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Haipinge, Rauha

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

RESEARCH TOPIC: **Investigating the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers: A phenomenological study of three schools in Okalongo Circuit, Omusati Region, Namibia**

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Date of Submission: **March 2022**

DEDICATION

This research is in memory of my late father, Immanuel Mukanga Mbalili, and my mother, Naemi Ndahambelela Mateus. It is also dedicated to the late Maria Tweenikumwe Konghola, a woman who inspired me. This study is also dedicated to my daughters, Ottilie Ndapandula and Kristina Shange-elao Haipinge, as an inspiration in our lives.

DECLARATION

I declare that the study *Investigating the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, a phenomenological study of three schools in Okalongo circuit, Omusati region, Namibia* is my own work, and it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University. According to Wits School of Education guidelines, all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references.



_____ 28 March 2022

Rauha Haipinge Date

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As G. K. Chesterton once said, *"I owe my success to having listened respectfully to the very best advice…"* And Carrel Alexis said, "*All of us, at certain moments of our lives, need to take advice and to receive help from other people*" (Singh, 2006, pp. 15-16). Thus, first and foremost, I thank the almighty God, my Creator, for his blessings and for allowing me to pursue my PhD in Education. He made it possible for me to get this far.

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ABSTRACT

This study assumes that education is a human rights obligation because it is the means by which people pass on their accumulated knowledge, skills, customs, and values from one generation to the next (Churr, 2015). Education also empowers people all over the world with the ability to live in dignity (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2001). However, in Africa, as in the rest of the world, the schooling of teenage pregnant or teenage mothers has been widely debated and condemned. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in the Okalongo circuit in Omusati region of Namibia to understand the motivation behind their success to remain in school, despite the high rate of teenage mothers dropping out of school. This was a qualitative phenomenological study. I conducted in-depths individual interviews, focus group discussions and reflective journals with 16 teenage school-going mothers between the ages of 17-20, purposively selected from three different public rural schools in the Okalongo circuit in Omusati region, Namibia. The study used an interpretive paradigm that provides insight into the complex world of lived experiences from the perspective of those who lived or experienced it (Flick, 2006). A paradigm represents a worldview that informs the researcher about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and how the researcher learns what she wants to learn (methodology) (Kuhn, 1977, Creswell, 1998, Guba, 1990). Audio-recorded transcripts were transcribed, translated, coded and analysed used thematic analysis by identifying themes and patterns and organising them into coherent categories with sub-categories. The study of teenage mothers in particular is complex, and because women are not a homogeneous group, they cannot be understood solely through a hegemonic or universalising feminist lens (Chiponda, 2014). Thus, the theoretical framework of this study was informed by liberal, radical, Marxism, socialism, black, and African feminism, which aided in understanding and analysing data from a feminist perspective. The multiple identities of teenage mothers were also considered. As a result, the intersectionality theory was deployed in this exercise. The main findings of this study demonstrate that teenage school-going mothers choose to stay in school and continue their education not because they have full support from their school, home, or community, but because of their resilience and desire to provide a better future for their children. Despite exhibiting resilient characteristics, this study concludes that teenage mothers continue to face discrimination and victimisation at home, school, and in the

community. Discrimination, name-calling, stereotypes, and stigma were identified as risk factors for teenage mothers' dropout. Teenage mothers have expressed feelings of powerlessness and loneliness as society continues to 'other' and discriminate against them. Gender expectations, culture, and patriarchal beliefs have also been identified as major contributors to the exclusion of teenage mothers from the educational system. Despite the challenges, the young mothers developed into complex, loving, and supportive women (Burciaga, 2019). This thesis is expected to contribute, in a small but significant way, to African feminism, specifically Namibian feminist theory, teenage motherhood studies, and narrative and educational literature, within the ranges of the six feminist theorists. The study adds to existing knowledge and recognises the uniqueness of teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences of schooling and motherhood in the Okalongo circuit, Namibia. Furthermore, because their decision to stay in school has challenged some Ovambadja socio-cultural discourses about teenage mothers, this study contributes significantly to teenage mothers' and feminist research in the Ovambadja community (a previously marginalised community by other Ovawambo communities). It continues the legacy of liberalism, radicalism, Marxism, socialism, black and African feminism, which began in the 16th century to fight for women's rights, which are still being violated today.

Finally, the challenges faced by mother-learners in schools remain unsolved due to misalignment between progressive policy, cultural norms, and social behaviours. Equity and non-discrimination at the level of these young women's and others' lives in Namibia appear unresolved.

ACRONYMS

BWOA - Black Women Organisation for Action

CRC - Committee on the Rights of the Child

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African State

FAWENA - Forum for women Educationalists in Namibia

FGDE - Focus Group Discussion Etale

FGDT - Focus Group Discussion Tango

FGDO - Focus Group Discussion Omwedi

FHH - Female Headed Family

GBV – Gender Based Violence

GEEI - Gender Equality in Education Index

GRN - Government Republic of Namibia

HIV/AIDS - Human Immune Deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

IIE -Individual Interview Etale

IIT - Individual Interview Tango

IIO - Individual Interview Omwedi

KZN - KwaZulu- Natal

LAC - Legal Assistance Centre

MoE - Ministry of Education

MoEAC - Ministry of Education Arts and Culture

MoEC - Ministry of Education and Culture

MGECW - Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

MoHSS – Ministry of Health and Social Services

NBFO - National Black Feminist Organisation

NHRI – National Human Rights Institution

NIED - National Institute for Educational Development

NWP - National Women's Party

RJ - Reflective Journal

RJE - Reflective Journal Etale CS

RJO - Reflective Journal Omwedi CS

RJT - Reflective Journal Tango CS

SSA - sub-Saharan Africa

SADC – Southern African Development Community

TPP - Teenage Pregnancy Policy

UNAIDS - United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCRC - United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNFPA - United Nation Population Fund

UNICEF - United Nations Children Fund

UN - United Nations

USA - United States of America

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WHO - World Health Organisation

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Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

1.1 Introduction

The motivation for this study arose from the personal observation I made on the issue of the teenage school-going mothers in the Okalongo circuit in the Omusati region, Namibia. At the beginning of each academic year every school in Namibia has to submit its enrolment statistics to the circuit. This exercise is repeated again at the end of each term. During the 2016/2017 and during the 2021 academic year it was observed that enrolment was always decreasing, as some learners dropped out of schools for various reasons. On inquiry, I found out that most of the dropouts were teenage mothers/mother-learners (as some were over 18 years old). However, even though the majority of the teenage mothers dropped out of school, there were some who decided to remain in school. Our school was no exception to this problem. This prompted me to look into the matter further, to investigate the lived experiences of the teenage school-going mothers who remained in school, especially identifying the enabling and constraining factors they experienced as they continue with their education. A number of researchers (David, Van Dyk & Ashipala, 2017; Andima & Tjiramanga, 2014; Wekesa, 2010) who have studied topics related to this study have expressed similar concerns as is explained later in the study.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the study and its context, in which 16 teenage school-going mothers from three selected rural schools at Okalongo circuit took part. In the first section of the introduction, I explain why I chose to conduct this research. It is followed by background to the problem and the study's context. In addition, I discuss the international, national, and regional trends concerning teenage pregnancy and motherhood. Furthermore, this chapter includes a discussion on the problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. The study's rationale and limitations are highlighted, and the chapter concludes with a study synopsis. The background to the problem is discussed in the ensuing section.

1.2 Background to the problem

The phenomenon under investigation, that is, teenage pregnancies and teenage motherhood, has become a global concern, affecting the educational opportunities of millions of young girls worldwide (Wado, Sully & Mumah, 2019; WHO, 2014). This

concern has exacerbated already-existing issues of gender inequality in education, which have grown over time. According to Niilenge (2008), there are numerous cases of teenage girls being discriminated against and stereotyped in schools as a result of teenage pregnancy, tradition, culture, and political circumstances. These are prominent in many African narratives, and there is growing interest in the mediation of gender relations in contemporary African literature in general (Andima & Tjiramanga, 2014).

Gender inequality in education

When it comes to gender-related issues and concerns, Namibia is no exception. Namibia's rich history and culture are told from pre-colonial times to the arrival of missionaries and traders, colonial and liberation struggles, and post-independence day celebrations (Rhode, 2003). Girls' or women's education in Namibia has a history, as it progressed from informal to formal education. Formal education, which was not compulsory in Namibia, was introduced by various missionary societies, such as the London Missionary Society that came into Namibia as early as 1806 (Buys & Nambala, 2003). Because the goal was to further the interests of the colonial power, it was an education that could not help the Namibian people develop ideas of democracy, equality, and self-reliance (Kasanda & Shaimemanya, 1998). This means that prior to independence in 1990, education for black Namibians was intended to provide them with basic literacy and numeracy skills in order to prepare a few, primarily males, for clerical jobs in the colonial government structure, rather than to help them stand on their own (Mwetulundila, 2002).

The need for literacy skills

Moreover, in order to establish Christian communities, black Namibians needed to be taught to read and write. Despite the fact that missionaries introduced education to the Namibian people, it was marked by gender inequality, as men and women were not taught the same content and were taught in separate schools (e.g., girls' schools and boys' schools) (Buys & Nambala, 2003). Cohen (1994) confirms that the missionary institutions' education for women was limited to homemaking skills and religious education. As a result, only a few women learned to read and write, and women's education lagged further behind that of men's. This lack of education can be traced back to Namibian culture, where girls and boys were assigned different roles. Girls were assigned to the home and childcare, while boys were assigned to care for the cattle,

work in the fields, and to provide for the women (Haipinge, 2013; Anderson & Taylor, 2009; Chakarova, 2003).

Namibia was under the German colony which had governed it for 31 years. In the German colonial education system, indigenous people were given "well-calculated limited skills" to ensure that they remained manual workers who could provide cheap labour to the Germans (Tjitendero, 1984, p.3). In addition, Tjitendero (1984) asserts that the German colonial government paid no attention to the establishment of adequate schools for the black population, rather the reserves (black 'states/homelands) were established for indigenous people.

After the German rule in Namibia South Africa was granted administrative mandate to administer Namibian affairs under a class C mandate. The class C mandate was designed to protect indigenous peoples' rights and interests (Udogu, 2011; O'Linn, 2003). This, however, was not the case; instead, the South African regime introduced the Bantu Education System Act of 1953 to the Namibian people. There were more "reserves (Bantustans or homelands) established" (Tjitendero, 1984, p.7). This exacerbated the disparity between the colonisers and the colonised.

Segregation and apartheid polies

The South African government promoted segregation and, later, apartheid policies in order to "reduce threats to white supremacy in both South Africa and Namibia" (Tjitendero, 1984:7). During the apartheid era, the South African government supported the general principle of black and white territorial segregation. This system was described as unfair and discriminatory, and it served the colonial powers' interests by providing a semi-literate black workforce for their labour market (Legal Assistance Centre, [LAC] 2017; Kasanda & Shaimemanya, 1998). The trend continued unabated during apartheid rule, when education was provided along racial, gender, and ethnic lines. Both Bantu education and the missionary system were described as aiming to "civilize the natives" because instead of educating them for self-sufficiency it changed their customs and values (South West Africa Survey, 1967, p. 2).

When Namibia gained independence in 1990, the new government inherited an education system that was riddled with difficulties such as separate systems run along

racial, ethnic, and gender lines, with under and non-qualified teachers (LAC, 2017). To begin, it needed to reform the entire country's education system in order to make it open and equal to all races. Second, it had to address and correct visible and invisible patterns of gender differentiation, as well as merge 11 local educational authorities into one (Ministry of Education and Culture [MoEC], 1992).

Post-colonial educational reforms

Against this background, Namibia has made remarkable progress in implementing the new education system with the aim of providing education for all since its independence in 1990 (Kandumbu, 2005). In the new education system, a child in Namibia is expected to start primary school at the age of six and complete the first phase (Pre-primary- Grade 7) by the age of 13. The Junior Secondary Phase (Grades 8-10) starts at the age of 14 and ends at the age of 16, while the Senior Secondary Phase (Grades 11- 12) starts at the age of 17 and ends at the age of 18. Furthermore, Namibia has a three-term system. Term one runs from January to mid-April, term two from mid-May to early August, and term three from early September to early December. At the end of each term, learners take a series of examinations known as the April tests (term 1), August exams (term 2), and November/December exams (term 3).

In a new government, policy reform, institutional restructuring, and consistent budgetary contributions from the government and donors have resulted in significantly increased access to education (Kandumbu, 2005). Despite the fact that new physical facilities are still being built albeit at a slower rate than is demanded, the total number of learners has increased from 382 443 in 1990 to 804 079 in 2020 (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture [MoEAC], 2020).

Education for all policy

The Namibian government's Education for All policy is a commitment to the global United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) priority. UNICEF sees girls' education as a gateway to achieving Education for All, as well as a vehicle for increasing access to, and improving the quality of education for all children. A good basic education is not only a right in and of itself, but it is also essential for the fulfilment of many other rights of the child and future generations of children (UNICEF, 2001). One of the challenges that the new government has faced is ensuring that Namibian girls, like boys, have equal

opportunities to develop their potential and contribute to the country's national development, because previously girls were under-represented in some fields of study such as Science and Economics (LAC, 2017, p. 250).

Apart from the challenge of teenage pregnancy impeding teenage girls' educational achievements, the effect of opportunity cost has also influenced culture to sabotage girls' education (Kenton, 2019). According to Sasman (2012), opportunity cost refers to the services that girls provide in a family including fetching water and firewood, as well as caring for younger siblings, among many others. Because of the implication of opportunity costs, girls who decided to go to school, forfeit their responsibilities at home and in the family because they devote their time to school activities. As a result, the responsibilities of families and communities play a significant role in girls' inability to stay in school (Musese, 2018; Mwetulundila, 2002).

Despite the government's efforts to reverse the colonial legacy of under-representation of black Namibian women in the education system, girls' education in Namibia, and particularly for teenage mothers, is underdeveloped. According to Sasman (2012), the Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI) conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in 2009 revealed that education is still unequal for girls in Namibia. GEEI, a global metric used to assess whether, and to what extent gender equality is achieved. This tool assesses girls' primary school attendance, completion of the five years of schooling, secondary school enrolment, and levels of gender inequality that girls will face in their future lives.

According to the Namibian assessment, while more girls than boys attend primary school, more boys attend secondary school. This situation obtains because many girls drop out of primary school before reaching secondary school. The reasons given for the high rate of female dropout include a high number of teenage pregnancies, harmful cultural attitudes and practices, such as early marriages, and gender stereotypes in schools and communities (Sasman, 2012 p. 2). Sexual violence and abuse also have an impact on the girls' ability to stay and finish school (Musese, 2018; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007). Other reasons why girls drop out of school earlier than boys include the fact that girls generally have more responsibilities at home, which have a negative impact on their school and motherhood responsibilities (Musese, 2018).

According to Aikman and Unterhalter (2007), some African countries such as Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa, currently have GEEI scores of more than 60%. This is a significant accomplishment, but the Beyond Access project estimates that a GEEI score of 95% would indicate that the Millennium Development Goals for universal primary education and gender equality would have been met. Even the highest-scoring African countries will need to maintain their efforts over the next ten years if they are to reach 95%.

