural patterns once they are observed. The unobtrusive nature of document analysis is identified by Pouezevara *et al.* (2016:35) as non-reactive research because the researcher is expected to observe or gather data without interfering in the on-going flow of everyday events. Document analysis collects data from written documents, archival records and other physical evidence without manipulating their contents. According to Creswell (2008:231), document analysis is a form of data collection method which requires the analysis of texts and takes place after the written or filmed texts were obtained. The texts in this regard could also include elements of pictures, a painting, or a historical story.

In this study, the researcher obtained teenage mother learners' records which reported on their school attendance, classroom performance, and medical records from the school management system at a secondary school within the Soutpansberg-West Circuit in the Vhembe District in Limpopo. According to content analytical methodology, information would be given to determine whether or not teenage pregnancy and motherhood has had an effect on the teaching and learning in the context of the classroom.

The main records observed by the researcher during the document analysis process included the following items an example of classroom attendance of the teenage mother learners obtainable from classroom attendance registers, the classroom performance of teenage mother learners as indicated in examples of the class reports during the period under review and copies of some of the medical records of teenage mother learners detailing visits to public clinics and hospitals (see Appendix L).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was introduced in Chapter 1 (Section 1.7.3) in this study. Qualitative data analysis was conducted in order to analyse data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis. Cohen *et al.* (2000:461) explain that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data in short, making sense of data in terms of participants' definition of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. Patterns, themes and categories fall within the thematic analysis expression which is adequately defined as the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:2).

Qualitative data analysis is a process of interpreting the research findings. Babbie (2008:418) suggested following five steps for analysing of qualitative data. These steps are presented in a table form in Table 4.1 below.

Table 3.1: Steps of qualitative data analysis

Steps	Activities
Step 1	Transcription of the data obtained through data collection methodologies
Step 2	Data are coded in order to develop themes and categories from the texts
Step 3	Emerging themes are considered with relevance to the research problem
Step 4	Comparing categories with one another to develop central findings that represent the lived 'interpretive experience' of the samples.
Step 5	Report writing: Drawing conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Step 1: Transcription of the data

Kumar (2011:248) maintains that transcription involves keeping the audio tapes in a safe place there is a chance to transcribe them, that is write down what they contain. It was mentioned during the in-depth interview section of this chapter that the researcher used the audio-tape recording in order to capture everything the participants had to share with them. The transcription process therefore ensured that the material included in the audio-tapes was then

written down verbatim for analysis purpose. This process was achieved by means of transforming information from audio recording into a written text.

Step 2: Coding of the data

Coding of the data entails highlighting similar themes within the text in order to differentiate them from the others. Naisser-McMillan and Schumacher's (2007:367) position is that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships between the categories. In this way, data is reduced until they are grouped into themes.

In this study, the text was coded by means of highlighting its important and similar themes by marking them with coloured analytical pens. Thus, by looking at the colour the themes represent, the researcher was able to note how to categorise them.

Step 3: Consideration of emerging themes

All emerging themes in the text were considered for their relevance to the research problem. Irrelevant themes were ignored and were excluded in this regard. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) maintain that during the qualitative data analysis, the social science researcher should look out for new themes that may emerge and welcome them by highlighting them. Emerging themes within texts should be treated in a similar fashion to the coding process mentioned above. The themes in the text were coded by means of highlights with coloured analytical pens. The themes formed the basis for the categories.

Step 4: Comparison of categories

The fourth step of the qualitative data analysis involves the comparison of different themes within the texts. Cohen *et al.* (2000:461) state that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of participants' definition of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. In this arrangement therefore, similar categories or themes that developed are compared in order to form themes related to the problem statement.

Step 5: Report writing

The final step in the qualitative data analysis process is the report writing. This step involves the interpretation of certain categories and themes in relation to the research topic by means of compiling a research report. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) maintain that writing up the research findings is a process that is conducted through explaining the relationships that exists between the different categories and themes within the texts. Social science researchers have the capability to draw conclusions and make recommendations on how they view the findings of the data collected through their respective methodologies.

3.8 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Validity and reliability are the most important research concepts to satisfy the construction of the research instruments and the general trustworthiness of the data for the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:105). Research instruments are expressed within the context of thematic analysis. In this regard therefore, Maguire and Delahunt (2017:1) maintain that thematic analysis is part of the qualitative research which can be described as the researcher's ability to understand, describe and interpret experiences and perceptions of participants being involved in the research process. These concepts are briefly discussed in the subsequent sections. These prerequisites and activities are detailed in a research design so that their respective attainment totals the attainment of the research goal and objectives. According to Gray (2004:397), the prerequisites and activities in any social science research study should include the following: an approach to the collection of data that combines a validity of results with an economy of effort and that such an approach should include decisions on the case site, sample, data collection and analysis. Gray (2004:397) further contends that a research design is a plan or a checklist that includes all the most important aspects which are accordingly conducted in order to achieve the research goal and objectives. Important aspects are population, sampling and sampling procedures, data collection, validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.8.1 Validity

Validity means that a research instrument is able to yield the exact description of the social reality under investigation. Sapsford and Jupp (2006:86) define validity as the extent to which

observations accurately record the behaviour in which the researcher is interested. That is, for a research instrument to be valid, it must measure what it was intended to measure (Gray, 2004:172). Research instruments utilised for data collection, for example, interviews, were constructed in such a manner that they enabled the participants to report on the relevant issues being investigated and examined by the researcher. In this instance, the researcher only asked questions that were related to the phenomenon under investigation, namely teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother experienced by teachers and learners as well as identifying the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability means the ability of a research instrument to yield similar results if applied over time. Reliability refers to the stability of findings. A reliable observation, for example, is one that could have been made by any similar situated observer (Gray, 2004:344). Conditions for reliability are met if the findings and conclusions of one researcher can be replicated by another researcher conducting the same case study (Gray, 2004:138).

Reliability was accordingly achieved through the use of research instruments that were constructed in a manner that fit the relevant sample, namely, teenage mothers within the Vhembe District of Limpopo. Cohen *et al.* (2000:117) contend that the concept of reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability, whereas Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008:2279) add other synonyms as credibility, transferability, dependability and confidentiality, all aspects are discussed more fully below.

3.8.3 Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be accurate, trustworthy and reasonable (Ramabulana, 2017:39). Credibility is therefore regarded as a criterion for evaluating the truthfulness of the research results. Credibility was ensured through the use of various data collection techniques.

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability is a technique which demonstrates that findings in a qualitative project can be applicable to other situations and populations (Ramabulana, 2017:39). This aspect is concerned with the replication of future research projects. The findings are silent about the intensification of support to teenage mothers which could be the future research projects.

3.8.5 Dependability

Dependability is defined as the consistency of the inquiry processes used over time. Ramabulana (2017:39) maintains that the more consistent the researcher has been, the more dependable the results will be. In this study well-crafted questions were asked in all participants to enhance consistency and create opportunity of dependability.

3.8.6 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the ability of the researcher to keep information they have obtained from the participants from reaching the hands of unauthorized persons. Cohen *et al.* (2000:60) contend that confidentiality extends to all information relating to a person's physical and mental condition, personal circumstances and social relationships which is not already in the public domain. The research did not share the information obtained from the participants with anybody else than her research promoter.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cohen *et al.* (2000:56) maintain that being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth so that ethics explain that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if in the extreme case. Researchers are compelled to adhere to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of participants' fundamental human rights during the data collection process. According to ethical consideration requirements, the research study subjects need not be exposed to research processes that undermine their human dignity. For example, the participants must not be asked questions that cause embarrassment during the interview sessions. In a

similar vein, the participants must not be subjected to harsh weather environment and other unbearable circumstances during the data collection process.

Ethical considerations could also include the trustworthiness of the data. That is, the data so collected should adhere to the concepts of validity and reliability. The researcher addressed different type of ethical considerations in this study, including trustworthiness of the data (validity and reliability), harm to subjects, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and deception. They were identified, defined and described in relation to the problem under investigation, namely; teaching and learning challenges of teenage mothers at Soutpansberg-West Circuit within the Vhembe, Limpopo.

As indicated in the first chapter of the study, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificated granted by the UNISA ethical committee (see Appendix A). Appendices C and D contain information related to the researcher first requesting permission to conduct the research from the custodians of the secondary school and being granted permission. Permission was also granted permission by the Department of Education, Vhembe District, Limpopo (see Appendix B). Kumar (2011) outlined harm to subjects, informed consent, anonymous, confidentiality and deception as ethical standards that should be adhered to during research. The above-mentioned aspects are discussed below.

3.9.1 Harm to subjects

Harm to subjects means the discomfort condition of the participants which is evoked during the research, such as during interview sessions for example. Harm to subjects occurs when the participants are interviewed under the harsh weather conditions, when the participants are exposed to research instruments that cause embarrassment on their part and so on. One of the major considerations of whether the study should be conducted is the decision concerning the well-being of the participant: Will there be a 'subject at risk' or a 'subject at minimal risk'? (Gray,2004). The interviews were conducted in settings that they did not harm the physical, psychological and emotional states of the participants. The research instruments contained within the data collection schedules for in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis were constructed in such a nature that they addressed the question of an ethical consideration of harm to subject. When questions were crafted the researcher was

considerate of all ethical considerations. There are two participants opted to be interviewed at their respective place and that opportunity was granted in taking care of their psychological state.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent is an ethical consideration which requires social science researchers to first obtain agreement from the research participants before they involve themselves in the research. Gray (2004:400) strongly warns that participants must not be coerced into participating in the study, they must rather give their written consent to participate. Voluntary participation must first be obtained from the participants before any data collection process involving them is carried out in the research field. Social science research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of subjects who are to assist in investigations and of significant others in the institutions or organisations providing the research facility (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:50). This entails that informed consent is preceded by a lengthy administrative practice concerned with whether the research participants were adequately informed of the details of the research study prior to their required participation, and also that the organisations that they present were accordingly contacted for obtaining the permission to conduct research studies. With regards to the ethical consideration of informed consent, the researcher included a number of appendices in the study as follows: Appendix E was a letter requesting adults to participate, Appendix F was participant information, Appendix G was a letter to learners and assent and Appendix H was a parental consent for a minor, respectively.

3.9.3 Anonymity

Anonymity means that no any other person, even the researcher is allowed to identify the participants by name or other biographic information. Participants are only identified by codes or other pseudonyms. Anonymity simply means that participants' names and their environments within which they exist are hidden from the general public. Anonymity is a promise that even the researcher is unable to tell which responses came from which participant, that is, an assurance that data is not traceable to participants in a research project (Gray, 2004:394). Participants' responses were marked by means of codes such as T005, T003,

TM001, TM002, the T and TM standing for teachers and teenage mothers on the transcripts, respectively.

3.9.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the ability of the researcher to keep information obtained from the participants from reaching the hands of unauthorised persons. Cohen *et al.* (2000:60) contend that confidentiality extends to all information relating to a person's physical and mental condition, personal circumstances and social relationships which is not already in the public domain. Confidentiality is an important subject within the social science research because it is aimed at protecting research participants from being intimidated, harassed and even expelled from employment by others. The researcher kept all the information collected from participants in this study in a safe place. Recorded information has been kept in the memory stick and transcription notes in a safe place.

3.9.5 Deception

Deception means to lie or to tell a half-truth in order to induce another person into participating in a research study he/she would have otherwise not done so (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:63). Deception is applied to that kind of experimental situation where the researcher knowingly conceals the true purpose and conditions of the research or else positively misinforms the subjects or exposes them to unduly painful, stressful and embarrassing experiences without the subjects having knowledge of what is going on (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:63). Deception is one of the social science research maladministration which is left to continue unchecked. This form of an ethical consideration must be strongly addressed especially the participants are voiceless and less powerful individuals willing to participate in the research processes.

Ethical considerations were articulated through the trustworthiness of the data which included the question of validity and reliability. In this context, the researcher already indicated that she constructed three research schedules levelled towards the data collection through in-depth interviews, the participant observations and the document analysis. Secondly, ethical considerations were also addressed through the application of harm to subjects, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Appendices G and H are included as written consent

forms completed by the participants during interview sessions, namely teachers and teenage mother learners respectively

3.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methods for the study. In this context, the researcher reported on a number of research concepts including the rationale for empirical study, the research design, the qualitative research approach, a case study, research methods, and selection of the research participants, pilot study, sampling and the participant criteria, the data collection, data analysis and the ethical considerations. Since this study was of a qualitative nature, the researcher applied convenience sampling in order to involve the Soutpansberg-West Circuit in the Vhembe District of Limpopo. The qualitative research methodology involved data collection procedures of in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis. The following chapter presents the research findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA IN THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the design and methods used to answer the main research question and the sub-question: *What are the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe, Limpopo?*

- What teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners are experienced by teachers?
- What teaching and learning challenges are experienced by teenage mother learners?
- What are the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process?
- Which guidelines do teachers need in order to support teenage mothers during the teaching-learning process?

The concept of convenience sampling was used in the study to sample five (5) teachers and five (5) teenage mother learners. Both categories of participants were involved in the in-depth interviews to gather data to answer the research questions. Other qualitative data collection methods included participant observations and document analysis. This chapter presents both the interpretation and the analysis of the data. In this regard therefore, the chapter is divided into sub sections presenting the results from the interviews, participant observations and document analysis.

4.2 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This section of the study interprets and analyses the data which were obtained through the in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis.

4.2.1 In-depth Interviews with Teachers

This first section of the interpretation and analysis of the research data was aimed at gathering information from teachers who interacted with teenage mother learners during the teaching and learning process in the context of the classroom and school.

