Teenage Pregnancy in South African Schools: from vulnerability to empowerment

MOTHIBE MARTHA MOTLALEPULE

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DECLARATION: LANGUAGE EDITING of Masters in Educational Psychology

I hereby declare that I have edited the Masters in Educational Psychology dissertation of Ms Motlailepule Mothibe and found the written work to be free of ambiguity and obvious errors.

Khomotso Bopape

Member of the Professional Editors’ Group

Address: P.O. Box 40208, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0083
Tel No.: 012 753 3670, Fax No.: 086 267 2164 and Email Address: khomotso@letsedit.co.za
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SUMMARY

One of the most serious phenomena plaguing families and societies worldwide is teenage pregnancy. In South Africa teenage mothers are permitted to return to schools after giving birth however, not much is done to support these mothers in order to ensure that they are not psychosocially vulnerable and not drop out of school due to possible stress, frustration and lack of scholastic progress. This is where this study is located.

This was a qualitative study that used symbolic drawings accompanied by short descriptive narratives and individual, semi-structured interviews as data collection methods.

The study involved 10 teenage mothers who had been re-admitted to schools after giving birth. The participants were aged 15 and 16 and in grades 9 and 10. The findings show that teenage mothers enjoyed family support, had dreams for the future, were anchored in religion and spirituality, had determination and that they had abilities to learn from mistakes.

I could not locate a study that had focused on the typical vulnerabilities and empowerment of teenage mothers. Therefore, this study provides useful insight into the factors that are known to render young girls vulnerable to teenage pregnancy and the resultant motherhood and the personal and ecological processes that combine in complex ways in order to enable young mothers to cope resiliently. The findings add to theory and have implications for practice.

Key words: Resilience; Vulnerability; Risks; Protective Resources; Positive Psychology; Teenage Pregnancy
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Mrs Pakiso Jeanette and Mr David Mothibe who instilled the love of education and hard work in me. My mother inspired and motivated me in so many ways.