Another group of countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, and Ghana, has a GEEI score of less than 60% but have seen a steady increase in GEEI over the last ten years (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007, p. 92). The GEEI rate of progress in gender parity indicates that an equal number of boys and girls in education will not be achieved until 2038 (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2007, p. 91) unless African governments work very hard to eliminate all gender disparities that impede equal participation in education for both boys and girls. In comparison to these rates, Dube (2015) asserts that, while the ratio of girls to boys completing primary or junior secondary school has shifted in various ways across countries, girls continue to be disadvantaged. He confirms that boys continue to outnumber girls in terms of educational enrolment and attainment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ensuring basic female education in Namibia has been identified as a critical factor in the nation's development and is part of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Education Vision 2030, (SDG4). By the year 2030, SDG4 and its corresponding targets aim to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations [UN], 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Furthermore, SDG4 under Education Vision 2030 envisions Namibia evolving from a literate society to a knowledge-based society, one in which knowledge is constantly acquired and renewed, and used for innovation to improve the quality of life. A knowledge-based society necessitates the presence of people who are healthy, well-educated, skilled, proactive, and possess a wide range of abilities. As a result, education for girls is critical to achieving SDG4 because it allows teenage mothers to stay in school and gain the skills required to transform Namibia into a knowledge-based society (UN, 2015; MoE, 2012).

Religion, politics, and socio-cultural activities have all had an impact on girls' education, as evidenced by the background presented above. The gaps which were created by past socio-economic, political and cultural inequalities has a history as far back as from 1806 and they are still in existence in the Namibian society (Ministry of gender Equality and Child Welfare [MGECW], 2010). This indicates that the struggle for women's education with and without children has been fraught with difficulties all along. Thus, religion, politics and socio-cultural beliefs are arguably the root causes of teenage mothers' ongoing oppression and discrimination, which a source of concern in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hailombe, 2011).

To ensure gender equality and the full participation of teenage mothers in education, it is critical that the government and society not only look at the number of teenage mothers enrolled in schools, but also that the government and society create an educational and social environment that encourages teenage mothers to stay in school. In addition to enacting policies and measures that specifically benefit girls, the government must actively address gender relations that influence girls' school attendance and performance. Traditional practices and attitudes, gender-based violence, girls' workloads, and teenage pregnancy are just but a few of the issues that have been identified as problematic in the education development of women in Namibia (Dube, 2015; Mwetulundila, 2002).

It is against this background that this study explores the lived experiences of teenage mothers in order to identify and understand their needs and the barriers that prevent them from fully participating in their education. As I assume, the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers who took part in this study are inextricably linked to and cannot be separated from their social context. As I argue further below, all interpretations of their lived experiences must be grounded in their socio-historical phenomenological and cultural context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

1.3 Context of the study

In order to provide a broad picture of the study's location, I present a brief historical and cultural description of Okalongo, specifically of the ‘Ovambadja’. This section situates the participants and provides a framework for understanding the social and

cultural practices by which the study's teenage school-going mothers make sense of their lives as mothers and learners.

By presenting some of the social and cultural context surrounding motherhood and education, I hope to establish that society and culture have influenced beliefs and perspectives on how teenage motherhood is viewed and positioned in societies. Furthermore, this research is grounded in the feminist theory, and is based on the idea that reality and knowledge are socially constructed (Guba, 1990; Kuhn, 1977). According to Shahadah (2011), the ongoing construction of teenage motherhood as a social problem is not only prevalent in Namibia, but a global phenomenon. It is clear from literature that young women under the age of 18 have children, and this is a cultural issue in Namibia and throughout Africa (Musese, 2018). Teenage motherhood, as is the norm, is never completely divorced from its original construction as an indicator of a failure to adhere to social, religious, and moral values. It is regarded as a cultural issue because children born to teenagers are regarded as 'illegitimate' because they are born out of wedlock, without the support of both parents, and with only the mother caring for them (Hacking, 1999; Jonas & Gunda, 2015).

The issue of pregnancy among unmarried women (let alone teenagers) is of concern in the community of the Ovawambo[1]. It is regarded as something forbidden, unacceptable and condemned by the community. In the history of the Ovawambo, even though this punishment is no longer prevalent, it is worth noting that unmarried women who engaged in sex and fell pregnant in the past were severely punished.

Our forefathers believed that it was a violation of traditional values and the norms of the community if unmarried people engaged in sex (Iimene, 2015). Therefore, in the historical context of the Ovawambo a severe penalty was the norm, namely, girls who fell pregnant were covered with grass and set alight to perish (Iimene, 2015). The reason given for such severe punitive measures was to prevent the high occurrence of teenage

[1] Ovawambo is the dominant ethnic group in Namibia. It consists of eight different tribes/traditional authorities. These are: Kwanyama, Ndonga, Kwambi, Mbalantu, Mbandja, Kwaluudhi, Kolongadhi and Ngadjera. These tribes speak different dialects but they understand each other very well. Most of their cultural ethics and values are the same.

pregnancy in society, and it was an attempt to eliminate irresponsible and unauthorised sexual conduct among the girls. Such punishment was believed to promote self-control among girls, and to maintain morals, norms and values in the community (Iimene, 2015).

As Iimene (2015) puts it, people were convinced that early pregnancy was wrong in the sight of the invisible Supreme Being known as 'Kalunga kaNangobe[2]', the provider of rain, blessings and good luck to obedient people, and bad luck to delinquents and deviants. It was believed that without morals, norms and values there would be chaos. Therefore, people believed that morals guide people to do right and good things for their own sake, and for the sake of their society (Mbiti, 1991). The punishment that I have alluded to earlier was only directed at girls, but not to boys who impregnated the girls, even though they were all involved in the same sexual activity. The whole exercise exemplifies social injustice towards women. The people who imposed such unjust laws against pregnant unmarried women were men (Iimene, 2015). Ambunda and de Klerk (2008), for example, claim that the origin of patriarchy in Namibia, especially in the context of the Ovawambo culture and the establishment of male superiority, are traceable to different influences and forces, such as social, cultural and religious practices, with each perspective emphasising different causes and forces.

Okalongo Circuit Profile

This study was conducted in the Okalongo constituency where Okalongo circuit (the research site) is situated. Okalongo circuit is one of 14 circuits in the Omusati region. The circuit is named after the constituency which is the Okalongo under the Ombadja Traditional Authority. It is one of the eight Ovawambo traditional authorities and is situated in the northern part of Namibia. There are about 33 973 inhabitants in Okalongo constituency of which more than half of 18, 888, equal to 55, 6% are women (Annual Report, 2020).

[2] Before Christianity Ovawambo believed in "Kalunga kaNangombe" the traditional name for the Divine before the arrival of Christianity. The name means Kalunga (God) and Nangombe is Kalunga's surname. With the arrival of Christianity the missionaries shortened the name to "Kalunga" (God) only.

The site is well known for its multicultural ethnic groups. Even though it is multicultural, the community that inhabits Okalongo is predominantly Ovambadja, and they originated from the Ombadja area in Southern Angola (Haipinge, 2013) as indicated in the map below.

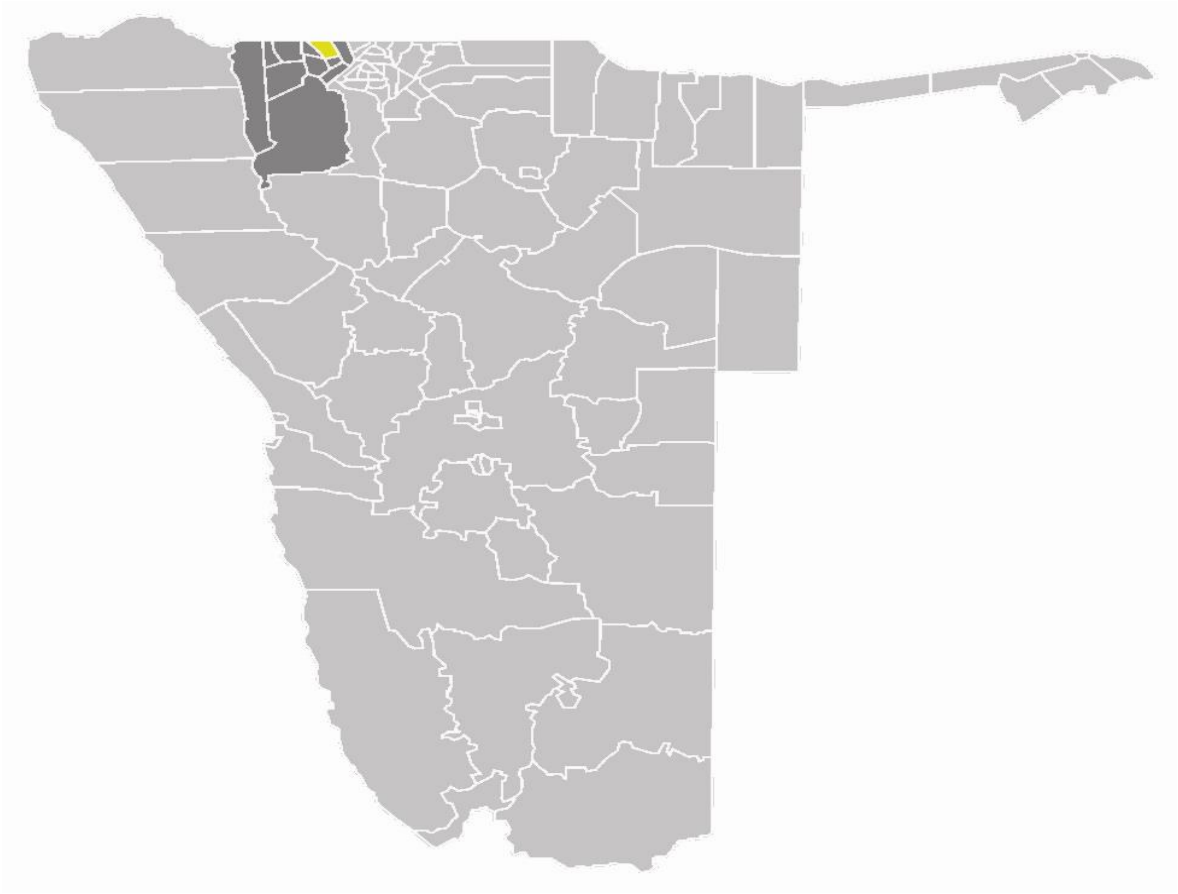


Figure1.1: Map of Namibia showing the location of Okalongo in yellow

Okalongo is rural, with at least 93% of households depending on wood as their main fuel for cooking and 82% of households without toilet facilities. The unemployment rate in this constituency is 47% (Steytler, 2014-Namibia statistics agency). Most of the houses in the area are mud houses (Steytler, 2014). The huts are usually arranged as a compound, with several of them belonging to a single family.

The effects of patriarchy

Okalongo is a patriarchal community, in which males are more dominant when it comes to the distribution of power between men and women (Haipinge, 2013; Anyolo, 2008). In addition, this community practices widow inheritance and emphasises polygamy

(Anyolo, 2008). It is also common among the Ovambadja to find a man having more than 30 children since some have more than one wife. Some have as many as five wives.

However, even though Okalongo is a patriarchal society more than half (61%) of the households in this area are headed by females (Steytler, 2014) in comparison to 39% of male headed families. According to Links (2018), Chisale (2017), and Folbre (2012), female headed households (FHHs) in patriarchal societies are rapidly increasing around the world, including Namibia, with 44% of female headed households caused by divorce, widowhood, and violence against women.

The effects of Christianity

The rising trend of FHHs in patriarchal societies can be explained by rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, Christianity, and socio-economic changes, all of which affect not only the family system and inter-generational social mobility, but also disrupts family relationships and increases family breakdowns. For example, if a man has five wives, four of them must leave their polygamous house and establish their own homes. Thus, many of the females leave their polygamous relationships and become Christians. In addition, females in 'Female-headed' households in a patriarchal culture are not valued as "heads", because culturally the man is expected to be the head in every family system (LAC, 2017, p. 250). This process of family change raises the rates of FHHs in patriarchal societies all over the world, (LAC, 2017); the Okalongo being no exception.

As with many African communities, sexual matters are taboo in this community. Wojcicki (2017), for example, asserts that sex in some communities cannot be discussed with children or in public. As a result, young girls are vulnerable in terms of not knowing how to deal with boys who demand sex at a young age. They are often totally unprepared and lack the skills to deal with teenage pregnancies. As a result of the silence on sexual matters, girls are totally unprepared to handle pregnancy. They are immature, physically and when they do become pregnant they have to undergo major physical and psychological adjustments, which could lead to emotional and psychological problems in their lives (Ambunda & de Klerk, 2008).

In this community, as with other African cultures in general, girls do not learn about menstruation until it occurs (Talavera, 2007). Girls grow up without the knowledge of what is expected of them, and those who do practise sex at a young age become pregnant without any real knowledge of what they are doing. Lack of information regarding sexuality in the Ovambadja community can also make girls feel shy and embarrassed once they become pregnant. It is more than simply an embarrassment, because early pregnancy is associated with shame and immoral behaviour, and is therefore kept as a secret for as long as possible (Anyolo, 2008).

Initiation/Olufuko

Another important cultural practice very common to this community is the practice of O*lufuko*. This is an initiation ceremony whereby the girls between the ages of 10 -18 years old are introduced to womanhood, and those undergo it uphold the honour and respect for themselves and their parents. Thus, if an initiated girl becomes pregnant, she is not entitled to social rebuke and her child is not regarded as an illegitimate child even though she is not married. Because initiation and marriage in Ovambadja community symbolise purity and legitimate. The same practices are common among other African communities. Amongst the amaZulu in South Africa, the initiation is called *Umemulo*, and in Kenya, among Somalis, it is called *Dhahara* (Mwashekele, Akuupa; Kautondokwa & Kuopala, 2017). In these countries the initiation aims at letting the parents celebrate the rite of passage of their young girls from childhood to womanhood, as well as upholding the honour and respect for themselves and their parents, by not becoming pregnant before being initiated. Any girl who goes through this ceremony and becomes pregnant is considered a mature woman who can marry at any time, regardless of the man's age. If a girl does not go through this ritual, she is considered promiscuous, shameful, and an embarrassment to her family and community if she becomes pregnant, because she did not follow the traditional values and norms of being initiated first. It is acceptable to this community to get pregnant once you are initiated even though you are unmarried.

Marital relationship

Marriage proposals or arranged marriages among girls who have undergone this ceremony are common in this community, with older men being the most interested partners. Girls can marry men who are as old as their fathers, as long as the man can

pay *lobola*. *Olufuko* is associated with polygamy. This is why it is common to see men with three to five wives and the majority of those wives are young girls who have undergone *Olufuko*. On the one hand, women have no choice but to accept this arrangement. While on the other hand, it shows that the power dynamic of decision making is in the hands of the men. Women are considered dependents and are thus expected to follow the men's decisions and directions (Ambunda & de Klerk, 2008). This indicates that the majority of cultural practices in this community promote patriarchy and it benefits men more than women (Mwashekele et al., 2017).

In this community, 87% of parents are literate (Steytler, 2014), but they prioritise their cultural practices over the value of education. If a girl has been initiated through *Olufuko*, it is very common to find parents who never send their children back to school because of pregnancy or early marriage. In this community, staying at home, getting married, caring for livestock, and ploughing the fields are regarded as more important than attending school (Haipinge, 2013). As a result, despite the fact that there is access to education through the ubiquitous availability of schools in the area, many teenage girls drop out for a variety of reasons, including teenage pregnancy, long distances, arranged marriage, and misbehaviour.