4.2.1.1 Biographical information of the teachers who participated in the study

The profiles of five teachers who participated in this research study are summarised in a table which illustrates their biographical information.

Table 4.1: Biographical information of teachers who participated in the study

Codes	Gender	Educational qualifications	Teaching experience in years	Subjects they teach	Grades they teach	Positions held at school
T001	F	BA	10	Physics Mathematics	10 11 12	Teacher
T002	F	HDE BA	37	Business Economics	10 11 12	HOD
T003	M	BEd. HONS BA	30	Agricultural Science	10 11 12	HOD
T004	F	BEd. HONS BA	26	Mathematics	10 11 12	HOD
T005	M	BEd. HONS BA	30	History	10 11 12	Deputy Principal

Biographical information of teachers who participated in the research study provides the study with important background information. In this regard therefore, the first section in the interview schedule consisted of biographical information which is measured by means of a nominal scale relating to gender, name of the school, highest educational qualifications of teachers, teaching experience in the number of years, subjects that teachers teach at school, grades they teach and the positions they held at school (Ramsaroop & Parumasur, 2007:27). Biographical information informs the study about the characteristics and nature of the research participants being involved in the research.

Interpretation and analysis of the data contained in Table 4.1 above indicates that three (3) female and two (2) male teachers were involved in this study. The succeeding column indicated that all five teachers had the necessary educational qualifications required to teach at secondary school level. The educational qualifications included an HED (Higher Education Diploma), BA (Bachelor of Arts) and BEd. (Bachelor of Education) and BEd. Hons (an honours degree in education). Teachers involved in this research study reported that they taught a variety of subjects such as Physics, Mathematics, Business Economics, Agricultural Science and History.

It was imperative that the research utilised a convenience sampling method in order to select teachers who were conversant with the research question under review in this study. The researcher involved teachers who taught Grades 9-12 at the time of the research as most teenage motherhood social problems are usually experienced among learners at ages 13 years and above and are usually admitted to the mentioned grades at schools (refer to Section 2.2). This sampling method also adds the aspects of another sampling method, which is judgmental sampling, also called purposive sampling, synonymous with qualitative research because Palys (2008:697) is of the opinion that it rests on the decision of the researcher to select only individual participants capable of informing their research studies with adequate information. Tongco (2007:147) contends that purposive sampling is about selecting prominent individuals who are interested in answering the research question without reliance on being supplied information by others.

4.2.2 Themes emerging from Interviews with Teachers

This second section of the chapter presents the findings of interviews conducted with teachers. In this regard, teachers were asked a series of questions which offered perceptions and

experiences of teaching teenage mother learners in the context of the classroom. The following themes and subthemes emerged from the data:

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes emerging from the interviews

Themes	Sub-Themes
Well-being of teenage mother learners	Teachers with teenage mother learners in the class
	Programmes for counselling teenage mother learners at school
	Problems with regard to class attendance by teenage mother learners
	Provision of policy in the form of assisting teenage mother learners to catch up with classwork
	Challenges in teaching teenage mother learners
Constructivist approach to learning	Involvement of teenage mother learner as an active agent in the learning
	Teachers ability to engage teenage mother learners during the teaching and learning process
	Teachers allowing teenage mother learners to reflect and compare what they discovered in order to construct meaning from learning
	The ability to reflect and think critically as envisaged by CAPS
Seven roles of educators	Teachers as envisaged by CAPS (interpreter and designer of learning material)
	Teachers prepare lessons indicating the content and the manner it could be conveyed (interpreter and designer of learning programme and material)
	Teachers starting lessons from known to unknown (learning mediator)
	Teachers encouraging teenage mother learners to communicate through the use of their first language namely Tshivenda (learning mediator).

4.2.2.1 Well-being of the teenage mother learner

The following five sub-themes, emerging from the main theme of well-being of the teenage mother learner, are presented in the subsequent sections.

1. Teachers with teenage mother learners in the classes

A nominal measurement was applied in this study in order to gather the responses of teachers in relation to whether or not they had teenage mother learners in their classrooms. This was a 'Yes' or 'No' response expected from the research participants. All five teachers reported having teenage mother learners in their classes as the Department of Education does not exclude learners from participating in the teaching and learning due to their pregnancy condition (Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014:374).

2. Programmes for counselling teenage mother learners at school

A question was posed to teachers which aimed at finding out whether they have programmes for counselling teenage mother learners at their disposal at the school environment. The options were either a 'Yes' or 'No' response. In response to this, all five teachers reported that they do not have programmes for counselling teenage mother learners at school. After gathering responses from teachers who reported that they did not have programmes for counselling teenage mother learners at school, a follow-up question was posed in order for clarification on how they coped with this type of a limitation. According to Yin (2011:132), follow-up questions are also called probes used to obtain their clarifications of the topic under review.

Two participants, reported as follows:

We use nurses to counsel them (T001)

We don't counsel them (T002)

The responses gathered from the participants above indicate that secondary school teachers in the Vhembe District in Limpopo do not have programmes available for counselling teenage mother learners. Teachers themselves are unable to counsel teenage mother learners because they are not professionally trained to conduct this type of intervention. T001 indicated that, if

needed, they (teachers) could involve a nurse from a nearby public clinic to counsel teenage mother learners. School communities and their respective classroom teachers cannot adequately assist mother learners unless they are supported by programmes specifically designed and executed by professionalised individuals such as social workers, clinical psychologists, nurses and others. Against this backdrop, Neiterman (2012:29) suggests that the state should develop policies and programmes specifically aimed at assisting teenage pregnant learners as well as teenage mother learners as it is regarded that this section of the school community experiences a large amount of socio-economic, psychological and emotional challenges as they continue to pursue an education. On the other hand, Neiterman (2012:29) maintains that in order to effectively solve the problem of teenage pregnancy and learner motherhood, health care professionals including teachers should offer different solutions ranging from preventative education to psychological counselling and the promotion of adequate maternal care. This type of counselling is a necessity in the assistance of teenage pregnant learners and learner mothers.

3. Problems with regards to class attendance by teenage mother learners at school

All five teachers reported during interview sessions that they experienced challenges with regards to class attendance by teenage mother learners. The researcher requested participants in the study to explain in detail their experiences related to these challenges. Asking participants to ‘*explain*’ is classified in qualitative research as probing. Kumar (2011:142) highlights that the concept of probing within a qualitative research as use for collecting in-depth information.

The responses to the probing question were as follows:

Sometimes there is no nanny, a baby is sick or is a grant day and or the mother is not well. Sometimes it is due to antenatal care and postnatal care as well as immunization for the baby. (T001)

Due to pre-natal and post-natal problems as well as immunization. Sometimes the mother or the child is sick. Days like grant day is also a challenge but these days are better because they have cards. (T002)

Mother learners are mostly absent and they don't attend catch up programmes like morning studies, afternoon studies and Saturday classes. (T003)

Mother learners absent themselves due to sickness of either the baby or the mother and the unavailability of nanny. (T004)

Yes: mother learners are usually absent for several reasons e.g. the mother or the baby might not be well and for immunisation of children. (T005)

The responses supplied by the participants in the study revealed that teenage mother learners are absent from school for a number of reasons related to pre-natal health problems, post-natal health problems, unavailability of the nanny, participation in the immunisation programme of children at public clinics and hospitals, either the baby or the teenage mother learner is sick, child care and grant pay-out dates. Absenteeism causes problem for the teenage mother learners' progress at school with their irregular attendance and even though there are catch-up programmes, poor attendance has been recorded.

d. Provision of policy in the form of assisting teenage mother learners to catch up with classwork

The first question teachers had to answer in this regard was to find out whether there was a policy on place in the schools for assisting teenage mother learners who were absent, to ensure that all classwork was covered and completed. Participants were required to reply with either a 'Yes' or 'No.'

All the five participants reported that there was no provision in the form of a school policy for assisting mother learners to catch up with the classwork done in their absence.

A follow-up question was posed to the participants requiring them to explain further. T004 did not understand the question well and did not answer, whereas a variety of explanations were given by participants. T001 maintained that:

Unless the mother learner comes forth, you can feel pity for the learner and explain. But it also depends on whether the teacher is willing or not

T002 remarked that:

They are assisted by their friends or by teachers if they have time, but this is very rare

T003 explained that:

Mother learners will find a way to assist themselves. We don't have time because if she is absent it means there should be a recovery plan for all subjects

T005 reported that:

Due to my workload I am not able to assist them. I refer them to their friends

The above explications reveal that teenage mother learners run the risk of not being assisted by teachers once they are absent from regularly planned lessons. Teachers are not obligated to assist mother learners although some may feel pity and explain details of the lessons to them. This type of assistance is usually not always possible and as such it is provided in the form of summary because teachers do not have the required time to repeat the lessons they had already presented in the classroom. Secondly, mother learners tend to be assisted by their own friends and some of the teachers. T002 indicated that it is rare to find teachers assisting learners who were absent from the class when lessons were conducted because this might be regarded as favouritism. Thirdly, time is a scarce resource which most teachers do not have with their busy teaching schedules. T003 reported on what they termed a recovery plan, which entails the process of repeating each and every subject for learners to catch-up with the material they did not understand and or they were not exposed to due to their absenteeism. It is not possible for teachers to repeat the lessons they had presented to learners all the time, as this may cause a lag in the teaching and learning process. Lastly, T005 maintained that teachers have an enormous workload which is challenging to address by the end of the year/term. In this regard, mother learners who missed lessons in the classrooms are advised to seek assistance from friends and others such as parents, siblings and so on.

Hubbard (2008:223) suggests that the premise of the school management system realising the right to education for all, entails that learners who fall pregnant or have given birth during their academic year, should not be excluded from participating in the studies. Mashishi and Makoelle (2014:374) refer to a document issued by the South African Department of Basic Education supplied to all South African schools entitled 'Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy' (DoE, 2007) which is aimed at preventing, promoting, establishing and maintaining the necessary assistance and support needed by teenage mother learners. Section 27 of the document states that:

Schools should strongly encourage learners to continue with their education prior to and after the delivery of the baby. Education should therefore continue offering educational support to the learner, within reasonable limits, and in whatever was possible given the particular content (DoE, 2007:7).

Such measures are directed at the process of assisting teenage mother learners catch up with work done during their absence from school.

4. Challenges in teaching teenage mother learners

On the Yes/No question, all five participants reported that they had experienced challenges when teaching teenage mother learners. This question was followed by a follow-up, open-ended question. An open-ended question is an unstructured question in which possible answers are not suggested and the participant answers it in his/her own words (Popping, 2008:2). Various responses were gathered during the interviews, including the following:

T001 mentioned that:

One mother learner said that her mother said that she will not touch her baby so she has to take the child to the crèche and she will not attend studies

T002 said as follows:

They are now mothers. It seems like we are at the same level. It is not easy

T003 stated that:

In most cases, they are fighting with others- possibly for boyfriends

T004 remarked that:

While you are teaching you realize that a mother learner is asleep. She arrives late while I am busy teaching and she will explain that the nanny was not there, so she was still struggling to find someone to take care of the child

T005 mentioned that:

After giving birth they are usually weak, so they fail to do the work and are usually consulting doctors or a clinic.

The participants indicated that teenage mother learners are often absent from school and in many cases arrive late at school and are therefore late in attending classes. Now that teenage mother learners are at the parental stage, some view their teachers as people on the same level as them, which changes the dynamics of the relationship. Teachers find that other factors impinge on the teaching learning process such as the emotional turmoil involved with having a baby and the turbulent relationship that many have with the fathers and/or boyfriends. In addition, health issues arise such as poor health, post-partum depression and tiredness so that when they do attend class, they tend to spend most of their time sleeping and thus fail to perform.

Morrell *et al.* (2017:2) maintain that since teenage girls are now predisposed to the additional burden of childbirth, before, during and after pregnancy, they are most likely to perform poorly within the classroom situation. The most recurring challenges experienced by classroom teachers therefore are continued absenteeism and medical complications. Maternal health is a premise from which absenteeism; truancy and poor academic performance develop (Morrell *et al.* 2017:2).

4.2.2.2 Constructivist approach to learning

The following sub-themes have emerged from interviews and relate to teenage mother learners learning within a constructivist approach.

1. Involvement of teenage mother learners as active agents in learning

Teachers were asked about their practice of teaching within which teenage mother learners are regarded as active agents in learning. Firstly, she required teachers to supply her with the 'Yes' or 'No' answers. A 'Yes' or 'No' response or score is a type of scale necessary to measure the availability of a construct as experienced by the participants.

Participants reacted differently with three out of the five teachers indicating that they regarded teenage mother learners as active agents. The remaining two reported that the teenage mother learners were in general not active in their learning.

Probes were used to gain a detailed understanding of the responses provided by the participants. Chisale (2017:35) is of the opinion that a qualitative approach to research to probe for deeper understanding of a phenomenon is necessary rather than examining surface features which always provided by the 'Yes' or 'No' responses addressed above.

T003 said that:

In some topics they are active, like reproduction. It depends on the learner as well as sometimes when we group them, then they become active within the group

T004 indicated that:

Most of the time they compete with their counterparts because we always remind them that had they not been pregnant they would have performed better

These participants reported that teenage mother learners are active when they are involved in group discussions and activities. In some cases, teenage mother learners compete positively with peers as they seem to understand that their absences from school while being pregnant and during the time of the birth, means that they need to ensure that their performance improves. It seems that when certain teaching methods are applied by the teachers, teenage mother learners become more active and take responsibility for their learning in the context of the classroom.