Figure 1.2: A photo showing girls initiated in *Olufuko* in Outapi during Olufuko Cultural Festival in 2017 (Source: Outapi Town Council magazine)

School-going age

It is important to highlight that the children in this community start school sometimes very late. It is revealed in this study that the participants' age and current grades are the polar opposite of what is expected in the curriculum. Most of the participants are not in the same grade as the system requires. This community has roots in Southern Angola, and the majority of the learners commute across the borders every day. They walk up to 30 kilometres per day (15 km going and 15 km coming back). Because of the long distances, some parents refuse to allow their children to begin school at the age of six, as required by the education policy. This means that children sometimes start school at a very late age; a child in grade one can be as old as ten when they start school. Thus,

when comparing the primary and secondary structures (cf.[3] 1.2), and the reality on the ground it is clear that the majority of the participants are not in the age group defined by the ministerial guidelines.

Therefore, introducing a re-entry policy after a girl learner becomes pregnant (cf. 2.9) in a community rooted in patriarchal tradition and cultural practice has consequences and challenges for pregnant teenagers and school-going mothers they return to school.

This contextual profile locates the 16 teenage school-going mothers who took part in the study and provides an insight into the broad context from which they make sense of their lived experiences. To understand the phenomenon under study further, I present some of the international and national trends on teenage motherhood and pregnancy in the next section.

1.4 International, national and regional trends around the phenomenon

This study has been informed by my own experience of the phenomenon indicated earlier (cf. 1.1). It has also been informed by the rapid increase in the statistics of teenage pregnancies over the past years, not only in Okalongo, but also from both developed and developing countries.

Cases of teenage pregnancy are high in Africa, where approximately 16 million teenage girls become mothers each year (Gyan, 2013), the majority of whom come from economically disadvantaged families (Gysew & Ankomah, 2013). In addition, a survey conducted in South Africa in 2011 found out that nearly 11% of the girls under the age of 19 were more likely to become pregnant. Hence, "approximately 4.5 percent of all females in the age group of 13-19 years were reported to be pregnant during the survey period" (Statistics South Africa, 2012, p. 18). These figures are consistent with data from 2009 and 2010, which show that slightly more than 2% of girls aged 17 to 24 were not enrolled in any educational institution, blaming pregnancy for their absence (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Furthermore, Nigeria and Zimbabwe are reported to

[3] Cf. short for the Latin: confer/conferatur, both meaning compare. It is used in the thesis to refer the reader to the part or section which is compared to with what is discussed.

have had high birth rates among teenagers with more than 100 per 1000 girls aged 15-19 becoming pregnant annually (Chauke, 2013).

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2013) revealed that in 2010 over 36 million women aged 20 to 24 gave birth before age 18 in developing countries, or about 7.3 million every year. The report further warned that if current trends do not decline, we must expect 78 million teenage girls to give birth during the next decade. This means that an average of 7.8 million teenage girls in developing countries will give birth every year from 2011 to 2020. According to Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Driscoll and Drake (2017) the number of teenage mothers is expected to rise even further between 2021 and 2030, reaching 86 million by 2030. The potential increase in the total number of girls giving birth before the age of 18 is determined by population growth due to declining mortality and slower reductions in fertility, resulting in population age structures dominated by younger mothers.

The seriousness of teenage pregnancy

The issue of teenagers becoming mothers at a tender age has a serious educational, social, and economic consequences. There is consensus among researchers, policymakers, and the general public that teenage pregnancy and childbearing is a social problem because teenage pregnancy is associated with social issues such as poverty, poor education, risky behaviours that lead to poor health, and child welfare.

Furthermore, the financial cost of teenagers having children is devastating (WHO, 2012), as teenage pregnancy is frequently associated with non-marital births, sexual abuse and neglect, abortions, infant and maternal mortality, and a high rate of unemployment. It is associated with school failure and dropouts, low self-esteem, and limited future career opportunities (Pazvakawambwa & Mumbango, 2015).

Despite intervention strategies such as the Teenage Pregnancy Policy, (2002), Vision 2030 (2004), National Gender Policy and Plan of Action, (2010), and National Human Rights Action Plan (2015), many countries, including Namibia, continue to have high rates of teenage pregnancy. All of these are important Namibian plans that are gender-related. It appears that these plans did not receive consistent public attention and monitoring, and as a result, the issue of gender equality, particularly in education, did

not receive much attention (LAC, 2017). Teenage pregnancy continues to contribute to the already existing gender inequality in our educational system because of poor monitoring and implementation. As a result, teenage motherhood is statistically prevalent in Namibia, particularly in the rural areas of the Omusati region and the Okalongo circuit, as it is in other rural areas in African countries. Given that one in every five teenage girls has a live birth before the age of 18, it is critical to understand who teenage mothers are and the challenges they face (UNFPA, 2013).

In addition, some of Namibia's 14 regions had recorded the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in 2018. The Kavango East region, for example, topped the list with 545 school pregnancies, followed by the Omusati region (where the research site is located), and the Oshikoto region with 460 cases each. Ohangwena reported 300 teenage pregnancy cases. The report further indicated that 232 school-girls became pregnant in the Oshana region (Iikela, Mogotsi & Hamutenya, 2019).

The above-mentioned international and national trends whereby there is a higher rate of teenage mothers dropping out of school than those who stay, motivated this study. According to its 2016 term report, the Okalongo circuit, which is the research site, had a very high rate of dropouts. According to the report, the number of teenagers who dropped out of school due to pregnancy has continued to rise unabated. For example, between 2012 and 2014, 123 teenage mothers dropped out of school. In 2016, the circuit recorded 89 cases of pregnancy among learners aged 15-19, with 65.2 percent of these teenage mothers dropping out, while only 34.8 percent of these teenage mothers remained in school and completed their final exams (Okalongo Termly Report, 2016).

Against this background, this study investigates the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, focusing on the enabling and constraining factors of support provided by schools as part of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy's implementation. According to Akella and Jordan (2015), Shuger (2012) and Macleod (2011) teenage school-going mothers must be supported in order to avoid threats such as school disruption, the continuation of the cycle of vulnerability and disadvantage, poor socioeconomic situations, welfare dependency, and health risks such as HIV infection, childbirth dangers, and maternal mortality among teenage mothers. The section that

follows presents the study's problem statement, which explains why this study was conducted to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers.

1.5 Problem Statement

As mentioned earlier, this study investigated the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers in the Okalongo circuit, Omusati region, Namibia. I noted the high rate of pregnancy among the teenagers in our schools, the high rates of pregnancy and dropout threaten retention and deprive the teenage mothers' rights to education. According to UNFPA (2013), this is a worldwide phenomenon which is receiving attention at the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Previous studies have revealed many challenges around this phenomenon, and there are numerous international and national programs underway on how to mitigate the situation. However, it looks like some programs on gender relations have not been implemented successfully (Dlamini, 2016; Moonga, 2014; Agustino, Coming, Verzosa et al., 2014). In Namibia, one of the major programs in response to teenage mothers' access to education, has been the introduction of a Teenage Pregnancy Policy throughout the schooling system, with little success in changing the way teenage mothers are treated in schools (Iimene, 2015).

Despite the widespread perception of girls' education as an investment in human capital, the policy imperative to assist the school system in preventing or managing teenage pregnancies is not only debated, but fraught with uncertainty. This means that education is critical because teenage mothers are learning the knowledge and skills required in the labour market. Once employed, they do not just contribute to a country's economic growth and human development, but they also improve their own well-being (King & Winthrop, 2015).

The government of the Republic of Namibia has since 2002 adopted a Teenage Pregnancy Policy (cf. Chapter 2.9) to prevent and manage learner pregnancy in Namibian schools (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture [MoEAC], 2002). Despite the formulation of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy in Namibia from 2002, teenage pregnancy cases in Namibian schools are on the increase. For example, according to Iikela, Mogotsi and Hamutenya (2019), 3500 teenage girls ranging from 12 to 18 years

fell pregnant between 2017 and 2018 in Namibia, leading to more than 2000 dropping out of school and only a small number of the total remaining in school. Evidence shows that developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, remain the most affected region in the world with the highest rates of teenage births recorded amongst girls aged between 15-19 years (Karim, 2015).

As a result, many teenage mothers dropped out of school permanently, compared to those who returned to, or remained in school. One of the factors contributing to school dropout is that teenage mothers are teased by their peers as soon as the pregnancy becomes visible (Ikela, 2015; Karim, 2015; Iimene 2015). Furthermore, the stigma and criticism levelled at teenage mothers in the larger community are intolerable (Ikela, 2015). These constraints appear to be major contributors to teenage mothers dropping out of school. As a result, this status of affairs feeds a vicious cycle of high dropout rates among teenage mothers. Some of the factors that inhibit or motivate teenage mothers who re-enter primary and junior secondary (Grades 4-9) school in the Okalongo circuit have not yet been investigated. Such teenage mothers are in their early stages of education and can be as young as 13-17 years old, but they are not given the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences. As a result, the purpose of this research is to fill that void.

Furthermore, the introduced Teenage Pregnancy Policy made many provisions and recommendations for helping teenage mothers, but it failed to state how those recommendations should be carried out. The policy was released to schools while there were no facilities or trained teachers that could help teenage pregnant learners in case of emergency. Furthermore, no funds were made available for transporting teenage mothers in case they fell sick, or to take homework to their homes during their leave of absence, as required by the policy (Iimene, 2015).

The policy requires schools to determine how they can implement the recommendations. As a result, individual school decisions on how to deal with teenage mothers not only differ, but are also influenced by various factors that are not always in the best interest of teenage school-going mothers. In most cases, school decisions hinder teenage mothers, who are already vulnerable due to an unplanned pregnancy,

and face multiple cultural and social challenges that predispose them to discrimination and stereotyping (Kapenda, 2012).

Nhongo (2018) states that results from studies carried out in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia indicate that there are more challenges than opportunities for teenage mothers to benefit from the teenage pregnancy policies. Because there is no evaluation mechanism in place, re-enrolment of teenage mothers into schools is not mandatory in most Namibian schools, and the fear is that teenage mothers' rights to education are open to violation. As a result, the purpose of this research is to identify the enabling and constraining factors that will enable teenagers who will become parent-learners to make informed decisions if teenage pregnancies continued unabated.

Early childbearing is preventing teenage mothers from participating fully in education. There is a fear that there are chances of a greater number of second pregnancies among teenage mothers if there is no drastic major support provided to those remaining in school (Karim, 2015; Shuger, 2012). Early childbearing among girls is not only depriving them of an education, but is also becoming a threat to the achievement of the National Gender Policy in Namibia, which aims at reducing gender inequalities in education, improving school completion rates for girls and increasing women's access to Vocational Training, Science and Technology (MGECW, 2010).

According to UNICEF (2008), teenage childbearing, which is common in many parts of the world, carries specific risks. Maternal death is four times more likely in women under the age of 20 than in women over the age of 20. Furthermore, unprotected sex by teenagers leads to pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, which may lead to their dropping out of school, early marriage, abandoning or dumping babies, and obtaining illegal abortions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2015) added that teenage school-going mothers' education must be supported, otherwise they may end up accepting low-paying jobs, entering into premature marriages, or becoming heads of poor households, relying on insufficient assistance from their family or the child's father. Furthermore, the teenage mothers' self-esteem may suffer because of the stress of motherhood and education. Teenage mothers appear to be caught in the crossfire of policymakers, cultural beliefs, and educational institutions.

As the problem of the study indicates teenage mothers' life stories in this community are not documented. Thus, this is the first study to be conducted in the Okalongo circuit on the experiences of teenage mothers.

The aims outlined in the following section guided this research as it sought to unpack the subject under consideration.

1.6 The aims of the study

This study focuses on the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers as they pursue their education. The study is crucial in respect of the re-entry policy that provides an opportunity for teenage mothers to have a second chance to complete their education and enjoy its benefits. However, there is an assumption that the re-entry policy is not properly implemented as the high rate of pregnancy among teenagers recorded every day in Namibia indicates. For example, Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, the Education Minister, in her speech during the commemoration of World Population Day in 2016 revealed that it has been a challenge of teenage pregnancies among teenage girls. She questioned whether the Teenage Pregnancy Policies that had been put in place to address, manage, and control teenage pregnancies is properly implemented (Kangootui, 2016). Thus, this study investigates the role of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (TPP) in supporting educational outcomes for this cohort in Okalongo circuit, Namibia (MoE, 2012).

In addition, this study seeks to investigate the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers in primary and junior secondary school (Grades 4-9) to determine how this group's lived experiences as a learner or a mother can affect their motherhood and learning responsibilities. The study sought data on the role of teachers, parents, and community members in promoting better educational outcomes for teenage school-going mothers. Furthermore, the study's goal was to see if the teenage mothers received any support when they returned to school. Finally, the study sought to identify the educational barriers that prevent teenage mothers from successfully juggling both responsibilities. The following questions were developed in order to achieve the study's aims.

1.7 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

Main research question:

What are the enabling and constraining factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers when returning to school in the Okalongo circuit, Namibia?

Sub-questions:

1. How do teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences of being a learner affect their responsibilities as mothers?
2. How do teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences of being a mother affect their responsibilities as learners?
3. What support do schools provide to teenage mothers who drop-out and re-enter schools after they have given birth?
4. What barriers do these teenage mothers face on re-entering school?
5. What recommendations do teenage mothers suggest to increase the total number of teenage mothers who can complete their education?

1.8 The purpose and rationale of the study

The study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of what it is like to live as a teenage school-going mother. The study was limited to three combined schools[4] in the Okalongo circuit in the Omusati region, Namibia, where the 16 teenage school-going mothers in total were sampled from those schools.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study is to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in terms of the enabling and constraining factors they encounter at home, schools and in the community as they pursue their education. It hoped that the findings of this study will be used to encourage the teenage mothers who

[4] A combined school is one that has both primary and secondary grades (pre-primary to grade 7 and junior secondary grades 8 to 9). While schools with only pre-primary to grade 7 are referred to as primary schools, schools with only grades 8 - 9 are referred to as junior secondary schools. Senior Secondary Schools are for learners in grades 10 to 12.

are remaining in school to continue with their education without fear and intimidation, and to motivate the dropouts to return to school and complete their education.

Secondly, the rationale for undertaking this study was first derived from my own teaching experiences as a teacher and a school principal for 30 years. During this period, I have observed the increase of teenage pregnancies and dropouts among teenage girls in our school. Similarly, the same observation has been noticed at other neighbouring schools, and in the whole Okalongo circuit in particular.

Having served as a teacher and a school principal has given me the opportunity to see that teenage school-going mothers' education is not taken seriously by teachers, parents or by fellow learners. Beside this, the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects that influenced the phenomenon under investigation are taken seriously. As a result, negative and misleading information dominates social media headlines. This is due to the fact that some reporters have not experienced this phenomenon. Thus, to avoid the misinterpretations of the teenage mothers' situation in future, this study is aimed at documenting the experiences of teenage motherhood and schooling.

A similar concern has been raised by the First Lady of Namibia, Monica Geingos, who urged church leaders to address the issue of teenage pregnancies. The First Lady, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the UNFPA launched a #BeFree Movement to empower young girls on how to prevent the increase of pregnancy among teenage girls (Mbekele, 2017). This initiative encourages open discussions on sexual matters and promotes comprehensive sexuality education. This backing for comprehensive sexual education in schools could help break down taboos which hamper the discussion of the use of contraception and other sexual subjects in some communities (Mbekele, 2017).
The increase in births from teenagers in Namibia is well-known all over the country, but figures are higher in some regions, with 20% of teenagers in some rural areas (where the study was located) becoming mothers earlier, in comparison with teenage girls in urban areas (Nhongo 2018). At state of address in 2018, Omusati region Governor Elginus Endjala also revealed his shocking increase of teenage pregnancy in the region, saying:

> It is disheartening to learn that the rate of teenage pregnancy is on the increase as per the statistics received from the Ministry of Education in 2017 academic year. I am shocked to learn that we have lost 445 learners due to teenage pregnancy with Okalongo circuit recorded as the highest with 78 learners. (Nhongo, 2018, p. 22)

During the state address Governor Endjala was also saddened and worried by the increasing pregnancies among minor girls who fell pregnant as far as Grades 4, 5 and 6 ranging between 12 to 15 years old. His concern is that there are no rape cases reported. He stressed that, by law, any child under the age of 16 who fell pregnant is regarded as a rape victim, because a child of that age cannot consent to engage in sexual relations with an older person (Nhongo, 2018).

On a different occasion the Minister Katrina Hanse-Himarua emphasised that Life Skills teachers and school principals should be held accountable. She thinks that the Life Skills subject has been neglected in schools (Kangootui, 2016). In this regard, the Minister emphasised that our curriculum requires schools to educate learners, both boys and girls, about the benefits of abstinence, the dangers of engaging in sexual activity at a young age, the proper use of contraception, and the rights of both male and female learners to make free and informed decisions about sexual matters (National Institute for Educational Development [NIED], 2015). However, the number of teenage pregnancies is increasing year after year. Minister Katrina Hanse-Himarua has also observed that the learner pregnancy policy is not being effectively implemented, and is not inclusive of the needs of teenage mothers.

Another school of thought contends that there is no shared understanding of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy among Namibian learners, and that the policy is not uniformly applied, resulting in more teenage mothers dropping out of school due to a lack of support (Iimene, 2015). In addition, there is an assumption that teenage mothers are dropping out of school due to discrimination and the moral stigma often associated with teenage motherhood.

Therefore, there is a need to ensure that stories of teenage mothers themselves need to be researched to ascertain whether there are in fact any positive results of their

individual experiences. This study provides teenage mothers from this community with an opportunity to express true accounts of their lived experiences of teenage motherhood and schooling, as a way of encouraging those dropped out of school to return.

UNESCO (2015) states that teenage pregnancy is an educational concern that lacks the opinions of teenage mothers and should be treated with appropriate interventions rather than victimising the girls, who already lack societal protection. It is against this background that this study aims to investigate the enabling and constraining factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers in returning to or being in school.

I chose to do this study in a rural area because it is the most affected area when it comes to teenage pregnancies, and no such study has been conducted in Namibia. This is the first study of its kind that looks at the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in a rural area, especially in primary and junior secondary schools. As per statistics indicated earlier, the issue of teenage mothers dropping out of school needs to be taken into consideration, even though pregnancy cases among teenagers is not something that can be solved in a short time. It is an ongoing concern that needs proper interventions and critical understanding. By way of intervention this study sought to solicit lived experiences from the teenage mothers themselves. It is important to investigate and document the real facts based on the experiences of the people who experience the phenomenon, rather than engaging in speculation and perceptions.

Aside from the study's purpose and rationale, the study is motivated by the disjuncture between the progressive Namibian Teenage Pregnancy Policy and the lived experiences of the parent-learners and pregnant-learners. The study posits that its findings will give additional guidance to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, and the school management authorities in the formulation and strengthening of inclusive policies, which will protect pregnant learners in schools and ensure their re-admission back to school. Furthermore, this study is significant not only to me and participants, but to policymakers and individuals, as explained below.

1.9 Significance of the study

This study is significant for several reasons. One of the study's contributions is to help generate literature on the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in the Okalongo circuit, which is currently undocumented. Thus, the study will contribute to a better understanding of the lived experiences of teenage mothers from Okalongo.

Furthermore, I contend that this study is valuable because the participants were able to share their lived experiences and identify the constraints that had an impact on their lives. I anticipate that the teenage school-going mothers who took part in this study were given the opportunity to express their true feelings and emotions as a result of their own experiences as mothers and learners at the same time. If they did so, they would be empowered and benefit from their own experiences and insights. Through this research their stories and experiences will be integrated to develop and design strategies to assist other teenage school-going mothers in leading more meaningful lives in the future.

In addition, the findings of this study will help school and community members to understand teenage mothers' situation by setting practical measures to reduce gender disparities, vulnerability, and constraints among teenage mothers in Okalongo circuit. Similarly, the findings will assist policymakers in developing inclusive regulations that take into account the experiences of teenage mothers. Most importantly, by documenting the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, I anticipate that this educational research will generate better and more positive knowledge of sustainable livelihood development in the lives of teenage mothers.

On the one hand, the experiences of the teenage mothers in this study is important in clarifying the extent to which schools are adequately addressing inclusion, marginalisation and gender inequality, in addition to supporting the rights of pregnant and learner mothers in successfully completing their schooling. On the other, the teenage mothers' own experiences and reflections will help in identifying better possibilities of what could be done to deal with school while being a teenage mother and avoiding permanent drop-out of school in the future. However, the study has its own delimitations, which are listed below.

1.10 Delimitation of the study

Participation was voluntary, and data were collected from the 16 teenage school-going mothers from one region and constituency (out of 14 regions and 12 constituencies). The study included teenage school-going mothers only. Teenage fathers and mothers who dropped out of school were not included in the study. Thus, the result, of this study may limit the ability to generalise the findings to all school across Namibia.

1.11 Research design that frames the study

This study is largely qualitative. According to Flick (2006, p. 12), qualitative research is "a process that investigates a social human problem, in which the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a whole and complex representation through a rich description and explanation, as well as a careful examination of participants' words and views". The study used an interpretive paradigm in this qualitative feminist research. The interpretive paradigm is adopted because it claims that social reality is not singular or objective, but rather shaped by human experience and social context, and that it is thus best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling with the individual's own subjective interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Weber & Wand, 1993, p. 220). Apart from interpretive the design of this study was phenomenology. According to Cohen et al. (2011), phenomenology is an approach that focuses on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct lived experiences from the first-person point of view. Therefore, a qualitative interpretivist phenomenology research methodology is employed to allow the respondents the opportunity to explain their experiences, and present their voices.

1.12 Locating my positionality

Even though I did not experience teenage motherhood, I have had both personal and professional interactions with teenage mothers as a teacher and school principal, and as well as a teenager who witnessed the effects of a friend's teenage pregnancy. Some have dropped out of school permanently, while others have completed primary school or a college education.

One of my classmates became pregnant when I was a teenager. She was 16 years old and in primary school (Standard 5 which is now equivalent to Grade 7). Pregnant learners were not permitted to attend school at the time, so she had to drop out. She

took her final exams at the end of the year, as was customary. It is unknown how she persuaded the school administration to let her return to school. I recall how the other learners teased, bullied, and discriminated against this mother-learner. I remember how she was always alone during break time, and how some learners laughed at her from a distance. I do not think that there was ever any doubt about her passing Standard 5 and progressing to secondary school. We knew she would have a baby soon and would have to fulfil her motherhood duties, as is customary for all mothers in the Ovambadja community. We had no idea what was going through her mind, but she stayed in school, much to our surprise. I believe her parents held similar beliefs because they not only assisted her with the baby while she was in secondary school, but also cared for her daughter while she attended college and graduated. That, I believe, was a wise decision because getting an education was the best way for her to provide for her child.

Later, as a teacher and principal at a combined school I learned about the high dropout rate of teenage mothers and which reminded me of my former classmate. She had succeeded, but many others had not. I suspected it was because she was surrounded by people who cared about her. I know how important the help was. At our school, I initiated a support structure for teenage mothers, which was spearheaded by two teacher counsellors. The Forum for Women Educationalists in Namibia (FAWENA) took care of the teenage mothers' physical needs while the teacher counsellors provided them with psychological support. This is a forum which aims to protect the rights of teenage mothers by providing them with guidance, counselling and material support while they pursue their education.

In addition, my Master's dissertation was a women's study that investigated women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, as well as their conceptions and experiences with negotiating sex and safer sex. This was with view of making recommendation of how schools may better engage young people to understand their sexual identities and ways in which power relations contribute to women's vulnerability. Women's rights to self-protection have been found to be hampered by socio-cultural factors and practices. Women do not have the right to choose when, how, and with whom to have sex because of cultural expectations and gender roles. As a result, a call for abstinence has no meaning for women, let alone girls, who are forced to engage in sexual activity. Their

situation, on the other hand, necessitates programs that can promote behavioural change in both men and women (Haipinge, 2013).

These experiences motivated me to conduct a study on teenage school-going mothers. I wanted to find out why some teenage mothers were able to continue their education despite the socio-cultural influences and the daunting challenges of being both a learner and a mother. What are their personal stories of staying or returning to school? I chose to investigate the enabling and constraining factors that teenage mothers faced. This is the question that this study attempted to answer. This study also sought to give teenage mothers a voice by openly disclosing their opinions and concerns, despite the oppressive forces they face in both society and school.

The salient point of this study is that the participants, as members of this community, provided me with information about their experiences. This means the study took an emic approach, whereby I am involved as an insider, and because of my personal and professional experience I have listened to their voices from a phenomenological standpoint, which I presented in this study.

Table 1.1 Definition of terms

In the context of this study, the terms in the table below are used and operationalised:

Terms	**Definition**
Teenage pregnancy	Pregnancy among teenage girls under 18 years old
Teenage school-going mother/mother-learner/ teenage mothers	For this study a teenage girl who gave birth between the ages of 15 to 20 and still in school
Feminist theory	A theoretical framework that argues that women experience race, class, and gender oppression and seek to resist this oppression

Experience	What we believe to be true or having knowledge of that is true
Lived experience of teenage school-going mothers	Participants' experiences in attending primary and junior secondary school and how they manage to stay in school
Phenomenological study	A study that describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon
Policy	Teenage Pregnancy Policy introduced in Namibian schools that allows pregnant and mother learners to remain in school, unlike in the past when they were not permitted to do so
Enabling factors	Support of any kind given to teenage mothers either from school, home and in the community
Constraining factors	Challenges/barriers faced by teenage mothers in school, home and in the community.

The next section present synopsis of the study

1.13 Synopsis of the study

In **Chapter 1** an overview to the scope of the study was presented. The background to the study, study context, international and national debates surrounding teenage motherhood and education, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose and rationale of the study, and significance of the study were all covered in this chapter. This chapter also discusses the scope of the study, the definition of terms, and the purpose of the study. The remaining chapters provide the details of the research framework

Chapter 2 provides a review in literature on the lived experiences of teenage mothers and schooling. It presented into the following sections: Arguments about teenage motherhood as a social and educational issue, the effects of teenage motherhood on the education of teenage school-going mothers are presented and critiqued. Furthermore, this chapter presents the discussion and critique some key points from the Teenage Pregnancy Policies of Namibia, South Africa and Kenya. I concluded the chapter by highlighting a gap in the literature.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that motivates this study. This includes liberal, radical, socialist, Marxist, black, and African feminism, as well as other philosophical and political feminist perspectives. The intersectionality theory is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an explanation of the research design and methodology adopted for this study. A detailed account of the qualitative interpretive approach in relations to sampling methods, research instruments, procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical issues are outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the qualitative study. It started with a synopsis of the participants. It also outlines the data presentations derived from primary sources of information, i.e. teenage school-going mothers. The information gathered is organised into six themes as identified from the data. The various classifications that have emerged in each theme highlight the key results that provide answers to the research questions.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed of the data analysis and discussions of the findings presented in Chapter 5. The discussion in this chapter was significantly informed by the findings in the reflective journal, individual interview and focus group discussions.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by presenting an overview of the study and my reflections on the research as whole. The key findings regarding the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers are presented. The limitation of the study are identified and discussed, and recommendations from teenage mothers and for further research on teenage motherhood and education are proposed.

Chapter 2: Literature review on teenage motherhood and schooling

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, the issue of teenage school-going mothers associated with gender inequality in education was problematised against a background of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy which was introduced in 2002 to address the challenges faced by teenage mothers in Namibian schools. A conceptual framework around teenage motherhood was outlined to develop an interpretation of the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers which include lived experiences, gender inequality, identity, power, culture, among others.

In light of this interpretation and in order to gain a comprehensive understanding and comparison of previous studies, this chapter reviews previous studies that have looked at teenage motherhood and schooling, particularly with regard to the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. The goal is to link the research findings to a broader understanding of the subject under consideration. Broader knowledge provides an overview of what is already known in the field of study, as well as indicating where additional research is needed (McMurray, 2011).

This chapter discusses the following topics: Arguments on teenage motherhood as a social and educational concern; teenage mothers' lived experiences of motherhood and schooling; discussions of the findings from literature review; the social and cultural construction of motherhood and teenage motherhood; teenage motherhood and gender inequality; teenage pregnancy policy in Namibia and other countries: and ended with an exploration of the gap in the literature.

2.2 Arguments on teenage motherhood as a social and an educational concern

A study conducted in Bungoma County, Kenya, by Barmao-Kiptanui, Kindiki, and Lelan (2015) discovered that different literature sources viewed teenage pregnancy and early motherhood not only as a social and educational concern in both developed and developing countries, but also as a complex reality in current society. Similarly, Mokgalabone (1999) contends in a study conducted in South Africa among poor rural school learners that situations involving teenage pregnancy and disruption in their education are unquestionably associated with societal problems. Daguerre and Nativel (2006) make the same point, claiming that the issue of teenage motherhood and

education has become a public concern because successive governments, regardless of political affiliation, have portrayed it as a social problem since the early 1980s.

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are frequently framed as social issues due to the missed educational and career opportunities that can result from being a teenage mother (Cherrington & Breheny, 2005). In addition, teenage motherhood is framed as a major source of social and educational concern because it contributes to the high rate of school dropout.

The main issue is that teenage motherhood deprives teenage mothers of the ability to make independent decisions, because they cannot support themselves. Furthermore, they are perceived as being incapable of balancing two responsibilities (learning and mothering) at the same time (Martin, et al., 2017; Maynard, 1996; Pearce, 1993) as they have to depend on their parents or guardians for support.

Daguerre and Nativel (2006) identified four major public discourse arguments opposing teenage motherhood and education. The arguments are that: (a) society views teenage mothers as being too young to raise children and attend school; (b) teenage mothers lack the maturity to make informed decisions about their sexuality and education; (c) teenage motherhood is associated with poverty; and (d) teenage mothers depends on others for financial assistance. These arguments are very useful in this study because they highlight some of the answers to my research questions (cf. 1.7) as they substantiate the reasons why society prefers to have teenage mothers stay home rather than return to school.

First, Daguerre and Nativel (2006) argue that society views teenage mothers as too immature by nature to carry a child, let alone care for the child while continuing their education. In addition, teenage pregnancy occurs during puberty or adolescence, which society regards as a critical stage of emotional and psychological development and during this stage a teenage girl need parental guidance. Hence, “pregnancy during adolescence is thought to endanger both the teenage mothers and the baby's health” (Lawlor & Shaw, 2002, p. 552). Thus, society prefers teenage mothers to stay home and take care of their children while being monitored by their parents rather than attending school. This argument is linked to societal beliefs and traditions that the role

of the mother is to take care of the welfare of those in the household, especially duties such as cooking, fetching water, and nurturing the children (cf. 2.5). Likewise, Daguerre and Nativel (2006) contend that the concern about the physiological age of teenage mothers is embedded in a broader social and traditional script that assigns specific functions and roles to specific gender.

The second argument in the public discourse is that teenage mothers lack the maturity to make informed decisions about their sexuality, let alone their education. As a result, sexual encounters during adolescence are associated with a premature loss of innocence, which can only harm children (Daguerre & Nativel, 2006). In fact, in most cases teenage mothers have not reached the consenting adult age and thus are unable to engage in consensual sex (Thomson, 2004).