On the other hand, participants who indicated that they regarded mother learners as non-active agents in learning explained as follows:

T001 mentioned that:

They are not that active in most cases; before pregnancy they are active but after birth their moral is very low. We just have to push them.

T002 insisted that it is not always the case with all of the teenage mother learners. However, some are not active because of their motherhood experience which holds them back.

T004 maintained that:

... some become redundant after pregnancy. In most cases you find that those who are intelligent and active prior to pregnancy now become very passive after giving birth

T005 iterated that:

Mother learners are not active at all.

Participants reported that teenage mother learners, as a result of their experience of being pregnant and then new mothers were not actively involved in their learning. Some were reported to have a lowered moral which means that teachers need to motivate them to ensure that they perform well. It seems that their motherhood experience has had a negative effect on them is consequently a barrier to their learning.

Morrell *et al.* (2017:16) state that teen mothers and pregnant teenage learners are not always considered problem cases within the school communities. They come to the school and continue to attend classes with other learners knowing exactly that they are considered on the wrong side of the school management. In this regard therefore, these individuals are less likely to cause disruption to the teaching and learning process knowing they could be expelled from the school community. Hubbard (2008:232) indicates that in the past the school management system was composed of the school principal, teachers, the school governing body, the school management teams, parents and other role players who wanted the pregnant learners and mother learners to be removed from their respective school environments. This no longer applies within the current South African educational context as a result of the South African Department of Basic Education's document entitled 'Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy' (DoE, 2007). As a result, pregnant learners and teenage mother learners attempt to perform as expected in order not to be seen as disrupting the teaching and learning process in the context of the classroom.

2. Teachers' ability to engage teenage mother learners during the teaching and learning process

This question was especially directed towards finding out whether teachers had the ability to engage teenage mother learners in learning during the teaching and learning process. In the

context of this requirement therefore, teachers' ability to engage teenage mother learners in class discussions, role play, experiments, practical work, assignment and drama were found to be of significant importance in the study.

Four participants indicated that they were able to engage mother learners in class discussions, role play, experiments, practical work, assignment and drama. All these teaching methods align with a learner-centred approach and are usually applied by teachers in order to enhance the teaching and learning process within the context of the classroom.

Mukhari (2016:184) maintains that teachers are required to design and prepare their lessons in such a manner that they are flexible in order to address learning challenges among learners that may arise. The flexible nature of a lesson plan allows teachers to use a variety of teaching methods and also a combination in order to improve the teaching and learning process such as classroom discussions, simulation, experiments, practical work (community development projects), home-based assignments (homework) and drama, as specific in policy documents (DBE, 2011).

In order for a lesson to be successful and attain its objective, lesson preparation is considered an important aspect (Visagie, 2017:2). In this regard, when participants were requested to identify several teaching methods, which they used in their teaching for the purpose of improving the teaching and learning process, they reported the following:

T001 said as follows:

I engage them in presenting topics. I give them pamphlets and also require them to present in the class.

T003 maintained that:

I do lesson preparation to improve the teaching and learning process.

T004 said that:

We group them with their counterparts so that they don't feel isolated when they conduct experiments. But I experience problems where mother learners don't avail themselves to the groups due to many reasons related to their circumstances.

3. Teachers allowing teenage mother learners to reflect and compare what they discovered in order to construct meaning from learning

Four participants reported a 'Yes' whereas only one answered 'No' to this question.

When the teacher participants were requested to supply more detailed information regarding the nature of allowing mother learners to reflect and compare what they had discovered in order to construct meaning from learning, they reported that:

T001 maintained that:

Not specifically but through correction, the teachers could see how they should have done the work

T002 reported that:

I don't focus on mother learners such that I teach them as group.

T004 maintained that:

I gave them an extra chance to reflect and compare mostly after group work

T005 said:

I don't do that.

Teachers indicated that they do not always have the capacity and time for allowing mother learners to reflect and compare what they had discovered in order to construct meaning from learning. To ensure that learning has taken place, teachers use correction and group work as the most acceptable and effective teaching and assessment strategies.

d. The ability to reflect and think critically as envisaged by CAPS

The participants were firstly required to indicate whether they agree or not with the viewpoint that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) envisage learners who should be able to reflect and think critically. Four agreed by responding with a "yes" and one disagreed with a "no."

The participants were asked a probing question to explain their responses. The participants in the study provided the researcher with a series of answers including the following:

T001 maintained that:

Business studies give them the opportunity to think critically because most of the aspects that are covered are daily life experiences

T002 is of the view that:

Learners don't want to think, they want to absorb and produce what they have been taught. I try to include questions which encourage them to reason and put things into perspective

T004 mentioned that:

I encourage learners to think further, namely to reflect, analyse. And encourage learners to think beyond the content of the text book

T005 said that:

I give them a chance to reflect on past, present and future politics

A participant reported that she thought learners were not able to think critically but wanted to be spoon-fed so could provide memorised material as answers. Other participants noted that critical thinking is enhanced by subject matter that concerns the daily living of individuals. This means that learners are encouraged to think beyond the learning material contained in text books and apply that learning to everyday life.

Ramabulana (2017:13) is of the understanding that the current South African curriculum, namely CAPS, has reached a stage in which the teaching and learning process in the classroom encourages learners to conduct their own critical thinking analysis of what they have learnt in relation to what is actually happening in their daily lives. A critical thinking approach therefore provides learners with an opportunity to interact with teachers and their peers in order to seek clarification around the lesson topic under review.

4.2.2.3 Seven roles of educators

The roles of educators and their associated competences is meant to serve as a description of what it means to be a competent educator. This section reports on findings emerging from the data of the roles played by educators.

a. Teachers as envisaged by CAPS

Four out of the five participants reported that they regarded themselves as teachers, as envisaged in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS, an acronym for Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, is a policy designed by the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) in order to guide the teaching-learning place and to place parameters related to the nature in which teachers must assess the classroom, test and examine performance of learners (Ramabulana, 2017:5).

Participants were asked to explain their respective responses in more detail. McKenzie (2012:2) contends that qualitative research instruments are generally interpretative in nature as they usually require participants to explain in detail about the concepts involved in social science research. In this regard therefore, research participants had the following to support their first response:

T001 stated that:

I conduct thorough research. I consult different textbooks, TV, newspapers and other practical work. I teach business studies which is a practical subject. For example, if we talk of strikes, they become the real things which are experienced. I set my tests out of real-life situations and as a result, I agree that I am a teacher as envisaged in the CAPS document

T003 is of the position that:

I prepare the content before going to the class. I try as much as possible to expand the content or tailor it so that it can fit the learner

T004 suggested that:

Because I can assist learners in physics through my preparations and approaches to do investigation and projects and, finally have the intended product, e.g. scientific inquiry. Then, I see myself as an envisaged teacher

T002 said that:

I cannot attain all roles you find in the CAPS because we concentrate on content, subject matter and not on pastoral teaching due to the reason that we do not have enough time because we have a lot of work.

Participants reported that as interpreters and designers of learning material, they implement the elements of the CAPS in order to enhance the learning among learners including teenage mother learners. Methods and approaches stipulated in the CAPS document assist teachers in applying a variety of methods to ensure that learners are not left without understanding the lessons taught in the classroom.

According to the CAPS document, teachers are expected to use a variety of methods and approaches to provide learners including pregnant teenagers and teenage learner mothers with quality education (i.e. the teaching and learning process) necessary to develop encourage and maintain their academic performance.

b. Teachers prepare lessons indicating the content and the manner it could be conveyed to learners

On a 'Yes' or 'No' question, all five participants reported that they indeed do lesson preparation where they indicate the content and the manner it could be conveyed to learners in the context of the classroom.

Participants were asked to describe in detail their responses. McKenzie (2012:4) contends that a qualitative research study seeks to obtain information related to detailed description as well as discovering elements and underlying factors of a research problem under investigation. Along this arrangement therefore, the participants supplied the following responses:

T001 said that:

I start by making notes, the methodology and also planning for slow learners

T003 maintained as follows:

I prepare lessons beforehand in my preparation. I also reflect on themes and sub-themes

T004 stated that:

I have lesson preparation for each lesson which indicates themes and sub-themes and sub-topics so that learners can understand

T005 agreed that:

I have lesson preparation

From the above it emerged that participants as interpreters of the curriculum and designers of the learning programme and materials, are involved in lesson preparation before going into their classes to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. Demands expected of classroom teachers are that they prepare for classroom lessons, they conduct ample assessment standards, they moderate, they conduct the effective classroom management, they do administration tasks as well as involving learners to do community development projects (Visagie, 2017:2). In this regard therefore, the preparation of a class lesson is an activity which requires teachers to plan as well as being prepared to include any emerging circumstance that might be necessary during the course of the lesson, particularly taking into account learners who are finding the work challenging and are perhaps lagging behind.

c. Teachers starting lessons from known to complex concepts

Five participants reported that they began their lessons with known concepts and knowledge and then moved on to introduce complex matters during their interactions with the learners including the teenage mother learners in the context of the classroom. When they were requested to describe their positions, three participants responded.

T001 report that:

Pace setter of Grade 12 starts from Grade 10. I am obliged to start from Grade 10 work which is familiar to learners

T002 said that:

In order to link the content, I start from known to the unknown

T004 reported that:

I start with pre-knowledge and proceed to new knowledge to enable learners to connect the dots

Mukhari (2016:41) is of the opinion that when teachers, as learning mediators, start their daily lessons from the known topics prior to introducing more complex and unknown ones, this process is known as scaffolding. By scaffolding therefore, teachers expose learners to lesson content that are known to them and as the lessons develop, teachers then move learners to something new. In this regard therefore, learners enhance their understanding, taking ownership and come up with own inputs to the lessons, which ultimately improves their classroom performance.

d. Teachers encouraging teenage mother learners to communicate through the use of their first language, namely Tshivenda

All five participants replied with a 'Yes' to indicate that they indeed encouraged mother learners to communicate in class through the use of the vernacular; and when they were requested to share more light to their answer, they responded as follows:

T001 said that:

They take part in the debate

T002 responded by:

I encourage learners to write down topics which they don't understand

T005 said the following:

Then they are presenting, they use their language in all the activities, so I encourage learners to use language appropriately to convey their thoughts and ideas

Participants as learning mediators indicated that the use of mother tongue encourages dialogue and interaction between learners within the classroom situation such as in debates and discussions. Secondly, learners were allowed to use their own language in areas where they wanted to express their learning. And finally, learners were able to convey their thoughts and ideas specifically when they communicated in their own language.

Beukes and Botha (2013:8) contend that the use of English as a first additional language (EFAL) in the teaching and learning process within the classroom in the South African context becomes a barrier to learning among most learners whose mother tongue is not English. Learners, including teenage mother learners, understand classroom lessons better when they are presented in the vernacular rather than in English and other foreign languages. Mukhari (2016:64) further states that the language used in the classroom within the South Africa context poses an obstacle to any learner whose first language, namely, a mother tongue is undermined and underutilised.

4.2.3 In-depth Interviews with Teenage Mother Learners

In this second section of the chapter, the data obtained through in-depth interviews with mother learners is interpreted and the findings presented. The section is presented in the similar arrangement to the previous section.

4.2.3.1 Biographical information of the teenage mother learners

The biographical information of the mother learners involved in the study is summarised in the following table:

Table 4.3: Biographical information of the teenage mother learners

Codes	Actual Age	If learners have children	If fathers of children play a role in their lives	Grade during pregnancy or child birth	Age of during pregnancy or child birth	Current Grade
ML001	17	Yes	No	9	14	12
ML002	18	Yes	No	12	18	12
ML003	19	Yes	Yes	12	18	12
ML004	19	Yes	Yes	12	19	12
ML005	19	Yes	Yes	12	19	12

From Table 4.3 above, the researcher gathered that the ages of the participants ranged between 17 and 19 years. Furthermore, all five teenage mother learners had children at the time of the interview sessions and, lastly three teenage mother learners reported that their child's father played a role in the child's life.

Upton (2010:30) maintains that biographical information is usually gathered during the first section in an interview schedule which is aimed at gathering information about the participants' gender orientation, ages, grades, and whether they had had children. Additionally, Ramsaroop and Parumasur (2007:27) mention that biographical information of the research participants is usually obtained by means of the nominal scale.

4.2.4 Themes emerging from Interviews with Teenage Mother Learners

The researcher presented the research findings gathered through interviews with teenage mother learners in this section of the chapter of the study

Table 4.4: Themes and sub-themes emerging from interviews with teenage mother learners

Themes	Sub-themes
Well-being of the child	<p>The nature in which children’s fathers played a role in their lives.</p> <p>The nature of relationship between teenage mother learners and the fathers of their children.</p> <p>The response of teenage mother learners’ parents upon finding out that they were pregnant</p> <p>Teenage mother learners experience of their friends’ reaction upon finding out that they were pregnant</p> <p>Family support in rearing a child</p>
Constructivist approach to learning	<p>The effect of rearing a child on teenage mother learner’s studies</p> <p>Active involvement in learning activities in the class</p> <p>Opportunities provided to teenage mother learners to express their own views on topics in the classroom</p> <p>The use of different teaching methods in order to enhance teenage mother learner’s learning in the classroom</p>

4.2.4.1 Well-being of the child

Teenage motherhood is closely associated with a number of social, economic, physical, psychological and emotional problems and therefore it is a condition that leads to a stressful life in general (Berthoud & Robson, 2001). The well -being of the child is vital to the teenage mother. When all the needs/ condition of the child are not met it becomes stressful to the mother. The mental health of the mother is a pre-requisite for learning of the teenage mother.