Although, according to Article 14 of the Namibian Constitution, accords men and women the right to marry and start a family without limitation of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, creed, or social or economic status, it has made it clear that those men and women shall be of full age (18 years) and not minors.

Recognising that men always take advantage of the minor children to coerce them into unlawful sexual intercourse with them as they are unable to give proper consent, the legislature has enacted the Combating of the Rape Act No. 8 of 2000 read together with Section 14 of Combating of Immoral Practice Act 21 of 1980 to make sure that the Constitutional rights of the children and vulnerable members of society is fully protected. These laws provide that any sexual intercourse with a child or minor under the age of 18 and younger is a punishable statutory Rape offence. Thus, children under the age of 18 are considered victims of forced sex and are unable to exercise their free will and it is the duty of all citizens to report such incidence to law enforcement as soon as it discovered.

According to Ngalangi (2015), girls may feel unable to assert their rights to abstain from sex or use condoms in situations where there is unequal power dynamics. While age differences may contribute to these power dynamics, girls may still experience power disparities with boys of their own age due to societal gender norms (Legal Assistance Centre, 2008). In this case society has failed to make fair judgements against

the culprits who impregnated the girls. Instead the blame is shifted to the teenage mothers alone.

The third argument in public discourse is the link between teenage motherhood and poverty, as most teenage pregnancies are associated with permanent school dropouts (Daguerre & Nativel, 2006). The argument is that once a teenage mother drops out of school, her chances of finding a good job to support her and her child are limited.

The fourth argument in public discourse about teenage motherhood is about the parents' financial dependence (Daguerre & Nativel, 2006). The immediate effect of having a child at a young age is an increase in financial reliance on the welfare state and family. Teenage mothers who have children while still financially dependent are referred to as "children having children", which is a moral judgment made on their behaviour (Cherrington & Breheny, 2005). It is because of this moral judgment that made the society to claim that teenage mothers make it impossible to achieve complete financial independence. According to Whitehead (2001), teenage mothers typically depend on their parents for more financial and emotional support to raise their children. As a result, they are stigmatised and isolated because their status is associated with welfare dependency as some are getting social grants from the government.

The preceding arguments have contributed to the perception that teenage school-going mothers face an unequal power of social deprivation. Even if they do attend school while pregnant, society has long held the belief that they will not succeed in school and their children are at the risk of immature development, emotional and behavioural issues, and neglect (Cherrington & Breheny, 2005; Epstein, 1980). While it is acknowledged that giving birth to a child as a teenage mother is not always a high-risk situation, the outcomes are heavily influenced by the level of support available to the baby and her mother (Musese, 2018; Mc Anarney, 1985).

To better understand and support these arguments, additional literature on the lived experience of teenage motherhood and schooling as researched in other different countries were reviewed, as presented in the section below.

2.3 Teenage mothers' lived experience of motherhood and schooling

Numerous studies on factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy in education have been conducted in various developing and developed countries but little research has been done on the lived experiences of teenage mothers while pursuing their primary and junior secondary education in the Namibian context.

Local studies on teenage mothers

The available studies on teenage motherhood and schooling conducted in Namibia, other African countries, and internationally have a broad understanding and knowledge base on the lived experiences of teenage mothers, which helped me identify the gap in knowledge that this study attempts to fill.

In Namibia, two recent health related studies were conducted in three different regions. The first study on teenage mothers in the Oshana region was conducted among first-time teenage mothers aged 15-17 years who attended post-natal care at six weeks (David, Van Wyk & Ashipala, 2017). This study was conducted at the Faculty of Health Science at the University of Namibia and the data were gathered through in-depth interviews, with the goal of exploring and describing adolescent motherhood experiences in the Oshana region of Namibia (David, Van Wyk, & Ashipala, 2017).

Musese (2018), on the other hand, conducted a similar study in two regions, Kavango West and East, among teenage mothers aged 14 to 16 years. The data for the study were gathered using a triangulation method of quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) methods (Musese, 2018). The primary goal of this study was to see if teenage mothers have symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress.

The findings of the Oshana region study revealed that teenage motherhood has a negative impact on the future plans of teenage mothers, particularly in today's economically driven environment. For example, it has been discovered that many teenage mothers do not receive adequate support or social assistance, both during pregnancy and while raising their children (David, Van Wyk & Ashipala, 2017). Musese (2018) reports that a lack of support (financial and emotional) brought feelings of regret, guilt, worry, chronic sadness, symptoms of moderate to severe depression, anxiety and stress, and stigma into the lives of teenage mothers.

In both studies, it was revealed that teenage mothers revealed that having a child added an extra responsibilities to their lives, and they felt that every decision or step they took would have an impact the lives of their babies. The studies concluded that, as a result of motherhood, teenage mothers had difficult interpersonal relationships with their families and friends, as they are struggling bringing up baby care. Teenage mothers, on the other hand, stated that they want to succeed in school, get a job, and support their children in the future (David, Van Wyk & Ashipala, 2017). However, according to Musese (2018), teenage mothers were discouraged and demotivated by teachers and community members.

Regional studies on teenage mothers

Bhana, Morrel, Shefer and Ngabaza, (2010) conducted a study among secondary school teenage mothers in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), in South Africa, where they observed that teenage mothers suffer from sarcasm because many teachers regard the presence of pregnant learners and teenage mothers in their classroom as a threat to the collective academic performance and management of the class. In most cases, the teenage mothers revealed that the teachers question their ability to cope with the school's academic demands, as they are always reminded of their failure (Musese, 2018).

In a similar study conducted in Kenya, teenage mothers not only experience mistreatment by teachers, but also by community members who have discouraged teenage mothers from attending school. At the same time, they are discouraging parents from supporting the teenage mothers to return to school because of the discourses that view these mothers as both immoral and irresponsible (Karim, 2015; Wekesa, 2010). These discourses of morality also reinforce the marginalisation and perception of school-going mothers as incapable learners. Similarly, Bhana et al. (2010) further support the sentiment that, apart from teachers' discrimination, teenage mothers also experience a great number of difficulties and unjustified pressure to endure maternal role and developmental task of teenage motherhood from parents and peers. They also receive very little support from the school and from their homes. They are usually misunderstood by their parents, teachers and fellow learners. In most cases, their concerns or opinions are not taken into consideration (Bhana et al., 2010) because society has already framed them as being irresponsible.

Despite the fact that there are no studies on the lived experiences of teenage motherhood in Namibia, there is a wealth of literature on the issue of teenage pregnancy and schooling in South Africa (see, for example, Ntinda, Thwala & Dlamini 2016; Ngabaza 2010; Chigona & Chetty 2008). However, the majority of these studies, just like in Namibia, did not investigate the lived experiences of teenage mothers at the primary and junior secondary levels; they focused on the experiences of teenage mothers at the senior secondary level or higher institutes.

According to Ngabaza (2010), teenage pregnant learners in South Africa were expelled from school before 1994. However, teenage pregnancy and motherhood have received significant attention in the education system since 1994. Ngabaza (2010) investigates teenage girls' subjective experiences of being teenage mothers at school, with a focus on personal and interpersonal relationships within their social contexts. The research was carried out in three high schools in Khayelitsa, Cape Town, South Africa. Fifteen young black mothers between the ages of 16 and 19 took part in the study. It followed an exploratory qualitative structure and was conducted within a feminist social constructionist framework. Data for this study were gathered through life histories and analysed using a thematic narrative framework.

This study's narrative findings revealed similar lived experiences to Namibian studies, namely, that teenage mothers found motherhood difficult and overly disruptive of their schooling. This study's experience with the concept of power is unique, and the context of childcare emerged as critical in how teenage mothers balanced motherhood and school work, and it was characterised by notions of power and control as elder women who provided childcare to teenage mothers dominated the mothering spheres. For example, their parents' presence and guidance were greatly marked by authority lines and power inequality. They were "taught" how to nurture the baby, however, their children were occasionally taken away from them. They could not make decisions about their bodies or their babies because the adults in their lives had taken away their ability to do so. To some extent, their parents appeared to exert control over their friendships. Thus, teenage mothers found themselves trapped within the boundaries of these contending authorities, which had an impact on how they dealt with school and motherhood. The schools were controlled and regulated by authorities in ways that constrained the teenage school-going mothers' balancing of school and parenting. At

school, teenage mothers found themselves challenged by the power authority invested in their teachers and administrators. As a result of power inequality, some teenage mothers concealed their pregnancies, hide from teachers and skip classes. Equally constraining to a number of teenage mothers were structural challenges such as lack of resources. These difficulties were exacerbated by the enormous stigma associated with teenage motherhood (Ngabaza, 2010).

In addition, Chigona and Chetty (2008) conducted a study in Cape Town, South Africa, which indicates that school drop-out among teenage mothers is regarded as a major cause of gender disparities in educational attainment and prevents the successful education progression of girls. Their findings demonstrated that the majority of mother-learners reveal that they are losing the fight for equal access to primary and secondary education mostly in developing countries.

Furthermore, Mokgalabone (1999) and Chigona and Chetty (2008) claim that unequal participation in education prevents teenage mothers from securing good career opportunities in the labour market and most girls who start their families before age 18 never complete high school. They reveal that in some African countries falling pregnant at a young age still marks the end of the education of many teenage mothers. David, Van Dyk and Ashipala (2017) contribute to the claim that teenage school-going mothers have been shown a lack of inspiration and encouragement to deal with motherhood challenges, and what they need most is support from teachers and parents as they lack sufficient knowledge and skills for successful maternal role and therefore depend on others (Mangeli et al., 2017). This kind of support is needed because previous studies, such as that of Chigona and Chetty (2008) indicate that the number of teenage mothers enrolling in school is already small, and if they still continue to face obstacles this can impede plans for girls to succeed in education. According to LAC (2017), only 24.5% of girls completed their primary education in 2016 in Namibia in comparison to 41.4% of boys. In fact, Namibia is one of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries that is experiencing a high rate of teenage pregnancy, and this has become one of the major contributing factors which have a negative impact on the educational success of teenage mothers (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001).

According to Kaufman et al. (2001), those challenges need immediate interventions otherwise the realisation of national conventions and child rights (as explained in section 2.9) to education will be in vain. This should specifically be the concern of sub-Saharan African countries where, according to WHO (2012), 24.4 million girls were out of school in this region for reasons, such as poverty, war and teenage pregnancy. Blume and Zembar (2011) in their study have contributed to the same sentiments that girls' education should not focus solely on getting girls into schools, but all stakeholders in education must ensure that girls must feel safe while in school.

Further, Ntinda, Thwala, and Dlamini (2016) studied the lived experiences of Swaziland's school-going early mothers. The goal of this study was to look into the lived experiences of Swazi school-going mothers in relation to motherhood and their prospects for the future. According to these researchers, Swaziland's rural teenagers have one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country, at 25%. They discovered that understanding the relationship context of Swazi school-going mothers is critical to increasing interventions with them.

A group of 15 young mothers between the ages of 16 and 19 from Swaziland's Limpopo region took part in this study. Young mothers, according to the study's findings, have strained relationships with their fathers, and rely on their mothers for emotional and material support. Teachers in educational support were perceived as discriminatory by participants. As a result, the researchers concluded that early motherhood caused feelings of regret and anxiety in many people, as well as happiness, personal sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in others.

Nkwemu, Jacobs, Mweemba, Sharma and Zulu (2019) have also engaged with the subject of teenage motherhood. In two secondary schools in Lusaka, Zambia, they conducted a study on the experiences of teenage mothers. The goal of the study was to investigate the experiences of school-going mothers in Lusaka in order to better understand their coping mechanisms during the re-integration process. This was a qualitative case study that employed in-depth interviews with 24 school-going mothers, ranging in age from 16 to 19. Purposive sampling was used to select the two schools in the Lusaka district. The data from this study were analysed thematically. According to the findings of this study, the girls were subjected to stigmatization, discrimination,

mockery, and abuse from their teachers. Fearing contamination, some community members labelled, humiliated, gossiped about, and isolated the girls from their friends and classmates. The findings also revealed that these experiences resulted in low self-esteem, inferiority complexes, poor academic performance, and identity crises in the teenage mothers (Nkwemu, et al., 2019). As a result, the study concluded that there is a need for teachers to receive training on how to deal with teenage mothers, as well as a flexible timetable to accommodate teenage school-going mothers who miss lessons to care for their babies.

Most of the studies (Nkwemu et al., 2019; David Van Dyk & Ashipala, 2017; Ntinda, Thwala & Dlamini, 2016) discussed thus far focused on the urban lives of teenage mothers, while only one examined the experiences of rural adolescent mothers. Despite the fact that the studies were conducted in different cultural settings, they all reflect the same experiences. For example, challenges such as power abuse, stigmatisation, discrimination, and mockery from community members, teachers, and other learners have been observed in all four countries (South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland and Namibia).

International studies on teenage mothers

Stroble (2013) conducted a global scale study in North Carolina and Tennessee in the USA. Ten black teenage mothers aged 15 to 19 were targeted. These were teenage mothers who had graduated from high school at the age of 19 and were enrolled in two or four-year college or university courses by the age of 20. According to Stroble (2013), teenage pregnancy disproportionately affects black and socio-economically disadvantaged teenage girls. His main findings revealed that the participants felt a sense of accomplishment, despite the fact that they struggled to balance school and work with being the best mother, struggled to pay for day care in college, felt judged for being a teenage mother, some received a lot of support while others did not received support. A supportive environment includes female family role models, faith in God, supportive school personnel (teachers, principal, school nurse), a teenage parenting program, classes that provided day care assistance in high school that extended through college, their children (who motivated them), and self-determination. According to Lombe, Phiri, Mampi, and Liato (2018), in their related study conducted in Zambia, note that

Christian teenage mothers put faith of their God at the forefront of their fight against social rebuke and aided to their progress in school.

The preceding section sheds more light on the lived experiences of teenage mothers pursuing their education. Teenage school-going mothers face numerous challenges while attempting to further their education and caring for their children. Teenage pregnancy continues to be a major issue in both developed and developing countries (Wado, Sully & Mumah 2019). However, the majority of the challenges that teenage mothers face in developing countries are not comparable to those faced in developed countries. In Africa, sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the most affected region in terms of teenage pregnancy, when compared to other regions (Martin et al., 2017). The more cases of teenage mothers reported in the region, the more difficulties they face, which include physical, psychological, mental, and social challenges (Mangeli et al., 2017). Teenage mothers are reported to have many challenges because of their unpreparedness for the transition into motherhood (Aparicio, Pecukonis & O'Neale, 2015). This reflects their vulnerabilities and the scarcity of opportunities available to them (WHO, 2016). The ensuing section provides the findings from literature review on the lived experiences of teenage mothers.

2.4 Discussions of the findings from literature review

The studies reviewed indicated that girls and women are losing the battle for equal access to education in sub-Saharan Africa and other developed countries. According Chigona and Chetty (2008), women make up 61 percent of the uneducated adult population in South Africa. In reality, women outnumber men in the world, but they appear to be the unprivileged majority.

Given that women constitute the majority of the world's population, and considering the total number of teenage mothers who drop out of school, it stands to reason that teenage motherhood contributes to the majority of uneducated women as most of the women are still not in school. The studies reviewed above demonstrate that education is important, not only for girls, but also for the entire society in order to break the poverty cycle that most people are trapped in (Bhana et al., 2010).

Women by nature, for example, have a caring quality, and this responsibility will only grow if teenage mothers complete their education and find work in the future. The fear is that if they do not attend school, they will contribute to the poverty cycle, which must be broken. As a result, the goal of this study is to provide necessary recommendations to policymakers and school administrators in developing strategies to increase the pool of teenage mothers who will complete school without suffering the consequences of early child bearing and child caring, which will ultimately deprive them of their right to an education.

According to Musese (2018), Wekesa (2010), and Ngabaza (2010), teenage mothers face not only the consequences of early child-bearing and child-caring, but also educational deprivation due to societal gender expectations. They emphasize that, while teenage mothers are no longer denied the right to attend school after becoming mothers, they face numerous challenges in balancing parenthood and the demands of education (Dlamini, 2016). According to Schrader and Wotipka (2011), the majority of parental roles and responsibilities were stereotypically feminine. Some of the difficulties faced by teenage mothers are discussed further below under the following emergent themes from literature.

2.4.1 Lack of educational and psychological support

According to Pillow (2004), in her study of black-American teenage mothers, the primary reason for their school disruption is a lack of educational and psychological support. Dlamini (2016) claims that teenage school-going mothers lack encouragement because some teachers fail to provide caring relationships and academic support. According to Chigona and Chetty (2008), the issue stems from our African context, where pregnancy among learners is associated with promiscuity, shame, and immorality. When a girl becomes pregnant, she receives little support at school or at home and if the teenage mothers continue to attend school, they are frequently "described and assumed to be poor or incapable learners" (Pillow, 2004, p. 111).

According to Chigona and Chetty (2008), both mother and child are at crossroads in their lives, where their paths may be shaped toward healthy development, stability, and productivity, or towards poverty and dependency. Without assistance and support to help teenage mothers finish their education, many will face poverty and its

consequences in the future (Dlamini, 2016; Kunio & Sono, 1996). Pregnant schoolgirls are sometimes stereotyped as incapable or poor learners, which has both immediate and long-term consequences for their educational experiences (Wekesa, 2010). In the short term, it lowers academic expectations for teenage school-going mothers and reduces the educational support that teachers are supposed to provide (Chigona & Chetty, 2008, p. 10). In the long run, this framing has an impact on the educational programs or policies recommended for pregnant learners and teenage mothers (Pillow, 2004).

Similarly, Bhana et al. (2010) report, in a South African study, that the presence of pregnant learners and teenage mothers in their classrooms is viewed as a threat to the class's collective academic performance by many teachers and other learners. Whether this is the case or not, teenage mothers receive little support at school. Some teenage mothers also claim that some teachers are unwilling to help them, claiming that pregnant learners bring shame to the school (Bhana et al., 2010).

In terms of shifting blame to others, according to Dlamini (2016), some teachers claim that the re-entry policy does not include teacher training on how to deal with pregnant learners, so they do not know how to assist the teenage school-going mothers. Given the gravity of the phenomenon under investigation, this study contends that it is ignorance, not lack of training that characterizes how teenage pregnancy is viewed in our society and schools (Wekesa, 2010). Some researchers, such as Pillow (2004) and Iimene (2015), emphasize in their research that teachers are influenced by the belief that school should be a place of sexual innocence, and that allowing pregnant learners and teenage mothers to stay in school before and after giving birth challenges both parents and teachers because it goes against their social and cultural expectations.

Aside from a lack of support at school, Taylor-Ritzler and Bleazar (2007) discovered in their Lesotho study that teenage mothers also experienced a lack of support at home. In most cases, no family members, friends, or boyfriends are available to provide childcare. In another study conducted in Kenya, Wekesa (2010) discovered that community members discouraged parents from supporting teenage mothers' return to school. Their reasoning was that teenage mothers are irresponsible, incapable, and hopeless learners. Such behaviour is exacerbated by a lack of sexual behaviour

education in schools, as sexuality is linked to the concept of silence and secrecy (Kangootui, 2016; Bhana et al., 2010).

According to Chigona and Chetty (2008), support for teenage mothers is essential in the lives of both mother and child. As teenage mothers learn how to care for themselves and their babies, support shapes their healthy development. As this study argues in the following section, lack of financial support for teenage mothers can be a major contributor to low self-esteem. Lack of self-esteem can be a burden for some teenage girls, as it prevents them from making the best choices for their education and lives.

2.4.2 Socio-economic constraints

Dlamini (2016), Iimene (2015) and Wekesa (2010) highlight some of the socio-economic challenges faced by teenage mothers. These are some of the factors that contribute to teenage mothers dropping out of school. Akella and Jordan (2015) and Shuger (2012) agree in their studies that social problems such as illiteracy, poverty, and low socio-economic conditions can impede the educational development of teenage mothers. Liang and Loaiza (2013) add to the argument by stating that due to economic challenges, teenage school-going mothers must spend more time outside of school looking for food and other necessities for their babies. Even when teenage mothers are encouraged to return to school, some report that they must first overcome economic and psychological challenges in order to support their babies, which they regard as a higher priority than their education (Dlamini, 2016).

Akella and Jordan (2015) state that children born to teenage mothers have lower resource opportunities and educational aspirations, because their mothers are often both poor and unmarried. Similarly, Moonga (2014) states that teenage mothers with lower resource opportunities have less human capital and economic mobility. However, it is noteworthy that not all the teenage mothers come from poor backgrounds where they lack support and social exclusion. As a consequence, many teenage school-going mothers report feeling out of control, worthless or hopeless in their own lives and their communities. According to Keller, Hilton, and Twumas-Ankrah (1999), many drop out of school due to stress, and some succumb to alcohol and drug abuse. As explained in the following section, some people faced discrimination, stigma, and marginalization (Wekesa, 2010).

2.4.3 Discrimination, intimidation, stigmatisation and marginalisation

According to Wekesa (2010), some of the reasons teenage mothers gave for dropping out of school include fear of discrimination, marginalization, stigmatization, and intimidation within their school context. According to Agustino et al. (2014) and Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013), community members typically develop negative perceptions of teenage motherhood, which leads to a negative perception of teenage mothers. As people form opinions about the teenage mothers' personalities, intelligence, and maturity, they become victims. Teenage mothers face discrimination from teachers, community members, and peers at school as a result of this negative perception. According to Sibeko (2012) and Grant and Hallman (2009), teenage school-going mothers identify discriminatory practices by teachers, such as not allowing pregnant schoolgirls to attend class or participate in school activities. They do not give them make-up tests or assignments to allow the teenage school-going mothers to catch up on what they missed while absent.

Furthermore, Dlamini (2002) discovered in a study conducted in Swaziland's Hho-Hho region that teenage mothers revealed that teachers are unapproachable and would not even offer them support, guidance, counselling, or sympathy. Teachers, according to the teenage mothers, are opposed to teenage pregnant girls attending school because their presence may influence other girls to do the same (Bhana et al., 2010).

Some of the observed expressions include classifications among teenage mothers such as labelling them as ‘Molahluoa' (outcast) in seSotho (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005) or ‘Oshikumbu' (concubine) in Namibia (Iimene, 2015). These are the social construction names that differentiate teenage mothers from those who postponed pregnancy until adulthood. Such names reflect how societies perceive teenage motherhood or pregnancy outside of marriage. These names are usually given to teenage mothers, whereas teenage fathers are not condemned and have no derogatory names given to them.

Another classification commonly associated with teenage motherhood is stereotyping them, as they are perceived to be promiscuous or immoral. Separation (marginalisation) is the third classification, in which an individual person is placed in a distinct category, creating a schism between ‘us' and ‘them' (MacLean, 2017; De Beauvoir, 2010[1949];

Yardely, 2008) Labelling, stereotyping, and separation, according to Yardley (2008), create stigmas that cause mother-learners to feel fear, shame, resentment, anger, distress, and lack of confidence as a result of these classifications.

As I will discuss in detail at the end of this chapter, many countries have implemented re-entry policies (cf. 2.7). According to Chauke (2013), SmithBattle (2013) and Chigona and Chetty (2008), even if the teenage mothers continue to attend classes, teachers and peers continue to intimidate, reject, discriminate against, and discourage them from attending classes. SmithBattle (2013) goes on to argue that teachers' treatment of teenage mothers and non-parenting learners differs, citing research that shows teenage mothers are still subjected to discriminatory practices.

2.4.4 The discourse of shame and silence on teenage motherhood and schooling

One of the challenges experienced by teenage mothers is the discourse of *shame* and *silence*. Foucault, (1989) (as cited in Ngalangi, 2015, p. 22) defines discourse,

> "As a system of knowledge which makes true or false statements possible, and that discourse makes human understanding possible. This implies that discourse is more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. It constitutes the nature of the unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of subjects the dominant group seeks to govern, and the subject's ways of constituting knowledge and making meanings".

According to Maher and Tetreault (1993), discourse is a form of power that circulates in the social field and can be associated with both dominance and resistance strategies. In our societies, early motherhood and pregnancy are viewed as immoral, exploiting widespread concerns about teenagers' sexuality. Schools are also expected to be a place where sex education is not discussed.

As previously reported, some teachers are against the policy that allows pregnant learners and teenage mothers to remain or return to school (Ngalangi, 2015). As sex remains silent, secret, and shameful, this reinforces the silence surrounding the teaching of sex education in schools (Akella & Jordan, 2015). According to Bhana et al. (2010), the changing policy context creates the perception that school gave freedom to teenagers to fall pregnant while in school because they know they are protected and

they can remain in school while pregnant. Thus, school becomes a new sexual environment and a new form of freedom for teenagers. Swann, Bowe, McCormick and Kosmin (2003), on the other hand, argue that the policy has increased the sexual visibility of teenage mothers while creating conflict and deeply held normative views about the moral aspects that result in social disadvantages and exclusionary practices toward teenage mothers.

Teenage pregnancy or teenage motherhood is a cause for concern not only in Namibia, but throughout the world. However, rather than excluding, labelling, or defining the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, we must establish a platform for intervention that leads to the proper drafting of teenage mother policies that suit and satisfy their challenges and needs.

Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990, and significant changes were implemented to improve and address women's issues. Some of the issues at the forefront of social transformation included the legalization of affirmative action and the prohibition of sex discrimination (Ambunda & de Klerk, 2008). Several post-independence writings by Namibian women emerged, including Linda Shaketange, Libertine Amadhila, and Nepeti Nikanor, revealing their long silence and suffering (Andima & Tjiramanga, 2014). Their voices advocated for change and the start of the feminist era in order to challenge the traditional image of women as subordinate in their own societies as well as those of the rest of the world (Ambunda & de Klerk, 2008).

Teenage motherhood is also constructed and presented in the literature as an educational, social, cultural, and health concern due to its political, religious, and socioeconomic implications (David, Van Dyk & Ashipala, 2017) as discussed in sections that follow.

2.5 Social and cultural construction of motherhood and teenage motherhood

In this section, I present some of the social and cultural contexts towards teenage motherhood and education as a way of developing my argument that society and culture have influenced our beliefs and perspective on how teenage motherhood is viewed and positioned. The findings from the literature indicate that the notion of reality and knowledge experienced by teenage mothers are culturally and socially constructed.

Shahadah (2011) indicates that in Africa the continuing construction of teenage motherhood as a social problem still prevails. It is a fact that teenage girls under 18 years of age have children, and this is a cultural issue in Africa.

In the Ovambadja culture motherhood, or the birth of a new baby, is an event that creates joy, celebration and admiration. In most cases, a person cannot resist instinctive forces (such as caring, moral and emotional support, nurturing, and deep love) that are released within them when they are near a new-born baby (Cherry, Dillon & Rugh, 2001). Thus, motherhood is a significant and important aspect of life for many women worldwide and it is highly desired and considered important to a woman's identity and the birth process strengthens her bond to the child, to each other, to a past, and to the future (Thurer, 1994).

For many women becoming a mother it is not just becoming pregnant and giving birth, but is a natural destiny and the ultimate fulfilment of the female role (McMahon, 1995). According to Caplan (1993), motherhood can be an amazing opportunity in a woman's life because it marks a new chapter and gives a woman a new sense of purpose and meaning. She asserts that a hidden connotation of motherhood always becomes clear when one examines the phrase 'mothering a child'. There is an image of selfless caring, warmth and nurturing that comes to mind. This special feeling does not go with fathering a child, which generally only establishes biological paternity with no string of caring or nurturing attached. Historically, this ideal of motherhood as being the natural fulfilment of womanhood can be traced back to the separation of private and public spheres (Habermas, 1989; Durkheim, 1933).

With the division of labour, women were given the primary responsibility for childcare (Thurer, 1995). Motherhood became idealised but did not correspondingly gain economic value which Hays (1996) identifies as the cultural contradiction of motherhood. The cultural idealisation of motherhood, however, created values and norms to which women were forced to conform (McMahon, 1995). The women conform to the stereotype of good mothers, who have qualities that make them uniquely suited to the responsibilities of caring and nurturing and consequently prioritise their needs by putting their children and family needs before their own (Thurer, 1994).

A woman who finds herself work outside the home ends up feeling guilty because her own socialisation, and that of society tells her otherwise, that she belongs in the home and she is the best person responsible for the child's care and needs. Further, a mother who pursues other goals, for instance, in this case going to school, cannot escape experiencing conflict because, according to McMahon (1995), mothering is seen by society as a full-time obligation that no woman can run away from.

In contrast to this idealised conception of motherhood, the birth of a child by teenagers is a familiar yet strange event, one that we can never become accustomed to, and one that can never be ordinary. As the norm teenage motherhood is still never completely separated from its original construction - as an indicator of a failure to adhere to social, religious and moral values (Guttmacher, 1976). It is considered a cultural issue because children born to teenagers are regarded as 'illegitimate', because they are born out of wedlock and without the support of both mother and father (Hacking, 1999).

As a result, teenage motherhood becomes one of those situations that affects the celebration of life for the child and for those around the child, and in many countries the implication around it affects the society in general. Moreover, teenage mothers become victims of social injustice as people discriminate against them. Clearly, today's teenage girls are growing up in a world that is very different from the one in which their parents were raised. Nowadays teenage mothers are growing up in a society that seeks change, including challenging the cultural expectations toward motherhood, by encouraging teenage mothers to remain in school, which is in conflict with the traditional belief that once you became a mother you are not expected to go to school (Hacking, 1999).

Nelson (2013) and Addleson (1999) argue that, apart from social and cultural points of view, religion plays a central role in terms of setting norms, values and controls to sexual activity outside of marriage, and illegitimate births are still considered sinful. The initial discrimination against, and injustice towards, teenage mothers still prevails in many societies. As a response to this concern, many African governments have made strong commitments to ensure that pregnant girls and teenage mothers can attend school. However, according to the Human Rights Watch (2018) report, countries like

Morocco and Sudan still make use of morality laws which allow them to criminally charge pregnant teenage girls with adultery, indecency, or extra-marital sex.

Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone and Tanzania still ban pregnant girls and teenage mothers from government schools. In Tanzania, pregnant girls are arrested and harassed by the police who force them to reveal who impregnated them. In May 2018, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice accepted a case brought against the government of Sierra Leon for its refusal to allow pregnant girls to attend public schools (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

As mentioned above, girls who become pregnant in many African countries are banned from education. Many countries also do not have policies for re-entry in education after giving birth (Human Right Watch, 2018). Some countries with high rates of teenage pregnancies, such as Angola and Burkina Faso, lack policies to manage teenage pregnancy in school. Progress is evident in 26 African countries (some of them are South Africa, Kenya, Zambia), including Namibia, that have laws and policies that protect teenage mothers' education during pregnancy and motherhood. However, laws and policies that guarantee re-entry are often poorly carried out and not well-monitored to ensure schools comply with them (Human Right Watch, 2018).