The following five sub-themes, emerging from the main theme of well-being of the child, are presented in the subsequent section.

1. The nature in which children's fathers played a role in their lives

The researcher wanted to gather information from the participants in the study about the role that the fathers played in the children's lives.

ML003 maintained that:

He buys everything for the child such as disposable nappies, clothing and formula milk

ML004 stated as follows:

He does everything for the child

ML005 said that:

He buys disposable nappies, clothes and food for the child

The most important aspect about the role of fathers is their involvement in their children's lives. The teenage mother learners reported that this include buying the necessary equipment for the care and comfort of the child as well as ensuring that the children are well-clothed and have the correct nutrition. The means food, disposable nappies and clothing for the maintenance of children. Fonda, Eni and Guimond (2013:1) report that most children born out of wedlock do not always receive the necessary support from their respective fathers. The authors continue to suggest that not only are fathers to be blamed, but teenage mothers may also offer inadequate care and support for their children as well.

2. The nature of a relationship between teenage mother learners and the fathers of their children

Teenage mother learners were asked to explain how the relationships between themselves and the males who fathered their children. Four (4) participants responded:

ML001 stated that:

We are no longer together

ML002 said that:

We have separated

ML003 reported that:

He supports me even when we have some relationship problems, we fight regularly but at the end we resolve our differences

MI004 explained that:

We stay together, he buys food and clothes for the child

From the information obtained during the interviews, two teenage mother learners have separated from the fathers of their children. One participant explained that even though the relationship had problems, they are able to work these out, while the other participant stated that they are together and he supports them.

Usually the first birthing of teenage mothers occurs as accidental and as a result, both parents have no future arrangements in place to establish, develop and maintain a family household (Fonda *et al.*, 2013:2). In this regard therefore, a love relationship between parents of children born out of wedlock has most often not yet developed or is non-existent.

3. The response of mother learners' parents upon finding out that they were pregnant

This question was aimed at finding out whether teenage mother learners' parents supported their pregnancy condition. In this regard therefore, the researcher intended to discover the level of emotions surrounding parents after finding out that their children were pregnant whilst still attending school. She posed this type of an open-ended question in order to provide participants an opportunity to explain in depth (Kumar, 2011:143).

The participants had a variety of responses, both positive and negative, to share:

ML001 stated that:

My parents were not understandable. They were not talking to me. Only my granny and aunt were supportive. My parents started to talk to me when the baby was three

months old. They sit down with me and said that I have disappointed them because I fell pregnant while I was 14 years old and doing Grade 9

ML002 said that:

My mom was understandable. She said that such things happen and she recommended that I should not abort the baby

ML003 explained that:

They shouted at me and said that this pregnancy was going to disturb my studies

ML004 describe the situation with her father in that:

My father was worried. My father was not talking to me. He later talked to me after I gave birth. My mother was fine

ML005 stated that:

They were furious but they emphasized that I should go back to school

The shock of receiving such news is usually associated with a variety of reactions such as not talking to children. However, physical abuse was not mentioned in this regard. From the research it seems as if fathers were more affected by the condition of teenage pregnancy than mothers. In general, others were more understanding that pregnancy is a condition which occurs immediately teenagers fail to practice unsafe sexual intercourse. It is indicated that most parents of the teenaged learners who happened to fall pregnant were against the suggestion of the termination of pregnancy (TOP) known as abortion. Secondly, the findings show that parents were confused as to which steps they had to take in relation to unexpected pregnancy of own children, while other members of the extended family such as grannies, aunties, family friends and others provided support to both the parents and the affected teenage children. All parents encouraged pregnant teenage learners to continue with their studies even though it may be a challenge. The findings reveal that the birth of babies in the family households brought joy to parents, as they eventually started communicating with each other in a peaceful manner.

Hubbard (2008:237) is of the opinion that teenage pregnancy is a primary shock for teenagers, parents, close relatives, friends and others. The envisaged shock is a crisis which tends to be

solved in a number of ways, such the learner dropping out of school, terminating the pregnancy, expelling the learner from the family household, being exposed to a harsh physical and emotional punishment.

4. Teenage mother learners' experience of their friends' reactions upon finding out that they were pregnant

The teenage mother learners' pregnancy affects their peers as well. Fonda *et al.* (2013:2) indicate that teenage girls who happen to fall pregnant during their schooling experience tend to be excluded, stigmatised and marginalised. In this study, the participants reported the following reactions from those they called friends and peers and how they felt after sharing their news:

ML001 reported that:

I was not feeling good at all. I nearly committed suicide

ML002 maintained that:

They never showed me that they were rejecting me. We even talked about my pregnancy.

ML003 reported that:

They understood in that they said that my pregnancy problem is common among other girls.

ML004 maintained that:

They were not supportive. They usually spread gossips that I had fallen pregnant at a tender age.

ML005 mentioned that:

At first, it was not alright in that they treated me indifferently. They side-lined me and some would mention that in the next academic year they would be leaving to a university without a baby

Explanations of the teenage mother learners who had fallen pregnant whilst at school are categorised into two main attributes in this study, namely; supportiveness and non-supportive reactions from friends and peers. Firstly, some friends did not reject them as they viewed teenage pregnancy as a South African social problem that is common within the community. In this regard therefore, girls at this tender stage of development encourage each other by talking openly about the condition so that they learn from others' past mistakes. Secondly, the researcher gathered that teenage learners who fell pregnant might be excluded from friends who were less supportive towards them, who treated them differently, side-lined them and also spread rumours around their health complication that had befallen them, namely teenage pregnancy. This non-supportive reaction could as well lead to some learners having suicidal thought because they felt rejected by their friends and peers.

Teenage mother learners should be adequately supported by parents, family members, teachers, peers, the community, faith-based organisations and others in order to encourage them to complete their education (Berthoud & Robson, 2001:41). This support is necessary because it will assist them in their attempt to escape poverty, unemployment, single-parenthood and other social ills manifested within the South African society.

5. Family support in rearing a child

A closed-ended question was asked of participants requiring them to answer either 'Yes' or 'No' to a question about whether teenage mother learners received support from family members. In this regard therefore, all five participants indicated that members of the family were supportive in rearing the child. These members of the family household included the mothers of the teenage mother learners, grannies and aunts, special individuals who are hired in order to conduct this type of chore such as nannies and child-minders.

4.2.4.2 Constructivist approach to learning

The following sub-themes have emerged from interviews and relate to teenage mother learners learning within a constructivist approach, and are discussed below.

1. The effect of rearing a child on teenage mother learners' studies

Three out of the five participants indicated that rearing a child does not affect their studies, while the other two indicated that it did.

When the participants were required to explain in detail, the following remarks were obtained:

ML002 explained that:

My mom takes care of the baby. During the day, the baby is taken to crèche, but if the baby is sick, I am totally disturbed

ML004 also said that:

I don't stay with them; they are always with my mom. So, I have plenty time to do my school work

ML005 revealed that:

I don't stay with the baby and so I have time to do my school work

ML001 reported that:

I can't read because the baby is crying. I can't attend morning studies because the child would say he wants me to take him to the car which transports them to the creche

ML003 said that:

Sometimes the baby cried throughout the night and I could not sleep. When I go to school, I will be slumbering throughout the day

Some of the participants indicated that their mothers were taking care of the children and/or the children are taken to crèche. These participants reported that because their children were being looked after by others, they had plenty time to focus on their schoolwork. It is only when babies are sick and crying throughout the night, disturbs the teenage mother learners' sleep and thus affects their studies.

Fonda *et al.* (2013:4) note that child rearing has become problematic to young mothers who are trying to complete their education. The time taken for the necessary parenting impinges on the

time needed for their studies. As a result, young mothers usually seek assistance from their parents, grannies, aunts, caregivers and so on for the parenting of their children.

2. Active involvement in learning activities in the class

All five participants indicated that they were actively involved in learning activities in the class. When requested to supply reasons for their ‘Yes’ answer, the participants reported as follows: ML001 stated that:

I take part in group work activities and participate in the lesson activities

ML002 reported that:

I get involved in the presentations

ML003 maintained that:

I don't think much about the child. I stay focused

ML005 said that:

I stand in front of others and present

Teenage mother learners felt that they were actively involved in the learning activities in the class because they were ensured that they became involved in the group work activities, lesson activities, classroom lesson presentations, reflection, assignment, investigation as well as compare and contrast and that they stayed focused in the teaching and learning process. Morrell *et al.* (2017:160) are of the opinion that girls who happen to fall pregnant and give birth whilst attending school and are competent and motivated at school, are far more likely to succeed later in life. This context generally entails that teenage mother learners are actively involved in learning like any other learner within the classroom situation because they are motivated by a driving force, namely they go back to school in order to obtain an education and provide a better life for their children and themselves. However the activities are co-currently with other class mates

3. Opportunities provided to teenage mother learners to express their own views on topics in the classroom

The researcher wanted to find out if mother learners were given an opportunity to express their views based on topics related to lessons treated in the classroom. On the yes/no question, three participants reported that they were given opportunities, while two indicated that this was not the case.

Open-ended questions were asked in order to obtain detailed explanations supporting their initial responses. In this regard therefore, the following information emerged during the interview sessions:

ML001 had this to say:

Not all teachers gave us this opportunity

ML002 reported as follows:

Teachers ask questions which leads us to share our own perceptions or ideas

ML003 said that:

They [teachers] just take one person whom they know is very intelligent to explain, and it does not always happen

ML004 was of the opinion that:

There are times when we are conducting experiments, and we are then asked to predict the outcomes

ML005 maintained that:

Like in LO when we are talking about teenage pregnancy, I fully participate because I have experienced the condition

The participants in the study indicated different opinions such as the fact that that teachers tend not to give them opportunities to share their perceptions based on the topic and that some teachers would only select the gifted learners in order to shed light on the topics being discussed

in the classroom. However, some teachers asked questions which in turn lead teenage mother learners to share their perceptions based on the topic. Some participants indicated that being involved in experiments ensure that there is interaction with others as a learner-centred approach, and involved in discussions with specific topics in Life Orientation (LO) are effective in giving them an opportunity to share their perceptions based on their experiences. Visagie (2017:25) contends that understanding learners' perceptions provide teachers with a clear direction on how to incorporate these perceptions in continuous learning of the subject matter as a whole.

d. The use of different teaching methods in order to enhance teenage mother learners' learning in the classroom

A variety of teaching methods are designed to enhance teenage mother learners' learning in the context of the classroom which was gathered during the interview sessions in this study. In this regard therefore, Mansor, Leng, Rasul, Raof and Yusoff (2013:104) explain that effective teachers use different teaching methods in order to motivate and engage their learners believing that every learner is capable of achieving success at school. These methods are learner-centred and activity based and include question-and-answer quizzes, short writing, dramas, classroom discussions and debates, individual and group projects, case studies, role play or simulation, and demonstrations, to name a few. A combination of different teaching methods is used in the classroom by teachers for the purpose of simplifying learning and ensuring that each learner's needs are met taking into account how to engage the various types of learners.

Teachers were reported as applying different teaching methods during the teaching and learning process in the context of the classroom. All five participants indicated that teachers applied different teaching methods which enhanced their learning in the classroom, but were asked to explain their responses. These were what the participants had to report to her:

ML001 maintained that:

They gave us work so that when we experienced problems, we went to them and asked

ML002 mentioned the following:

If they have given us assignments, they recommended that if we didn't understand we should come and ask for clarity

Teachers applied certain individualised and or group work teaching methods in order to address the learning barriers experienced by learners, including the teenage mother learners in this regard.

In response to this research question, a participant responded by indicating as follows:

ML002

A teacher attended to my problems regarding learning so he/she could possibly assist me

The individualised teaching method is applied for learners with special barriers to learning. Landsberg *et al.* (2005:453) maintains that individualised teaching methods are necessary in areas where learners have difficulties learning, are depressed and or experience major barriers to learning.

On the group work teaching method, ML004 insisted that:

Sometimes we are in a group or individually

Different teaching methods were applied in the classroom situations as reported by the teenage mother learners during interview sessions. The most important methods identified in this regard include completing assignments, group work and individual work. It is important to add that upon given classroom work, learners including teenage mother learners were advised to individually approach teachers for clarification if needed. The effectiveness of teaching methods especially when they are combined, leads to enhanced understanding of class lessons for learners including teenage mother learners (Mansor *et al.*, 2013:104). As this suggests, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of different teaching methods in order to improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

The findings revealed that learners, including teenage mother learners who tend to be experiencing barriers to learning are effectively assisted through group work. Group work is identified as an effective teaching method available within the South African school system

(Mansor *et al.*, 2013:104). Group work involves all learners without discrimination to interact with each other in order to collaboratively solve a particular lesson problem.

When the participants were required to answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ if they thought that group work was an effective teaching method enhancing their learning capabilities, all five of them reported that they felt that it was a good teaching method and further probing led to different responses. In this regard therefore, the following responses were gathered from the participants:

ML001 said that:

I learn from others

ML002 maintained that:

We usually share ideas so that if we treat the concept and a teacher realize that we do not understand, they put us in a group to discuss so that we can help each other

ML003 was of the opinion that:

We share ideas among ourselves.

ML004 indicated that:

When I am alone, I don't understand some of the questions, but when we are together, I gain some insight from friends.

ML005 mentioned that:

When you are alone you think you are right because you are not in the company of others. When we are in a group, you can quickly measure the strength and weaknesses of self and others.

The interpretation of the responses revealed the participants regarded group work as an effective teaching method applied in the classroom. The purpose of group work encourages learners, including teenage mother learners, to learn from each other, share ideas and gain insight from peers in relation to the lesson topics. On the other hand, the participants indicated that studying alone could result in a high level of failure because teachers are not always available to assist learners when queries emerge.

One of the most effective teaching methods in the teaching and learning process is projects which require learners to work in small groups in order to solve community-related problems (Mansor *et al.*, 2013:106). Learners are encouraged to identify, plan, implement and monitor and evaluate strategies necessary for the solving of community problems.

In the context of this study, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they regarded projects as an effective method in the teaching and learning process. Four participants thought working on projects was an effective teaching method, while one did not think so. A follow-up question asking participants to explain their previous responses was used in order to provide teenage mother learners an opportunity to explain their different reasons in own words (Kumar, 2011:142). The researcher gathered the following responses during interview sessions:

ML001 maintained that:

Others don't take part and want to copy our work. I prefer to work alone

ML002 suggested that:

I enjoy working in the company of others

ML003 insisted that:

Some are more knowledgeable than me, so we share, and I enjoy it

ML004 contended that:

I enjoy helping others

ML005 mentioned that:

When we are requested to do models, we usually need the support and ideas from others

Projects can be seen as an effective teaching method due to the reason that it provides teenage mother learners with a platform in which they gain support from other students. Mansor *et al.* (2013:104) are of the opinion that projects involve learners to work in groups as they attempt doing particular activities related to a problem under study. However, the negative side to

project work is the balance of work, where some learners offer little and depend on others in the group to complete the task.

The interpretation and analysis of the interviews conducted with teachers and mother learners were accordingly addressed in the previous sections of this chapter in the study. The succeeding section interprets and analyses the research findings obtained through participant observation.

4.2.5 Findings from Participant Observation

Participant observation is a type of social science which is carried out by the researchers themselves as they observe some interactions clearly observable of the sub-cultures in which they are interested in investigating (Kumar, 2011:340). Researchers are therefore required to make field-notes during their observation. Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest and Namey, (2011:36) insist that the social science researcher compiles field-notes in order to capture the activities, relationships, interactions and other behavioural patterns which are exhibited by research participants as they are observed.

During participant observation, the researcher spent two weeks at the site for observation and visited again to collect additional information. The researcher compiled field notes for each of the teenage mother learners involved in the study. Particular aspects such as challenges teenage mother learners experience when interacting with teachers and peers, attitude and treatment of teenage mother learners by teachers and other peers within the context of the classroom and what teenage mother learners want to talk about in their interactions with teachers and peers, were observed and recorded.

Mack *et al.* (2011:36) indicated that field-notes are not expected to capture everything about the research participants rather only those which are relevant to the phenomenon under investigation, namely teenage motherhood. In this regard therefore, the main themes covered during the participant observation included teachers' attitudes towards teenage mother learners, learners' comments on teenage mother learners during the lesson, availability of teachers to address problems faced by teenage mother learners, individuals with whom teenage mother learners mostly interact during school breaks, the topics during discussions between teenage mother learners and their peers, teenage mother learners' involvement in the extramural

activities and teenage mother learners charged with undisciplined behaviour during observation.

4.2.5.1 Teachers' attitudes towards teenage mother learners

The researcher observed the following with regards to teachers' attitudes towards teenage mother learners:

ML001 The researcher observed that the teachers loved this participant as she was confident in her studies. Some of the teachers discussed her potential with her and how she could develop if she put more effort into her studies. The researcher observed that the learner was always assigned tasks of distributing learning materials to peers in the class.

ML002 Some of the teachers were observed as warning the learner about her poor performance indicating that she should pull up her socks in order to avoid failure and that she might have to repeat the grade for the second time. The learner was seen as being cooperative in class.

ML003 Most teachers complained about the learner's truant behaviour, poor classroom performance, unruly behaviour and failure to do classwork and homework.

ML004 The learner was active during the class discussion and teachers encouraged her to put more effort into her performance.

ML005 The learner was always being reprimanded for her confrontational behaviour towards teachers. Her relationship with teachers was not good at all.

From the findings above, it is clear that in general teachers had a positive attitude towards mother learners who behaved well. Teachers confronted and attempted to address the behavioural patterns which tend to disrupt the teaching and learning process.

4.2.5.2 Learners' comments on teenage mother learners during the lesson

The researcher wanted to identify how other peers felt about teenage mother learners during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. These are what she observed:

ML001 The learner was not talkative but she performed well during classroom discussions. Other peers respected her to such an extent that she was selected to be a class scribe and also a group representative.

ML002 In most instances she was interrupted by peers as she tried to explain some of her presentations. She was emotional in character especially when interrupted by others.

ML003 She was passive during some lessons in the class. She seemed to excel better doing experiments in the agricultural science class. Most peers tend to listen attentively to her views and arguments.

ML004 She was highly vocal during a discussion on teenage pregnancy in the Life Orientation lesson in the class. Other class members felt that her outstanding performance was due to her experience.

ML005 It seemed as if the learner's peers liked her inputs and advice related to the lessons carried out at the classroom situation.

From the observation it became clear that classroom peers respected teenage mother learners who contributed in the class discussion and also those who hold important positions such as the group leader or class prefect.

4.2.5.3 Availability of teachers to address problems

As indicated in Chapter 4 Section 4.2.3.1 of the literature review in this study, teenage mother learners usually experience major challenges during the teaching and learning process. In this regard therefore, the researcher observed sentiments related to the availability of teachers in

addressing problems experienced by teenage mother learners in the classroom situation. These are what she observed:

ML001 A teacher was supportive towards a learner in that they seconded her in her selection as a classroom scribe.

ML002 The teacher protected the learner during an interruption episode created by her peers. The teacher encouraged attempts by learners as they interacted with others during classroom dialogues and so on. The teacher also emphasised the importance of a culture of learning which is associated with making mistakes and reprimanded those who scorned a learner's inputs in the teaching and learning process.

ML003 A learner could not perform at the same pace as other peers. In the attempt to assist, the teacher utilised a question-and-answer teaching method in order to provide the learner with adequate learning.

ML004 The teacher reprimanded peers who felt the learner was performing badly. In this view, they indicated that the learner's willingness to share information is a resource which should be appreciated as well as encouraged.

ML005 The teacher found that some class peers were totally against a teenage mother learner as they were not ready to listen to her inputs. In this regard therefore, the teacher relied on harmonising the classroom conflict in order to provide a healthy learning relationship among all learners within the context of the classroom.

It was found that teachers are available for teenage mother learners who might be struggling with learning. Teachers encouraged and also provided additional assistance for the purpose of simplifying learning among teenage mother learners and those who were lagging behind in learning.

4.2.5.4 Individuals with whom teenage mother learners interact

Teenage mother learners generally view themselves as belonging to the school system in that they always interact with school mates of own choice like any other learner at school. In this instance, the researcher wanted to identify these individuals and aimed at finding individuals who mostly interacted with this sector within the school community. The following aspects were observed:

ML001 She mostly interacted with girls rather than boys. She sat with a boy in the classroom situation. She liked most girls, irrespective if they had babies or not.

ML002 The learner interacted mostly with boys. Her class mate was a boy.

ML003 The learner enjoyed the company of other teenage mother learners although she did occasionally mix with other girls and boys.

ML004 The teenage mother learner mixed with all learners. She mostly spends time with another girl who was also a teenage mother learner.

ML005 The teenage mother learner interacted mostly with girls.

From this observation it became clear that most teenage mother learners in general interacted with a variety of other learners within the school community whereas some preferred to mix with other teenage mother learners.

4.2.5.5 The topics during discussions

Teenage mother learners have a way of discussing different issues with classroom peers. In this view therefore, the researcher observed their interactions with peers in order to discover the topics of discussions. This is information gathered during the observation process:

ML001 The learner held her discussions with classroom peers related to issues of meals, the incoming class tests and kids and their wellbeing.

ML002 The learner rarely talked about the school-related matters and in the process, she concentrated on how week-ends could be improved. The researcher observed that the learner spent an average of less than 10% of their time discussing school work in general.

ML003 Most discussions were around the meals of the day at school and the health of children left at home.

ML004 Discussions were held around school work, boyfriends and also about the presents she received from the father of the child.

ML005 The learner was worried that she did not have proper sleep the previous night due to her baby not feeling well, that she could not complete her homework and that she would not be able to do well in the coming class test. In addition, the learner was also observed as confiding in another learner that she was prepared to join other girls for weekend entertainments.

Mother learners rarely engage themselves in discussions related to the teaching and learning process. It seems that during school breaks it was normal for many to talk about challenges they faced as mother learners with those who were already mother learners but normally conversations revolved around their lives as teenagers.

4.2.5.6 Teenage mother learners' involvement in the extramural activities

The researcher observed the school extramural activities in order to identify whether teenage mother learners were involved. These were the findings of her observation:

ML001 The learner was involved in netball

ML002 The learner took part in volley ball, the school choir and dancing

ML003 The learner participated in netball and traditional dance

ML004 The learner took part in volley ball

ML005 The learner was involved in both netball and the school choir

From the observations, it was clear that teenage mother learners had not isolated themselves from school life but were involved in extramural activities such as netball, volley ball, school choir and traditional dance.

4.2.6 Findings from Document Analysis

Certain documents were analysed and the interpretations are presented in this final section of the chapter. The main topics included in the documents relate to the number of days teenage mother learners attended school during the three (3) school terms in the 2018 academic year, the performance average of the classroom tests, examination results (Pass/Fail), medical records, which were obtained from the Child Health Cards of children born to teenage mother learners, and disciplinary reports.

4.2.6.1 Attendance of mother learners

These records were obtained from both the classroom registers and mother learners' year-end reports and were used to determine school attendance among teenage mother learners during the three (3) school terms in 2018. In this regard therefore, the researcher collected summaries of attendance for every teenage mother learner involved in the study. The number of days mother learners were absent from classroom and school during three (3) school terms in 2018 are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.5: Number of days absent from school during three school terms, 2018

Mother learners	Number of days absent from classroom and school
ML001	16
ML002	15
ML003	25
ML004	18
ML005	28

It is indicated in Table 4.5 above that teenage mother learners were absent from the classroom and school for a number of days ranging between one and nine during the three school terms in 2018.

4.2.6.2 Performance of teenage mother learners in the class tests during 2018

The researcher randomly selected copies of exercise books of teenage mother learners on different subjects in order to collect data related to their performance in class tests during 2018. The teenage mother learners' performance in class tests is summarised in the table below.

Table 4.6: Performance of teenage mother learners in class tests during 2018

Mother learners	Marks obtained in class tests								Total
ML001	31/75	29/75	114/225	27/75	35/75	106/225	34/75	-	376/825
ML002	8/40	13/60	24/40	29/150	12/40	49/100	18/150	37/150	190/730
ML003	14/60	10/40	-	-	-	-	-	-	24/100
ML004	19/100	15/150	10/70	34/150	19/150	-	-	-	126/770
ML005	34/225	12/75	70/150	32/75	20/75	27/225	13/75	-	208/900

Key to the figures in Table 4.6 is the slash (/) between the two score properties indicating that a learner had obtained marks over an indicated total. For example, ML001 achieved 31 out of the total of 75 marks in a class test. Adding all the scores the mother learner and comparing them with all the total in during class tests, the researcher could find the aggregate performance of the learners. According to the scores contained in a Table 4.6 above, mother learners scored as follows in their class tests during 2018:

ML01 scored 376 out of the total of 825 marks translated into a failure as she obtained only 45.58%. ML02 scored 190 out of the total of 730 marks which marks that she under-performed as she obtained only 26%. ML03 scored 24 out of the total of 100 marks which indicates that she failed by obtaining only 24%. ML04 failed because she scored 126 out of the total of 770 marks, and which is rated at 16.36%. ML05 scored 208 out of the total of 900 marks indicating that she failed, because she obtained a 23%.

All five mother learners involved in the study scored marks below a required pass mark of at least above average during 2018. The results show that mother learners performed poorly in the class tests throughout 2018. The general poor performance of mother learners in class tests is attributed to a number of factors including absenteeism and limited concentration during the teaching and learning process in the class.

4.2.6.3 End of year results of teenage mother learners during 2018

The researcher requested copies of the examination results for the mother learners involved in this study. End of year results of mother learners during 2018 are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.7: End of year results of teenager mother learners during 2018

Teenage mother learners	Year percentages obtained	Remarks (Pass/Fail)
ML001	48.7%	Failed
ML002	33.3%	Failed
ML003	35.7%	Failed
ML004	37.3%	Failed
ML005	38.7%	Failed

From Table 4.7 above, it is indicated that all five teenage mother learners obtained between 33.3% and 48.7% as their end of year results during 2018. Usually a pass mark obtained by general students should be above 50% which means that they all failed their respective examinations during the year under review because they scored less than the 50% average.

4.2.6.4 Medical records of teenage mother learners and children at the public clinics and hospitals

Medical records, called the Child Health Cards also referred to as Child Immunization Cards, for teenage mother learners who have just given birth to children were obtained for analysis. In the context of this research study, the researcher wanted to measure the number of days teenage mother learners attended the public clinics which coincides with their school day programme, i.e. missing school. The findings are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.8: Public clinic visitations of the teenage mother learners and children

Teenage mother learners	Total clinic attendance days	Comments
ML001	13	Completed the programme
ML002	12	Completed the programme
ML003	16	Completed the programme
ML004	5	Programme continuing
ML005	12	Completed the programme

Table 4.8 above indicates that teenage mother learners are required to visit a public clinic for both their medical check-ups as well as that of their children. According to the public clinic visitation records obtained for teenage mother learners, they are required to attend the clinic at least between 12-16 days before the child has successfully completed the immunisation programme. This is when children are about to start pre-school education. Four mother learners had completed the public clinic visitation programme during the period of this study, while only ML004 was still required to continue with the programme during 2019.