Even in countries with good policies, teenage mothers who are still in school face obstacles in returning to school after giving birth. When it comes to education, some schools prioritise moral arguments in order to exclude and mistreat teenage mothers. The argument is that allowing teenage mothers to continue their education will normalise out-of-wedlock pregnancies, liberate teenage girls from punishment, and set in motion a causal chain in which more girls will become pregnant (Human Right Watch, 2018).

Correspondingly, based on the critiques of motherhood, the life and goals of being a learner are not compatible with what society and women themselves, expect of a good mother. The assumption of conflict is, therefore, guaranteed (Ngabaza, 2010). In addition, Ngum Chi Watts, Liamputtong and Mcmichael. (2015) explain that teenage motherhood happens at a crucial developmental stage of teenagers' lives, a period of adolescence which is important in the life of human development due to intense

experience of physical and emotional changes. Ngum Chi Watts et al. (2015) further explain that this period is very critical because of its biological and physiological changes. This is a transition from childhood to adulthood.

UNICEF (1992) supports this view that during adolescence, teenagers develop in many areas, such as attitudes and behaviours with regard to sexuality. Fleming (1990) argues that the adolescence period can be marked by poor cognitive development, which also affects decision-making by teenagers if they do not get assistance from relevant sources, such as parents, teachers, social workers, or health professionals. During this time, a great deal of psychological support is required because it can be a perplexing stage of life, ranging from ignorance to moral breakdown (Helge, 1989). It can also include sexual abuse of vulnerable female teenagers (McMahon, 1995) and public ignorance about early menarche (the first occurrence of menstruation) (Ngum Chi Watts et al., 2015; McMahon, 1995; Creatsas, 1993).

Teenage mothers who lack parental support find their responsibilities overwhelming and intimidating. The life of a mother-learner, like motherhood, is defined by societal, cultural, and institutional arrangements (Coser, 1974). Again, as with motherhood, what defines the ideal mother-learner is most clearly seen in critiques of her role's limits (Karim, 2015). The burden of motherhood, as well as the pressures placed on teenage mothers by gender expectations, has resulted in dropouts, which adds to the already existing problem (Helge, 1989). To overcome the difficulties of this developmental stage, this study agrees with Alade (1989), who claims that most teenagers require support, counselling and require assistance and protection in order to become empowered to effectively deal with many of the challenges they may face.

The concern of teenage motherhood and education in relation to gender inequality, which I will discuss in the following section, was influenced by social and cultural constructed claims of gender expectations alluded in the preceding section.

2.6 Teenage motherhood, education and gender inequality within our society

Considering the above whereby teenage motherhood is regarded as a social problem, it is also framed as the contributing factor to inequalities between mother-learners, father-learners and other learners regarding educational access and achievements (Ntinda,

Thwala & Dlamini, 2016). Researchers such as Karim (2015) and Moonga (2014) agree that in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries teenage mothers are losing the battle for equal access to education due to many challenges facing them.

According to Bhana et al. (2010) these challenges are complicated and interrelated as they are influenced by culture, gender and social power. Some of these challenges are influenced by the different role expectations and responsibilities which still exist in our societies between boys and girls. The gender role expectations not only predispose boys and girls to behave differently in their specific contexts, but they influence the ways they live and how they make meaning of their lives (Rao-Gupta, 2002).

In reality the gender expectations stem from the idea that certain characteristics, forms of behaviour, roles and needs are natural for boys, while other qualities and roles are natural for girls (Chacarova, 2003). Rao-Gupta (2002) further indicates that social and cultural gender creations reproduce and shape female and male behaviour, particularly in the area of sexuality and sex. Their social identity is thus shaped by the gender beliefs which stem from the idea that certain characteristics such as having sex, being the head of the family, looking after cattle and owning properties are 'natural' for men, while other qualities and roles such as nurturing, and child care are 'natural' for women (Chacarova, 2003). It is because of these socially constructed ideologies of how girls should act and behave in social situations that prevents teenage school-going mothers from participating fully in education and completing their education (Dlamini, 2016).

According to Chacarova (2003), the social gender expectations result in education being regarded as a low priority for teenage mothers because once one becomes a mother, socially and culturally she is expected to know and perform the basics of being a good mother, such as full-time caring and nurturing. Furthermore, Bhana et al. (2010) note that the burden of pregnancy and having a child are feminised and are regarded as the responsibilities of women.

Dlamini (2016) in her study conducted in South Africa also concurs with Bhana et al. (2010) and Chacarova (2003) that the global gender patterns reflect that it is primarily girls and women who carry the burden of caring for a child in a household. They further assert that because of social and gender expectations in society most of the teenage

mothers become victims of social stigmatisation, which in most cases, forces them to drop out of school. Education plays a central role in the social and economic development of any country and community by enhancing the quality of life of its citizens (UNESCO, 2010).

In addition, educating girls today will help future generations. According to UNESCO (2012), data clearly indicates that if all females in developing countries completed primary education, child mortality would drop by 6% which would save nearly 1 million lives annually. Also, maternal deaths, which the UN states are largely preventable, would reduce by two thirds. Even though these are possibilities, gender inequality in educational opportunities and outcomes have emerged from the literature as a major concern among teenage mothers. Gender inequality in education needs proper intervention and strategies that can contribute to global justice (Barmao-Kiptanui et al., 2015).

Thus, this study is important because it not only documents the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, but it also supports and encourages teenage mothers to complete all levels of education. Through the completion of education teenage mothers have an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills that enable them to compete effectively in the labour market in the future (Bhana et al., 2010). In this context, Blume and Zembar (2011) concur with the fact that education is very important in the life of teenage mothers, as it provides them with an opportunity to learn the socio-emotional and life skills required to navigate and adapt to a changing world. King and Winthrop (2015) are of the opinion that girls' education is an investment in human capital that promotes economic growth, and increases a country's human development and well-being as well.

Barmao-Kiptanui et al. (2015) and Blume and Zembar (2011) further assert that education is central in developing a girl's capabilities, empowering her, promoting awareness and critical thinking, enabling her to claim all the other basic human rights and help her make more informed decisions. A person who is emancipated and transformed can face any challenges that come in her or his way.

The aforementioned multidisciplinary studies point to teenage mothers being vulnerable and underrepresented in the education system in both developing and developed countries. Their vulnerability, can be mitigated through effective interventions that support the educational welfare of teenage mothers as well as improve protective factors in children's welfare and upbringing (Holgate, Evans & Yuem, 2006).

Previous studies have demonstrated that there are more challenges than support mechanisms for teenage girls in school. Thus, the findings from the literature reviewed above indicate that there is a need for a platform for society to recognize the individuality and uniqueness of teenage mothers' lived experiences, as well as to identify supportive strategies that give teenage school-going mothers and their children a fair chance of success (Holgate et al., 2006).

The willingness of social agencies to recognize the multifaceted nature of the difficulties faced by teenage mothers, as well as their need for coordinated multi-support, is critical to the success of such involvement (Alade, 1989). Policies aimed at lowering teenage conception rates must also be reconsidered because they are based on the assumption that lowering teenage birth rates can reduce poverty and play an important role in the fight against social exclusion (Daguerre & Nativel, 2006), and thus no proper intervention is in place. Schools have the obligation to promote gender equality.

2.7 Teenage pregnancy policy in Namibia and other African countries

The issue of gender inequality and oppression against women and girls has a long history and is still an ongoing phenomenon. Feminists and sympathisers are working very hard to make sure that women and girls' rights are protected (Graig, 2014; Heisser-Biber, 2014; Chiponda, 2014; Haipinge, 2013). Before independence in 1990, pregnant girls were not allowed to attend school (Kapenda, 2012). They were immediately expelled from school once the management found out they were pregnant. As a result, many girls suffered the consequences of being uneducated, in comparison to the boys who impregnated them. Such exclusion is referred to as gender inequality and oppression against teenage mothers, because of the unequal treatment between teenage fathers and teenage mothers (Bayu, 2019; Ifechelobi, 2014). It is because of this gender

inequality within our society that led the international communities to formulate conventions as commitment to gender equality. Notably, as described in the previous sections, teenage mothers have been unfairly pushed to the margins of society because of the social construction of teenage motherhood, which has led them to suffer in the hands of those who are supposed to protect them.

The Teenage Pregnancy Policy is still confined to the traditional way of living, and fails to embrace the reality which is prevailing in our society today. As a remedy to protect teenage mothers from educational exclusion, Namibia has made progress in terms of the enrolment of girls in primary school even though the issue of teenage pregnancy is continuing to hinder this progress (Ministry of Education of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC), 2012). Fortunately, the government and relevant stakeholders in Namibia are still implementing measures to address the challenges faced by girl-children as the educational problem of girls and teenage mothers has not fallen on deaf ears. It has led to a collaboration of global initiatives to find ways of dealing with this distressing situation. At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, particular emphasis was placed on female education, not only as a fundamental human right, but also as an important factor in economic and social development (UNESCO, 2003).

Female education became part of the discussion because pregnancy among learners has become a major social problem facing many countries in the world. Furthermore, teenage pregnancy is preventing them from finishing their education, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the reported cases of teenage pregnancy are the highest in Africa.

Education in Namibia has been cited as a critical factor in the development of nations and the achievement of Vision 20/30 goals (MoEAC, 2012). During the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, Namibia, among other countries, consented to various international commitments on gender equality. Some of these are Education for All, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the UN Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child, Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (MoEAC, 2012). Any country committed to these international instruments has the obligation to extend equal educational rights to children, including girls, who could become pregnant before completing their schooling (Runhare & Vanderyar, 2012). For this reason, Namibia has committed to a more

progressive policy path by not discriminating against pregnant and teenage school-going mothers. In line with those human rights, Namibia has pledged to become a knowledge-based, highly competitive, industrialised country and eco-friendly nation, with sustainable economic growth and a high quality of life. If this pledge were to become a reality, then it would have a great impact on our teenage girls' self-esteem and self-realisation of their dreams towards high educational attainment (MoEAC, 2012).

As a fulfilment of the commitments made in Jomtien during the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, and with the ratification of international conventions which call for gender equity in education, the government of Namibia developed a policy which allows teenage mothers to remain in school. The policy is part of a wider strategy to improve the education of teenage mothers and is meant to be a key step towards the attainment of basic education for all school-going mothers. According to Kapenda (2012), teenage motherhood is a global social concern with far reaching consequences. The re-entry policy provides teenage school-going mothers with a second chance to complete their education and enjoy its benefits. This policy is called, Education Sector Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (MoE, 2012, p. 3). The Learner Pregnancy Policy has clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders affected by the policy in the prevention and management of learners' pregnancy, such as the roles of school principals, teachers and parents in terms of final responsibility for the implementation of the policy. The main objective, as stated in the policy, is to "improve the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in Namibia, with the ultimate aim of decreasing the number of learner pregnancies and increasing the number of mother-learners who complete their education" (MoE, 2012, p. 3).

The policy is applicable to all primary and secondary schools in Namibia, including government and government-subsidized private schools. The intended aim of the policy is to serve the needs of all learners of school-going age, including learners over 18 years who are still attending school, in accordance with the Education Act 16/2001 and its accompanying regulations. In the case of pregnancy prevention, the policy clearly indicates that schools must provide all learners (both boys and girls) with better education on sexual and reproductive health, including the benefits of abstinence, the

risk of engaging in sexual activity at a young age, the appropriate use of contraceptives, as well as the right of both male and female learners to free and informed choice regarding sexual matters (MoE, 2012). The policy further indicates that every school must have a designated Life Skills teacher or teacher counsellors to assume the responsibility of giving information on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, mutual respect in relationships, self-esteem, empowerment, the right to sexual autonomy and alcohol-related issues to mention only a few (MoE, 2012).

The policy further states that if the prevention measures fail and learners do become pregnant the policy indicates that schools should make a greater effort to manage the situation by supporting pregnant learners, expectant fathers and mother-learners to continue with their education and the responsibilities of parenthood, without compromising the best interests of either the baby or the learner (MoE, 2012). Schools are also expected to provide pregnant learners with psychological support which includes encouragement to the teenage mothers in continuing their education before and after the baby's birth. School principals are urged to identify a support person to monitor the pregnant learner and follow up on her progress until she returns to school. The support person should also ensure that the expectant learner-father understands the importance of responsible fatherhood and that he must be discouraged from fathering more children while at school. The schools are also expected to offer educational support such as the provision of curriculum packages for use during leave of absence and subsequent return to school if needed by the pregnant learner to help her keep up with the syllabus.

The policy makes provision for a safe school environment where all teaching and non-teaching staff are expected to ensure that the school environment is safe and non-discriminatory towards pregnant learners, expectant fathers and their parents. The policy also stipulates that schools should keep an accurate record of learner pregnancies. The record would include information about any service the learner received from the school including the dropout period and subsequent return rates of mother-learners. In order to ensure effective implementation and policy awareness, the Ministry of Education published a summary of the policy in two national newspapers and provided hard copies for principals in primary and secondary schools (public and private) in Namibia. The school principals were urged to share the contents of the policy

with their staff members and make copies of the policy accessible to all learners and their parents (MoE, 2012).

In this study I argue that the policy has some legal loopholes that can be used by school administrators to discriminate against teenage school-going mothers compared to their male counterparts. For example, no training was given to the teachers on how to deal with teenage pregnant cases at school. In this regard, Hubbard (2008) states that in many African societies there are no concerted efforts to effectively ensure that girls who fall pregnant access their rights to formal education. In addition, in Namibia the policy that allows teenage mothers back to school was received positively only by human rights activists and legal experts, but was opposed by local communities due to traditional views on premarital and teenage sexuality. Chilisa (2002), and Bayona and Kandji-Murangi (1996) argue that negative perceptions of teenage mothers in view of African socio-cultural values and traditional practices on marriage and motherhood have had an impact on socially labelling teenage mothers as unsuitable for formal schooling, as they are believed to contaminate other schoolgirls.

In addition, literature reveals that there are divided thoughts among the Namibian stakeholders in education, as there are some parents, teachers, non-governmental organisations and individuals who support the policy, but there are also still some parents, teachers and individuals who believe that the policy has made it acceptable for girls to fall pregnant, and does not invoke strict enough repercussions for teenage pregnant girls (Iimene 2015; Kapenda, 2012). Nhongo (2018) confirms this sentiment by showing that teenage pregnancies among school-going girls have increased since the introduction of the policy, which has raised concerns that it is not being implemented correctly. They argue that the special treatment and attention that is accorded to the teenage mothers may be sending the wrong message to other girls. On a different platform, one member of the Namibian parliament, Elna Dienda, who was part of a parliamentary committee that visited all the regions to investigate the pregnancy policy, expressed her concern. Teenage Pregnancy Policy implementation as high rate of pregnancy among learners are being reported which resulted in high rate of school drop outs (Nhongo, 2018).

Iimene's (2015) study conducted in the Oshigambo circuit in the Oshikoto region, Namibia, has also highlighted that there is a need for combined efforts to address pregnant learners and/or mother-learners' problems at home and at school. He emphasises that there is a lack of awareness of the problem by teachers and parents on how to implement the provisions of the policy. Some teachers claim that they are not trained to deal with cases of pregnant learners in case the teenage mothers feel sick or go into labour at school. Furthermore, some of the recommendations made are that the Ministry of Education should revisit the policy to address issues such as the dress code of teenage mothers, coming up with strategies on how the school can help teenage pregnant learners not to walk long distances by providing them with accommodation and health facilities closer to schools. These are some of the challenges that are experienced by teenage mothers. They make it difficult for them to attend school regularly and successfully.