4.2.6.5 Teenage mother learners charged with undisciplined behaviour during observation

The researcher obtained records from the school principals and the school management team (SMT) in order to determine whether mother learners had in some instances been charged with undisciplined behaviour during observation. The following were her findings:

ML001 Yes, the teenage mother learner engaged in some argument with another learner and they ended up fighting.

ML002 Yes, the teenage mother learner was absent from class without a valid reason.

ML003 Yes, the teenage mother learner disrespected a teacher during the lesson.

ML004 No

ML005 Yes, the teenage mother learner bullied other learners especially those who were young.

A large number of teenage mother learners were not charged with undisciplined behaviour during observation. Only one was reported as having been charged.

4.2.6.6 Disciplinary reports of teenage mother learners who undermined the school policies and codes as recorded by the school management

In this regard therefore, the researcher wanted to find out whether teenage mother learners had breached school rules and regulations in such a manner that their respective parents and/or legal guardians were called in order to meet with teachers and other school management team.

All five mother learners involved in the study did not have disciplinary records, which indicated that they had not undermined school policies and codes.

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research findings emerging from the data collected through three different data collection methods, namely in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. In-depth interviews gathered information in the form of information which required the researcher to include a series of detailed responses by the research participants as they attempted to explain the social phenomenon under investigation. Participant observation also delineated the qualitative aspects in that it relied heavily on the texts (field-notes) compiled by the researcher as she explained the nature of mother learners' interaction with teachers, peers and other people within the school community.

The succeeding chapter will contain the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District in Limpopo. This chapter focuses on drawing conclusions from the findings emerging from data collected from teachers, teenage mother learners, participant observation and document analysis supported by the literature.

The aim of the study was to identify the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe District in Limpopo by finding answers to the following sub-questions:

- What teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners are experienced by teachers?
- What teaching and learning challenges are experienced by teenage mother learners?
- What are the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process?
- Which guidelines do teachers need in order to support teenage mother learners during the teaching-learning process?

This chapter is composed of a summary of the literature review, the empirical study and the research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARIES

Summaries of the literature review, the empirical study and the research findings form part of this first section of the chapter.

5.2.1 A Summary of the Literature Review

A teenage mother learner is viewed as a social problem (Mkwanzani & Odimegwu, 2015:3) closely associated with the escalating development of teenage motherhood within the South African society. The researcher defined the concept mother learner in Section 2.2) in this study. Blaisse (2010:4) defined mother learners as teenage girls who fall pregnant and give birth whilst studying. A social problem is regarded as some form of a crisis which affects a large number of people which requires immediate as well as effective strategic interventions for its reduction and or elimination.

Causes of teenage motherhood include socio-economic deprivation, poverty, environmental factors, behavioural problems, child sexual abuse and rape, peer pressure, lack of knowledge about the use of contraceptives, substance abuse and others (Compare Luong, 2008; McLeod, 2013.) Teenage motherhood leads to a variety of effects such as school dropout, lowered socio-economic status, disorganisation of the family, stressful lives in general, medical attention, baby care and attention, social exclusion, a high amount of an exposure to HIV/AIDS infections and other sexual related diseases and others (Hubbard, 2008:236).

The South African legislative frameworks are in place to prevent mother learners from being stigmatized, discriminated against, excluded and expelled from the school communities once they have fallen pregnant and have given birth to children. The main legislative frameworks in this study include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (2003), the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), the Revised National Curriculum Statement R-9 (2002) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (see Section 2.7 of the study). These legislative frameworks, together with their related policies, maintain that all learners must have access to equal and quality education, and that every South African must be able to read, write, count and think.

A learner-centred and activity-based approach should be encouraged at schools and South African school communities must eliminate all forms of discrimination, stigmatisation, deprivation and exclusion of learners including those who have fallen pregnant and some who have given birth to children (Liu & Matthews, 2005; Amineh & AsI, 2015). A learner who is

pregnant is allowed to continue learning until they complete their education under the supervision of an adult person such as the teacher, a member of the school management system and or a parent (Chohan & Gina, 2009:2).

5.2.2 A Summary of the Empirical Study

The empirical study followed a qualitative approach guided by a case study design. The sampling method applied in this study was purposive sampling, referred to as judgmental sampling which is a non-probability sampling (Gray, 2004:402), which allowed for the sampling of relevant participants. Data collection methods used in this study included the in-depth interviews, document analysis and participant observation and allowed for triangulation of methods. In this regard therefore, in-depth interviews as was previously detailed in Section 3.6.1 was the main method in order to gather non-numerical information related to participants' experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005:56).

Participant observation, detailed in Section 3.6.2, was used to record activities of teenage mother learners during their interactions with teachers, peers and other school community tasks and performances. Document analysis, addressed in Section 3.6.3, was conducted to reveal aspect of mother learners' attendance, medical records of babies, tests results, examination performance and behaviour.

5.2.3 A Summary of the Research Findings

In order to answer the main research question of *What are the teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in the Vhembe , Limpopo?* I had to satisfactorily answer each of the four sub-questions:

- What teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners are experienced by teachers?
- What teaching and learning challenges are experienced by teenage mother learners?
- What are the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process?

- Which guidelines do teachers need in order to support teenage mother learners during the teaching-learning process?

5.2.3.1 Sub-question 1: What teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners are experienced by teachers?

All teachers who participated in the study revealed that they had obtained the necessary educational qualifications to teach at secondary schools, having between 10 to 37 years' experience in teaching, with most having taught Grades 10-12 at schools. Each teacher held a specific position in the school ranging from teacher to HOD and that of a deputy principal (see Section 4.2.1.1). It is apparent that the researcher involved relevant participants who were capable of informing the research study about the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at secondary schools in the area under investigation.

Teachers reported that they all had teenage mother learners in their classrooms at the time the study was conducted (see Section 4.2.2.1a), which aligns with policy that pregnant learners and teenage mother learners are encouraged to continue with their education prior to and after the delivery of the baby (DoE, 2007). Mutshaeni *et al.* (2015:101) explains that pregnant girls have a right to education and therefore can neither be denied admission to study nor be expelled from the school on account of pregnancy, but their presence at school needs to be correctly managed (see Hubbard, 2008:223). The document 'Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy' (DoE, 2007) was aimed at preventing, promoting, establishing and maintaining the necessary assistance and support needed by teenage mother learners, although research has revealed that teenage mother learners are at times subjected to exclusion, stigmatisation and the deprivation of learning process (Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014). It seems that teachers, with their busy schedules, are often unaware of such occurrences in their class but teenage mother learners should be protected from discrimination, intimidation and exclusion by others.

In addition, teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills in dealing with teenage mother learners, particularly their health issues. As a result, teenage mother learners need specialised help which includes the referral to the medical practitioners, if necessary and counselling services (Mkwanzani & Odimegwu, 2015:2). With teenage pregnancies on the rise in schools

in South Africa, health care professionals including teachers should be equipped to offer different solutions ranging from preventative education to psychological counselling and the promotion of adequate maternal care (Bottomley & Lancaster, 2008 as cited in Neiterman, 2012:29). This is vital as the study revealed that there were no available counselling programmes for these learners (see Section 4.2.2.1b).

Absenteeism is a major challenge faced by teachers as teenage mother learners tend to be absent themselves from the classes due to the pre-natal, post-natal, own health and children's health complications, the child care grant pay-out dates and other circumstances (see Section 4.2.6.2), confirming Mashishi and Makoelle's findings (2014:375) of regular absenteeism of teenage mother learners from the classroom. Being absent from class for extended periods has an effect on the teaching and learning process, with teenage mother learners missing out on vital lessons which impact on continuity of learning and classwork. This in turn affects their performance in class tests and examinations (see Sections 4.2.6.3 and 4.2.6.4).

The teaching and learning process in the class is driven by the teacher. In addition to being equipped with subject content knowledge (SCK), teachers need to know how to teach the content through their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (DoE, 2003:5; Shulman, 1987). This entails using a variety of teaching approaches and methods that are effective in addressing the teaching and learning challenges of teenage motherhood (Mogashoa, 2013) and ensuring that each learner's needs are met, taking into account how to engage the various types of learners (see Section 4.2.2d).

Using a variety of methods, particularly those which are learner-centred and activity-based, ensures that learners take control of the learning process by being actively engaged in their learning. The research however, found that some teenage mother learners are affected by being mothers and having to take care of their babies and as a result, are tired and listless and tend not to become involved in class activities (see Section 4.2.2.2a)

A further challenge that teachers face is that teenage mother learners can at times, lag behind their peers, especially as they are often absent from school. Teachers find that due to time constraints, lessons cannot be repeated or retaught but, in some schools, catch-up programmes have been put in place. However, teachers reported that mother learners failed to avail

themselves during the catch-up programmes specifically directed at making certain that learners, who were not present in class, are provided with additional lessons in order to keep them at the same level as others (see Section 4.2.2.2d).

5.2.3.2 Sub-question 2: What teaching and learning challenges are experienced by teenage mother learners?

Teenage mother learners' ages ranged between 17 and 19 years of age, with some being supported by the fathers of the children (see Table 4.2). In contrast some teenage mother learners reported that the relationship between themselves and the fathers of their children had almost completely deteriorated (see Section 4.2.4a/b), and most mother learners in the study were no longer living with the fathers of their children. This emotional turmoil experienced by teenage mothers is a challenge that might have a major impact on the teaching and learning process.

Financial support is vital to support new mothers and their babies. Within the South African context, child support grants are provided by the South African government to assist lower-income households to assist parents or unmarried women, including teenagers, with financial support for the basic needs of their child. However, financial worries and concern about basic living needs may also be a challenge which has an effect on teenage mothers' learning

In addition to financial support, teenage mother learners need physical and emotional support from their families and friends. News of pregnancy had mixed receptions in families. Teenage mother learners reported cases during which family members, especially their fathers, mistreated them upon finding out that they were pregnant (see Section 4.2.4c). In many cases, the mothers supported them as well as other family member such as aunts and grandmothers who would come to their rescue to take care and support their babies. Arai (2009:173) notes that mother learners require a support system from their own homes where their parents can take a responsibility of looking after the babies when they attend school. However, if a teenage mother has to care for the baby and has disturbed nights, or a sickly child, or a very demanding baby, this could be a challenge to her learning (see Section 4.2.4.1e).

Teenage mother learners could be faced with challenges once news of their pregnancy is announced and even once they return to school after the birth of the child. Teachers are expected to have a positive attitude towards all learners without regard of the extraneous variables such as age, health, impairment and so on. Teachers should treat all learners including teenage mother learners with fairness. In this regard Fonda *et al.* (2013:2) suggests that mother learners who are treated like other learners at school will feel accepted and continue with their studies. Teenage mother learners in general, reported that they had great support from their teachers (see Section 4.2.5.1). However, in some cases, teachers did not react to the teasing and discrimination experienced by the teenage mother learners (see Section 4.2.5.2) with attempting to curb this negative behaviour (De Wet, 2014).

Absenteeism is another factor influencing the teaching and learning process of teenage mother learners. Teenage mother learners were found to have been absent from the classroom and school for a number of days ranging between one (1) and nine (9) during the three (3) school terms in 2018. Teenage mother learners absent themselves from school attendance due to several reasons including their health, the health and care of a child (see Section 4.2.6.1), spending their school periods attending child check-ups at the local public clinic, a condition which deprives them an opportunity to regularly attend school (see Section 4.2.6.4). Indeed, mother learners cannot be expected to fare equally with other learners as absenteeism erodes time needed to be spent on studies. Effective strategic interventions need to be put in place in order to limit periods which teenage mother learners spend out of the classroom. Fonda *et al.* (2013:3) suggest that this absenteeism or truancy, in some cases, could be addressed by means of the involvement of other individuals who are prepared to take over the care, treatment and support to the mother learners together with their respective babies. Professionals such as social workers, school psychologists and others should encourage families of mother learners to provide care, treatment and support to babies when mother learners attend school (Blaisse, 2010:14). Because of periods of absenteeism, teachers reported that they were hard pressed to spend extra time helping teenage mother learners ensure that work missed was completed, which is a challenge experienced by these learners, and as a result they tend to lag behind their peers. This presents as a major challenge as the learners' performance is affected, which could result in possible failure.

Stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion by peers could have a fundamental effect on teenage mother learners learning within the classroom and should be eliminated at schools. Girls are sociable creatures and if a girl is left out and isolated, this could influence the learning and cause emotional distress for the teenage mother learner. Teenage mother learners in general interacted with everyone within the school community although some preferred to mix with other mother learners. Classroom peers respected mother learners who contribute in the class discussion and also those who hold important positions such as the group leader, class prefect and others for example (see Section 4.2.5.2). Learners with barriers to learning including mother learners should be encouraged to actively participate in the teaching and learning process within the classroom situation. Luong (2008:5) supports this by indicating that active participation is an important attribute for the diffusing stigmatisation discrimination and exclusion among learners. Hubbard (2008:223) indicates that all learners as well as mother learners, have a right to education and as such they must be protected from stigmatisation, discrimination, exclusion and other forms of deprivation within the school environment.

5.2.3.3 Sub-question 3: What are the detrimental effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching-learning process?

Teenage pregnancy and school attendance are reported by Maemeko, Nkengbeza, and Chokomosi, (2018) as not going well together. Teenage pregnancy has a particularly detrimental effect on girls' schooling and their future plans. This is because the teenage mothers attend school irregularly and sometimes drop out of school due to their new parenting role and thus finding the dual responsibilities challenging to overcome (Duncan, 2011). This is reiterated by Morrell *et al.* (2017:2) who contend that since teenage girls are now predisposed to the additional burden of childbirth, before, during and after pregnancy, they are most likely to perform poorly within the classroom situation. Swann Bowe, McCormick and Kosmin (2003) support the fact that teenage pregnancy and early motherhood can be associated with poor educational achievement, poor physical and mental health, social isolation, poverty and related factors. It seems that teenage parents experience reduction in their education attainment compared to teenagers who are not parents (Duncan, 2011).

This study found that all teenage mother learners failed in their respective examinations during the 2018 academic year. This research finding entailed that most of the mother learners failed

to be promoted to the next grade, thus resulting in a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning process. The study concluded that teenage mother learners experience numerous challenges which inhibit their performance and as a result they tend to fail in examinations. (see Section 4.2.6.3).

Although the results of the final examination are the benchmark for promotion to the next grade, the study found that teenage mother learners performed badly within the classroom situation throughout the year. All five teenage mother learners involved scored marks below a pass mark of 50% in their class tests during 2018 (see Section 4.2.6.2). These low marks were exacerbated by learners being absent on assessment days.

Teenage pregnancy has a major impact on the performance of learners as they generally perform poorly as compared to their performance before they fell pregnant and gave birth (Maemeko *et al.*, , 2018). This poor performance in many cases results in failure in specific grades and thus drop out from school, affirming that teenage mothers are unlikely to complete their high school education (Panday *et al.*, 2009).

5.2.3.3 Sub-question 4: Which guidelines do teachers need in order to support teenage mother learners during the teaching-learning process?

Teachers should take cognisance of legislation related to education, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) (see Section 2.6). In addition, teachers need to be guided by a number of policies such as the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10-12 (DoE, 2003), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) R-9 (DoE, 2002) and currently, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) (see Section 2.7). The norms and standards for educators guide teachers on the roles and their applied competences and qualifications need to assume the various roles played in the classroom. In addition, teachers as subject specialists need to be equipped with the relevant subject content knowledge (SCK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to ensure an effective teaching and learning process (DoE, 2003:5).

Teachers are also encouraged to provide a special curriculum for the purpose of scaffolding learning among teenage mother learners and those who are lagging behind.

Teachers in their role of educating their students need to be guided in creating a healthy environment within which teenage mother learners can enjoy learning without being hindered by the extraneous barriers to learning. That is, teachers should make certain that these teenage mother learners are not stigmatised, discriminated against and excluded from learning with their peers. Teachers should be guided by the document ‘Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy’ (DoE, 2007) which is aimed at preventing, promoting, establishing and maintaining the necessary assistance and support needed by teenage mother learners.

It has been reported that teachers lack of necessary knowledge and skills when dealing with teenage pregnancy and teenage mother learners. As teenage mother learners experience health, psychological and emotional problems, the government should provide teachers with in-service training providing guidelines on how to deal with pregnant learners (Mutshaeni *et al.*, 2015:101). Teachers should create an open-door policy which allows these learners to report any problem they experience as well as caring and supporting, including referring them to other professionals beyond the school management system such as nurses, medical practitioners and social workers (see Section 2.2).

5.3 LIMITATIONS

The researcher acknowledges that this study has certain limitations. One of these limitations pertains to scope /time frame (which was the current academic year of teenage mothers). If the time frame stretched from four years back the researcher would have had comparative perspective of the academic performance of the teenage mothers. This limitation has not, however, affected the significance of this research and it lends itself to further studies.

Another limitation of the study can be seen in the number of participants involved in the study. The more participants who participate, the greater the probability of saturation of information. The process of gaining saturation of information may have been reached quicker and the depth of the information gained may have been affected.

However, since the research was qualitative, with the purpose of collecting in-depth data, it is believed that the limitations did not negatively influence the outcome of the study

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES OF TEENAGE MOTHER LEARNERS AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The recommendations offer suggestions to address challenges of the teaching and learning of mother learners at secondary schools which is basically conducted through the active involvement of teachers, learners, parents, health professionals, the school management teams (SMTs) and the Department of Basic Education.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Teachers

It is recommended that teachers should teach teenage mother learners study skills, provide individual support programme (ISP) in case the pregnant learner has challenges related to pregnancy ailments and is unable to complete certain tasks.

It is recommended that teachers should enrol for Special Needs education qualifications so that they acquire knowledge on how to support and include learners that are physically, mentally and emotionally challenged, including pregnant learners in their classroom situations of ordinary schools, to help these affected learners perform better academically like other learners who have not fallen pregnant (Maemeko *et al.*, 2018).

5.4.2 Recommendations for Teenage Mother Learners

It is recommended that pregnant learners and teenage mother learners be encouraged to study hard in order to improve their academic performance in the classroom (Maemeko *et al.*, 2018). It is recommended that teenage mother learners be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

It is recommended that teenage mother learners be involved in the reduction of their own teaching and learning challenges to learning (Mutshaeni *et al.*, 2015:102.)

It is recommended that teenage mother learners endeavour to reduce absenteeism and truancy. This means that if a lesson is missed, it is their responsibility to work harder than normal learners in order to perform at similar pace with peers. They should make certain that the time they spent caring and supporting offspring as well time lost during attending the post-natal health check-up is covered by this extra work. In addition, it is recommended that mother learners only collect child care grants made available to them by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) during times outside school hours. This reduces their absenteeism, and truancy which the school management system is usually concerned about.

It is recommended that teenage mother learners establish, develop and maintain a healthy working relationship with peers who can become an effective resource in their learning process. This entails being prepared to work in groups with other learners so that whatever aspects they failed to comprehend in the classroom situation could be clarified by other learners.

It is recommended that teenage mother learners strongly consider the importance of the catch-up programmes available at school which require them to study during extra school hours, on weekends and during holidays. Catch-up programmes also require these learners to perform school activities and tasks at home.

It is recommended that teenage mother learners be adequately disciplined in character, meaning that they should not disrespect teachers, school staff, learners and parents. This thus maintains that they can only be cared for, accepted and supported by others and teachers when they are viewed as being adhering to the school policies and codes.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Parents

Parents play a vital part in the education of their children. In this regard it is recommended that parents enter into a partnership with teachers, the school principals and other school staff in order to provide them with information related to how well they could assist their child, namely; a mother learner.

It is recommended that parents create a healthy relationship with the school that is aimed at caring and supporting mother learners while they enter the school community. They must be

prepared to attend parents meetings scheduled by the school management system at all times, parents should attend special discussions required by either teachers, the school principals and other school staff and that they are expected to be supportive towards the school when it is engaged in the process of developing own child.

It is recommended that parents be seen as applying discipline to their own child before the child is actually disciplined by the school. For example, how regularly the child does her homework is not the responsibility of a teacher who is not part of the family household but that of a parent. If the parent does not take on this responsibility, then their child's educational performance is lost.

5.4.4 Recommendations for the School Management Teams (SMTs)

The SMT is defined by De Wet (2014:8) as a unit within the school community that is composed of a number of teachers which just falls below the positions of the school principal and his/her deputy principal. This unit is responsible for running all matters within the school community including the care, support and inclusion of mother learners within the teaching and learning process. The SMT assists the school principal and the school administration in making certain that mother learners are accordingly admitted at the school.

It is recommended that the SMT ensures that teenage mother learners are not unnecessarily stigmatized, deprived of neither an education nor being discriminated against. It is therefore the SMT which meets the level of discipline needed to be permeated to learners who violate the school policies and codes. The SMT establishes, develops and maintains the safety and security among all teachers and learners within the school environment, including caring and supporting mother learners. In short, the SMT supports teachers when they conduct the teaching and learning process at the school.

5.4.5 Recommendations for Health Professionals

Schools cannot act alone in order to address problems related to the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at their respective communities. In this regard therefore, the stakeholders within the school management system including teachers, learners, parents and

other community members lack of the knowledge and skills required to deal with pregnant learners and mother learners. The stakeholders require a level of assistance from other social professionals who have the capability to provide care and support to mother learners during their physical, psychological and emotional distress.

It is recommended that teachers and the school management teams establish a partnership with various health professionals to assist teenage mother learners during the times they experience physical, psychological and emotional problems which are beyond their professional development. In this regard therefore, the most effective approach to address the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools should be conducted within what is referred to as a multi-professional team. This team is composed of teachers, nurses, medical practitioners, social workers, clinical psychologists, counsellors, police and so on. In this context, teachers supply the team with either the health, psychological and or the emotional problems mother learners experience when attending the teaching and learning process at school.

It is recommended that social workers, clinical psychologists and counsellors be involved in attending to problems related to the psychological and emotional defects experienced by mother learners.

It is recommended that the government in collaboration with Education departments and the community should establish health clinics that are linked to schools. Health clinics must be easily accessible to the school community. It should be on the school premises, close to the schools or transport should be provided if it is not within easy reach of the learners. Social workers should be available at the clinics to support pregnant schoolgirls, schoolgirl mothers and their babies (Maemeko *et al.*, 2018).

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Numerous studies in the previous years had painted a dark picture within the South African educational system that teenage pregnancy and motherhood are conditions which must be ultimately avoided and denounced. The current democratic South African society comes with another analogy which entails that education must be provided to all learners without regard of

their extraneous characteristics such as ages, race, socio-economic status, religious affiliation and medical health. This in short indicates that teenage learners who fall pregnant and even those who have given birth to children during the teaching and learning process are protected by the fundamental human rights to continue developing themselves educationally without being excluded from the main frame of the societal educational system. Few research studies have been conducted in this terrain and as such the researcher encourages other future researchers to concentrate their research studies around the investigation of the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion this chapter offered the most important aspects which resonated from the previous four chapters through answering the research sub-questions. Firstly, that mother learners experience a variety of challenges that become barriers to the teaching and learning process during pregnancy and after they have given birth to children. Teenage mother learners are usually absent from the classroom and school this predisposing them to a backlog as far as the teaching and learning process is concerned. The reasons for increased absenteeism could be due to their health problems and those of their children, regular public clinic visitations, nannies not available and so on. As such, teenage mother learners need a safe, caring and supportive environment at school in order to enable them continue with learning. The school policies and codes should be developed in such a nature that they enhance inclusion of mother learners at the school as well as providing them with the necessary educational support they might require. Secondly, research studies aimed at investigating the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools should combine both the elements of the qualitative research and the quantitative research in single research projects. This will enable researchers to gather large amounts of data capable of explaining the emergence of the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools in detail. This research approach should be supported by different data interpretation and analysis methodologies as well, which belong to qualitative research, namely; qualitative data analysis. Thirdly, the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools can be adequately addressed through the involvement of important role players within the educational system, namely; teachers, parents, learners, health professionals, the school management teams (SMTs) and the Department of Basic Education. Teenage mother

learners can improve their lifestyles as well as enhancing their academic performance once they seek and get care and support from these role players.

Fourthly, teachers can improve the learning among teenage mother learner when they apply different teaching methods within the classroom situation. Group work, classroom discussions, classroom projects and community development projects are found to be the most effective teaching methods which tend to address the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools within the South African educational context. Teenage mother learners are predisposed to an inescapable condition of being occasionally absent from the classroom and school. As a recommendation, these individuals should be encouraged and supported to become actively involved in the catch-up programmes which are aimed at filling the teaching and learning gap cause by their absenteeism at school. Finally, the researcher concludes that the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at secondary schools could be reduced through the professional development of teachers. Teachers should be exposed to relevant knowledge and skills in dealing with teenage mother learners in the classroom environment. Although this does not require teachers to replace health professional around the care and treatment of pregnant and mother learners, teachers can still seek advice from the public health staff such as nurses and medical practitioners in times when mother learners experience health complications whilst attending an education. Teachers could be encouraged and supported to conduct research studies around the investigation of the teaching and learning challenges of mother learners at schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission to conduct research

Ref: 0928331407
Enq: PRINCIPAL
Cell: 079 3721327
0825527530
Email: j.thifulufhelwisecondaryschool@gmail.com



J. Thifulufhelwi Sec. School
P.O. Box 136
Sinthumule
0921
29 August 2017

Dear Madam

Lethole T M (Researcher)

UNISA: COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SUBJECT: GRANTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT: JONATHAN THIFULUFHELWI SECONDARY SCHOOL

1. The matter above refers.
2. Granting, **Lethole T M** permission to conduct a research at our school with the following title: **Challenges of mother learners at secondary schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.**
3. As a school, we deemed it necessary to grant her the permission to do this research as it will also benefit us in the long run. This study will also assist us in the identification of challenges mother learner experience which could hinder their progress/performance.
4. This research will also not disrupt our daily activities of teaching and learning as we will be busy with our revision and examination.
5. We will highly appreciate it that at the end of data collection, feedback is provided.

Yours Faithfully

Mr. Tshivhinda S.E
(Principal)

**JONATHAN THIFULUFHELWI
SECONDARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 136, SINTHUMULE, 0921**

[Signature] 29/08/2017
PRINCIPAL NO. 2 DATE

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Jet Scanner Lite

Appendix B: Permission to conduct research from the District Office



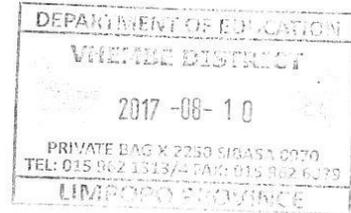
LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT

CONFIDENTIALITY

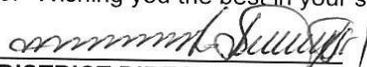
REF: 14/7/R
ENG: MATIBE M.S
TEL: 015 962 1029



LETHOLE T.M
UNISA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CUNDUCT A RESEARCH AT JONATHAN
THIFULUFHELI SECONDARY SCHOOL

1. The above matter refers.
2. You are hereby informed that your request for permission to conduct research on **"Challenges of mother learners at Secondary School in Vhembe District Limpopo Province"** has been granted.
3. You are expected to adhere to research ethical considerations, particularly those relating to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent of your research subjects.
4. Kindly inform circuit manager and School Principals of selected school prior to commencing your data collection.
5. Wishing you the best in your study.


DISTRICT DIRECTOR

2017-08-10
DATE

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH: MALIBOHO T

Tohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

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Appendix C: Request for permission to conduct research at a secondary school

District director Vhembe District

Department of education Contacts: 0824430371

Dear District director Dr Rambiana G

Request for permission to conduct research at Dambuwo Secondary school

I Lethole Tshiwela Maria (Student Number: 0728-812-3) am doing research under supervision of Geesje van den Berg, a Professor and Chair of Department: Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a MEd at the University of South Africa.

The Title of my research is: *Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in the Vhembe district, Limpopo.*

The aim of the study is:

*To determine teaching and learning challenges of mother learners experience by teachers
To determine teaching and learning challenges of mother learners as experienced by them
to determine the effects of teenage motherhood on the teaching –learning process
to suggest ways in which these learners can be better supported to be successful in their school education*

Your school has been selected because of the number of mother learners registered in your school. The study will entail observation, interviews, and document analysis in order to collect data. During observation the researcher will have a checklist of items to be observed. Interviews will be conducted in a structured way. The researcher will have a list of documents which will be analysed and key areas to be analysed will be indicated.

The benefits of this study are:

1. Research participants: They will be able to identify teaching and learning challenges of mother learners.
2. The research will provide opportunity for learners to reflect and understand their

challenges on teaching and learning.

3. The department will have an overview of the challenges of teaching and learning of mother learners.

There is foreseeable risk of inconvenience. Teachers and learners will be preparing for examination as a result they need much time to do revision. Revision will be done concurrently with the research.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

In order to give feedback to participants, a meeting will be scheduled and feedback will be shared with them.

Yours sincerely Lethole T.M

Signature: Lethole T.M) researcher

Appendix D: A letter requesting an adult to participate in an interview

Dear

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study. I, Lethole T.M (STUDENT NUMBER: 0728-812-3) am conducting research as part of my study as a maser's student at the University of South Africa. The title of my research is *Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe, Limpopo*. Permission for the study has been given by the Vhembe District Director to conduct this research. Also, I have obtained ethical clearance from The Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe district Limpopo province in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve teaching and learning.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 15 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data

collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are:

1. Research participants will be able to identify teaching and learning challenges of mother learners.
2. The research will provide opportunity for learners to reflect and understand their challenges on teaching and learning
3. The department will have an overview of the challenges of teaching and learning of mother learners and there are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Lethole Maria on 0722038160 or email letholetm@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for five years.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0722038160 or by e-mail at letholetm@gmail.com.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

Lethole T.M

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature:

Date:

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher Name: (Please print) _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: ____

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet (Learners)

Title: Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe district Limpopo province

Dear prospective participant

1. My name is Lethole Tshiwela Maria (Student Number: 0728-812-3). I am doing research under supervision of Geesje van den Berg, a professor and Chair of Department: Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a MEd at the University of South Africa. We have a UNISA bursary for the logistics of the research. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe district, Limpopo*.

I have permission from the Vhembe District Director to conduct this research.

2. **What is the purpose of the study?** This study is expected to collect important information that could assist in identifying and understanding the challenges of teaching and learning of mother learners.
3. **Why am I being invited to participate?** Because you are a mother learner and you are doing grade 12. I obtained your contact details from Mr Rasikhanya .
4. **What is the nature of my participation in this study?** You will be interviewed via questions. (Enclosed find the questions). The researcher will further conduct analysis of your documents related to teaching and learning e.g. attendance register, progress report etc. Two weeks will be scheduled for observation and record analysis by the researcher. The researcher will have one-hour session for interviews with each participant.
5. **Can I withdraw from this study even after agreed to participate?** Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

6. **What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study:** As a participant you have the opportunity to benefit knowledge. After the research you will be able to identify and understand teaching and learning challenges of mother learners. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning challenges of mother learners.
7. **Are there any negative consequences for me if I participate in the research project?** There will be inconvenience of your time at school due to interview session, and submission of document that I will request for the purpose of analysing. However, at some point you might not feel comfortable as I will request personal document and issues regarding the experience of schooling as a parent. Some questions might appeal to your personal experience which might create discomfort.
8. **Will the information that I convey to the researcher and my identity be kept confidential?** You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher, will know about your involvement in this research or your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Please be informed that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes such as a report, journal articles and conference proceedings. Be aware that a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.
9. **How will the researcher protect the security of data?** Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/ filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer for 5 years. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further research ethics review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programmes
10. **Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?** There will be no payment or reward, financial or otherwise. No cost is anticipated from

the participants and there will be any cost incurred it should be explained and justified.

11. **Has the study receive ethical clearance:** The study has received written approval from the research ethics review committee of the CEDU REC, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish
12. **How will I be informed of the findings /results of the research?:** if you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Lethole T.M on 0722038160 or email letholetm@gmail.com. The same contact details should be used if you will require any further information or want to contact the research about any aspect of this study,
13. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted , you may contact Professor Geesje van den Berg, at 0829219771 /0124294895 or vdberg@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study

Thank you

.....

Signature

Appendix F: Letter requesting assent from learners in a secondary school to participate in a research project

Title of my research: Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe district Limpopo province

Dear

Date _____

I am doing a study on curriculum studies as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your teachers can use to facilitate your lessons better. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study. I would like to interview you about teaching and learning in your content subjects. Answering the questions will take no longer than 15 minutes.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

The benefits of this study are that you will be able to identify teaching and learning challenges of mother learners as well as providing you the opportunity to reflect and understand your challenges on teaching and learning.

You might feel uncomfortable when you are supposed to talk about personal experience of teenage motherhood. That is the only potential risk that you may experience during our research. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or any other adult call me at 0722038160. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered, and when you understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Lethole T.M

Phone number: 0722038160

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

.....

Learner’s name (print): Learner’s signature: Date:

Witness’s name (print) Witness’s signature Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

Parent/guardian’s name (print) Parent/guardian’s signature: Date:

Lethole T.M

Researcher’s name (print) Researcher’s signature: Date:

Appendix G: Parental consent for minors

Dear Parent

Your daughter is invited to participate in a study entitled: Challenges of mother learners at secondary school in Vhembe district Limpopo province.

I am undertaking this study as part of my master's research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to investigate the challenges of teaching and learning which are experienced by teenage mother learners and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of teaching and learning practices. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because she has a baby and she is doing grade 12. I expect to have four other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request her to:

1. Take part in an interview (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
I will have meeting with her to explain the procedure, the purpose of the study, the nature of her participation, the potential benefits and why she is invited.
2. Questioned for interview will be scheduled and during interview your daughter will be audio recorded.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. Her responses will not be linked to her name of your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are:

1. Your daughter will be able to identify teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners.

2. The research will provide opportunity for her to reflect and understand their challenges on teaching and learning.
3. The department will have an overview of the challenges of teaching and learning of mother learners.

Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the consent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased. The benefits of the study are:

1. Your daughter will be able to identify teaching and learning challenges of mother learners.
2. The research will provide opportunity for your daughter to reflect and understand their challenges on teaching and learning.
3. The department will have an overview of the challenges of teaching and learning of mother learners.
4. Potential risks are that your daughter might feel uncomfortable to talk about personal issues concerning pregnancy and how it is affecting her performance at school. I will do everything I can to protect her and will not make her feel uncomfortable. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. If you have questions about these studies please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof Geesje van den Berg, Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 0722038160 and my e-mail is

lethoetm@gmail.com . The e-mail of my supervisor is vdberg@unisa.ac.za.
Permission for the study has already been given by the Department of Education and
the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature
below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow
her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

.....

Parent/Guardian's name (Print) Parent/Guardian's signature Date

.....

Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature Date

Appendix H: Interview schedule for teachers

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gender: Male Female:

Name of the school:

Qualifications

Teaching experienceyears

Subject(s) taught:

.....

Grades:

1. Do you have a programme of counselling mother learners immediately upon realization that she is pregnant or after the mother learner gave birth?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

2. Do you experience challenges of class attendance by mother learners?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

3. Do you have provision in the form of policy on how you will assist mother learners to catch up the work which was done in their absence?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

4. In your practice of teaching do you see mother learners as active agents in learning?

Explain

.....
.....

5. CAPS has the kind of teacher that is envisaged embedded in its policy and is reflected as roles of educators in South African schools Act. Do you see yourself as an envisaged teacher?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

6. Do you make lesson preparation where you indicate the content and how it will be conveyed to your learners?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

7. Do you engage your mother learners in discussion, role play, experiments, practical work, assignment and drama?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

8. Do you start your lessons from known to complex interacting familiar with unfamiliar?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

9. Do you let your mother learners reflect and compare after they have discovered and construct meaning from learning?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

10. Language is a tool to learn and communicate globally and do you encourage your mother learners to communicate with you, with peers, through reading and writing?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

11. CAPS curriculum envisaged on learners who should be able to reflect and think critically, do you share the same vision?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

12. Do you experience any other form of challenges when teaching mother learners?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

Appendix I: Interview schedule for Grade 12 mother learners

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Name of the school:.....

How many children do you have?

.....
.....

1. Does the father play a role in the child's life?

Explain

.....
.....

2. Do you have a sound relationship with the father of the child?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

3. How was the response from your parents when they realised that you were pregnant?

Explain

.....
.....

4. How was the response from your friends when they realized that you were pregnant?

Explain

.....
.....

5. Are family members supportive in rearing the child and how ?

Yes No

Explain

.....
.....

6. Is rearing a child affecting your studies?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

7. When you are in class, are you actively involved in learning activities?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

8. Are you given opportunities to view your perception based on the topic?

Yes No

Explain

.....
.....

9. Do your teachers engage you in discussion, role play, experiments and assignments?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

10. Do you enjoy doing projects with your friends?

YES NO

Explain

.....
.....

Thank you for participating

Appendix J: Document analysis: documents and data to be analysed

Documents selected	Data to be analysed
Learners school attendance register	To check their school attendance
Learners period attendance register	To check how frequently they miss a period.
Subject policy documents	To identify the specification of formal and informal activities as well as the main specific outcome for each section.
Question paper of previous written tests and class wok. standardised and informal	To compare the standard of questioning between standardised (common) and informal (school based)
Schedule of previous terms	To compare learners' performance
School reports of participants	To analyse participants' academic performance
Subject pace setter	To view the concept of the content subject
Teachers' preparation	To assess the presentation as per the principles of constructivism and seven roles of educators

Appendix K: Non-participant observation sheet

Item to be observed		
Relationship	Caring	Teaching and learning
<p>☐ Does the school have policy on admission of mother learners.</p> <p>☐ What is the attitude of teachers towards mother learners.</p>	<p>☐ Does the school have a counselling committee for mother learners.</p>	<p>1. Does the school have policy on catch up programme for mother learners.</p> <p>2. Does the school have support programme to assist mother learners with school work.</p> <p>3. In case mother learners missed the class due to the problems related to their children, does the school make provision of assistance to mother learners.</p>
<p>☐ The manner in which knowledge is conveyed will be observed.</p>		<p>4. To conform the application of constructivist principles.</p>
<p>5. Observations will be done twice. Observations will be done over two weeks and classes of participants will be visited for two period.</p>		

Appendix L: Proof of editing letter

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

Tshiwela Maria Lethole

**The teaching and learning challenges of teenage mother learners at secondary schools in
Vhembe, Limpopo**

MASTER'S IN EDUCATION

in

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STUDIES

University of South Africa

Supervisor: Professor Geesje van den Berg

Cilla Dowse

10.01.2020

Cilla Dowse	Rosedale Farm
PhD in Assessment and Quality Assurance Education and Training, University of Pretoria 2014	P.O. Box 48 Van Reenen
Programme on Editing Principles and Practices: University of Pretoria 2009	Free State cilla.dowse@gmail.com Cell: 084 900 7837

Appendix M: Ethical clearance certificate

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/11/15

Dear Ms Lethole

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2017/11/15 to 2020/11/15

Ref: **2017/11/15/07288123/48/MC**

Name: Ms TM Lethole

Student: 07288123

Researcher:

Name: Ms TM Lethole

Email: letholetm@gmail.com

Telephone: +27 72 203 8160

Supervisor:

Name: Prof G van den Berg

Email: Grootbnp@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: +27 12 429 4895

Title of research:

Curriculum challenges of mother learners at a secondary school in the Vhembe district in Limpopo

Qualification: M Ed in Curriculum Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/11/15 to 2020/11/15.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/10/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2020/10/18. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2017/11/15/07288123/48/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
 mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
UNISA
College of Education

2017 -11- 22

Office of the Executive Dean

University of South Africa
 Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
 PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
 Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
 www.unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