South Africa is one of the African countries that introduced the teenage pregnancy re-entry policy. According Ngabaza and Shefer (2013), before 1994, exclusionary practices were common and the majority of those who fell pregnant failed to resume their education. Because of the exclusionary practices the re-entry policy was first adopted in 2007 and latest review is gazetted in Department of Basic Education (2021) in order to allow teenage pregnant girls and teenage mothers to complete school successfully. Notwithstanding the new policy, there are inconsistencies between policy implementation and teenage mothers lived experience in school. For example, according to Matshotyana (2010), in her study conducted in South Africa, some schools located in Khayelitsha do not provide any means of support to pregnant and parenting learners. The findings revealed that teachers complain that pregnant learners conceal their pregnancy from the school, and from the parents for fear of being expelled from schools which makes it difficult for teachers to identify them and intervene in the learner pregnancy issue, in spite of the re-entry policy provision. The report emphasises that, in the absence of proper guidelines on how to handle learner pregnancy at school, some learners fail to report their pregnancy to the teachers, as they are not sure of their confidentiality.

Kenya has introduced a re-entry policy for teenage mothers which was passed in 1994. This policy, just like in other African countries, has been plagued by weak and

inconsistent implementation (Wekesa, 2010). The inconsistencies included how teachers identified pregnant girls in their respective schools.

UNESCO (2018, p. 40) reports that "policy implementation is weak and lacks community awareness and implementation frameworks or guidelines in Kenya". On the one hand, teachers are claiming that because there is no forced medical screening some teenage mothers never reveal that they are pregnant, and they regard this as exploitation of the duration of their stay in school as intended in the policy. On the other hand, this prolonged duration is in favour of the teenage mothers as this helps the pregnant schoolgirls develop resilience necessary for return to school as a mother-learner (Wekesa, 2010).

Even though the three countries (Namibia, South Africa and Kenya) introduced the teenage pregnancy policies in their countries, the major weakness and concern, regardless of the presence of the policies, lies in the implementation, particularly at school level. The literature supports these findings, especially the fact that the policy brought misunderstanding and miscommunication between teachers, parents and learners about learner pregnancy policy (Iimene, 2015; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013; Wekesa, 2010). Previous studies have indicated that re-entry policies are often not consistently applied because of a lack of knowledge at district or school level, or because of arbitrary and context-specific decisions made about their application (UNESCO, 2014). UNESCO (2018, p. 40) further reports that "While the general policy and legislation in the country is strong, the main challenge highlighted is the lack of proper implementation of the policy in Namibia and there is a need for more training and awareness, comprehensive inspections, increased human resources, enhanced accountability and coordination".

It is evident from the literature findings that the implementation of re-entry policy is questionable. Hence, this study seeks to find out if there is any support given to teenage mothers as a response to the implementation of the teenage pregnancy policy as intended. Since the teenage mothers are the ones who experience teenage motherhood and schooling, their lived experiences on the implementation of the policy are of great importance. This study seeks to find possible modalities on how to minimize many

challenges faced by teenage mothers, teachers and parents in implementing the policy. The issuing section is presenting the gap as identified from literature review.

2.8 The gap in literature

Literature exists with many views around this phenomenon of teenage motherhood and pregnancy among learners in sub-Saharan Africa (Vyskocil, 2018; Dalian, 1998). However, research into the lived experiences of motherhood and education, particularly the enabling and constraining factors that teenage mothers face when they remain or go back to school is not well documented. Furthermore, when I explored literature on pregnancy among Namibian learners, I found that the research into the actual, lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in the rural primary and junior secondary schools who are raising children while attending school has received little attention, particularly in the context of Okalongo. The literature so far has failed to expose the difficulties embedded in the issues surrounding the lived experiences of teenage mothers returning to school. Thus, I find it necessary to document the lived experiences of teenage mothers between the ages of 15 and 20. Furthermore, no feminist study has ever included the community under investigation. As a result, feminist theory has emerged as an appropriate theoretical framework for this study, assisting in the development of an understanding of the issues from a feminist perspective. Stephens (2004) supports the argument that reproduction and mothering are central to theories of patriarchy and women's unequal position in our society, and this study employs feminist theory to address both patriarchy and inequality among women in our society. As a result, there is no doubt that early childbirth can be seen as both a cause of teenage mothers' subordinate position in society because they gave birth too early, and a means of disempowerment due to the status of being a mother. Despite the critical nature of teenage pregnancy and motherhood in feminist literature, feminists have engaged with teenage motherhood significantly. According to Macleod (2014), the current literature on teenage pregnancy focuses on public health, medical, and psychological writing rather than the lived experiences of teenage mothers.

I have also noticed that trends and perceptions of teachers, parents, and other education stakeholders on learner pregnancy policy (Iimene, 2015; Shaningwa, 2007), and teenage pregnancy (UNAIDS, 2011; Anyolo, 2008) are well documented. However, there is a gap between theory and practice regarding policy implementation, and this

study seeks to bridge that gap because the outcome will determine whether or not the policy is implemented as intended. In support of the aforementioned claim Bhana et al. (2010) point out that there is still a scarcity of literature from an educational standpoint on the reality of the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. The teenage mothers must tell us how they balance motherhood and learning, as well as the extent to which they feel truly accepted and supported in schools.

2.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review literature pertaining to the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in developing and developed countries. To this end, the chapter reviewed literature on the concepts of teenage motherhood and education, lived experiences of teenage mothers of schooling and motherhood, influences of social and cultural on the education of teenage mothers, and the issue of teenage mothers and gender inequality in education. While there has been some research conducted on teenage mothers, there still a need for additional studies that investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in rural primary and secondary schools to determine the enabling factors contributed to their remaining in school and to identify the constraining factors that dispose teenage mothers to dropping out of schools. Furthermore, it can be argued based on the literature reviewed that teenage mothers are generally faced many challenges of gender inequality in education that are influenced by social and cultural expectations within our societies. The gap identified from literature based on this review provided a justification of my study.

In addition, the results of the previous studies as reviewed in this chapter would be useful in discussing the findings of my study, the theoretical and conceptual framework discussed in the next chapter also had its foundation in this literature review. This is because there is a need for employing theory which explains the conditions of teenage pregnant and mother-learners, to understand how teenage mothers experienced motherhood and schooling in the previous studies in comparison to my study.

The outline of key ideas and concepts pertaining to the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers presented in this chapter lays the foundation for the development of a concept of teenage motherhood and education in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Theorising teenage motherhood and education: feminist theory

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the literature review that I presented in chapter 2. However, unlike in the preceding chapter where I revised research literature, in this chapter I discuss the theoretical literature that informs my study to construct the theoretical and conceptual framework for the conduct of this inquiry.

In Chapter 2, the issue of teenage mothers dropping out of school was raised as a concern, as it contributes to the already existing issue of gender inequality in education. Furthermore, from the literature reviewed, I have noted that teenage mothers are still confronted with issues such as stereotyping and discrimination, as they pursue their primary and secondary education. This study opted for a feminist theory because women are affected when it comes to gender inequality in education and they continue to suffer the consequences of teenage motherhood in schools in the hands of those in power such as elders, teachers and other learners (Iimene, 2015; Sibeko, 2012).

Feminist theory, as noted by Niilenge (2008), is better placed to explain how women's discrimination is often influenced by tradition, culture, and political circumstances. In the context of this study, Namibian teenage school-going mothers have a unique perspective of educational and social injustices due to their vulnerable position in society. This has left them struggling to navigate and overcome discriminatory practices related to gender and ethnicity in primary and secondary schools, including higher education (McLeod, 2013).

Based on the statistics presented in Chapter 1.4, many teenage mothers drop out of school and only a minority remain. Thus, this study investigates the enabling and constraining factors experienced by the minority group of teenage school-going mothers who decided to remain in school, as they strive to continue their education. I decided to investigate their lived experiences because their dual responsibilities in the education system are not well documented. Furthermore, literature shows that teenage mothers still experience exclusion and marginalization, not only from a historical point of view, but from current society as well (SmithBattle, 2012). In light of the above, I believe that foregrounding their lived experience can enable an understanding of the

lives and decisions of teenage school-going mothers to emerge. Moreover, it enables counter-discourses and alternative stories of teenage motherhood to be heard and revealed. In an effort to understand the issues raised and find answers to the research questions, the study is informed by the feminist theory which illuminates gender issues, with the aim of empowering and giving voice to the marginalised group.

The study assumes that teenage mothers' experiences are shaped by culture, social, political, and economic situations, based on the environment where they come from. McLeod (2013) argues that there are political situations, and many education settings, which are dominated by cultures that have not considered the unique position of teenage school-going mothers. This means that there are practices within our society and school's environment that inhibit teenage mothers from fully participating in their education. In many cases their opinions, based on their situations, are not taken into consideration, because they are teenage mothers. As a result, many in the schools automatically disregard the opinions of the teenage school-going mothers, and the benefits of the unique perspectives they can bring to the school.

Women by nature are knowledgeable, innovative, transformational and co-operative, but their uniqueness is violated just for being teenage mothers in a community which regards out of wedlock pregnancy as an abomination and unacceptable (Herrera, Duncan, Green & Skaggs, 2012). Furthermore, McLeod (2013) and SmithBattle (2012) claim that teenage school-going mothers are faced with social stigmatization and stereotypes, which perceive them as socially irresponsible, unmotivated and incompetent parents. Furthermore, Shaw et al. (2006) note that teenage mothers are stereotyped because society believes that they do not contribute to the economy, as they rely only on a social grant. As a result of this stereotyping, teenage mothers become the victims of social exclusion that leads to marginalization, stigmatization and denied access to various social and educational opportunities.

It is against this background that this chapter is structured into six sections. The introduction of the chapter represents the introduction of the study, followed by the explanation of my understanding of feminism where I highlight the definition, origin and background of how feminism has evolved over time. In section three I present my reasons for employing the feminist theory, while in section four I present the feminist

theory perspective. In section five I present some of the cultural and social discourses that can have an influence on lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. The latter section is the conclusion of the chapter where I summarise the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study.

3.2. My understanding of feminism: Origin and definition

After a long history that started as far back as 1830, with the first wave of feminism of making the world better for women, women are still being harassed in their daily lives, and are still fighting for their rights and empowerments. Such struggle has created an ongoing debate on issues related to women's subordination all over the world (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). It is for this reason that feminism came into existence, intending to solve women's problems and to put an end to their unjust treatment. It is the voice of women in times when they are not able to speak or to express their feelings and wishes (hooks, 2001).

3.2.1 Origin and definition of feminism

According to Weiner (1994) and Giddens (2001), Hunburtine Auclert coined the term 'feminism' in the late 1880s in her journal *La Citoyenne as La Feminitè*, where she criticized the domination of women, and claimed women's rights as part of the emancipation promised by the French Revolution. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the term had first appeared in English in Britain, then in America in the 1910s, and in the Arab World as 'Niswia' by the 1920s.

Weiner (1994) and Giddens (2001) go on to say that feminism is derived from the Latin word *femina*, which means 'women' or 'women's issues. Other Western Feminism emerged through historical and political movements in the West, especially USA and Europe. However, African feminism is indigenous to Africa and it can contextualised to reflect African lived experiences of teenage mothers as it is now used the world over and is represented by various institutions and countries committed to activity on behalf of women's right and interests (Bhasin & Khan, 1999).

According to Ghorfati and Medini (2015), the term 'feminism' represents women's problems and suffering, as they dream for equal opportunities in societies where all the power, rules, wishes and orders are controlled by men. Furthermore, Faris (2013, p. 3)

argues that feminism came into existence because “women have traditionally been dehumanised by a male-dominated society, which they call patriarchy and that [it] has been always better to be a man”.

For Bhasin and Khan (1999), feminism is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation, and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women’s labour, fertility and sexuality, in the place of work and in society in general, and results in the conscious and deliberate action by women and men to transform this situation.

The primary hypothesis of feminism is that women in society are subordinated, oppressed, disadvantaged and treated unequally in comparison to men, and that their oppression is not legitimate, natural or justified in any way (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). It is for this reason that liberal feminism is concerned with females, not just as a biological class, but the female gender as a social class, and therefore feminists share the understanding that women’s oppression is tied to their sexuality (hooks, 2000). This is because women and men’s biological differences are reflected in the organisation of society and based on these differences, women have been treated as inferior to men (Walby, 1990). Madsen (2000) also asserts that whether feminism serves as a theory, a social movement or a political movement, it explicitly focuses on women’s experiences and highlights various forms of oppression that the female gender has been subjected to by society. It is a movement that advocates gender equality for women, and campaigns for women's rights and interests (Giddens, 2001).

Parpart et al. (2000) further explain that feminism seeks to remove all barriers to equal social, political and economic opportunities for women. Parpart et al. (2000) object to the notion that a woman’s worth is determined predominantly by her gender, and that women are inherently inferior, subservient or less intelligent than men. Therefore, the term ‘feminism’ can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights, opportunities and legal protection for women. This means that feminism involves two important aspects: academic pledge and political movement. Both lead to women’s integrity, and the end of prejudice in all forms (McAfee, 2018).

From the late nineteenth century to the present, the term ‘feminism’ has been associated with women's activism. It is useful to distinguish feminist ideas or beliefs from feminist political movements, because individuals have been concerned with, and theorized about, women's justice even when there has been no significant political engagement around women's subordination (Madsen, 2000; hook, 2000). Despite segregation and inequality, women have been able to stand up every time, and have been able to speak and express their problems, feelings, and wishes, thanks to feminism (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). Besides, women were able to spread it all over the world, make it a symbol of equality and make all people believe that men and women deserve equality in terms of all opportunities, respect and social rights (Bhasin & Khan, 1999).

According to Chiponda (2014), every feminist movement has its own philosophical and radical position regarding the basis and meaning of oppression or subordination of women. People usually wonder how feminism was able to pave the way for women in the world to become noticeable after forceful oppression that includes rape, killing and suffering for ages (Bailey, 1997). This was not easy, but it has become possible as feminists and scholars’ struggle against injustice, as explained in the three feminism waves in the ensuing sections.

3.2.1.1 First-Wave of Feminism

When speaking about the right to vote among women in this 21st century, people might get confused and tell you that all citizens (both men and women) have the right to vote, choose and give their opinions freely (Logan, 1993). However, this did not exist before, as the right to vote among the African women was granted between 1950 and 1975 (Schaeffer, 2020). The right to vote for women started with first-wave feminism which occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries but began in the 1830s.

First-wave feminism originally focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women, and the opposition to chattel marriage and ownership of married women (and their children) by their husbands. However, by the end of the nineteenth

century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women's suffrage[5] (Doull & Sethna, 2011).

The first-wave of feminism in Europe was stated in the famous work of Mary Wollstonecraft "*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*" (1792) (Craciun, 2002, Griffin, 1996, Janes, 1978) that is considered as a revolution in its own right. In her book, Wollstonecraft highlighted that women need to be educated because education is the best way to make women take up their place in society, as equivalents to men. In this wave, Virginia Woolf also wrote the book that was well-known about women's rights *"A Room of One's Own"* (1929) in which she supported Mary Wollstonecraft and others that encouraged women to fight for their rights. It was through the first-wave feminism that the awareness of women's voice and agency representation in society started to spread all over the world (Craciun, 2002).

In addition, first-wave feminism inspired other feminist movements all over the world to compel countries to allow women to vote, because before then only men were allowed to vote (Sneider, 2010). This process of feminism was supported by black women abolitionists such as Maria Stewart (1803–1879), Sojourner Truth (1797–1883), and Frances E.W. Harper (1825–1911). They promoted this activity for all black women (Coolidge, 1966).

During first wave feminism, women were still regarded by society as the property of their fathers or husbands (Doull & Sethna, 2011). This means that women were not permitted to do anything without the control or approval of men in private and mostly in public places (Anderson & Taylor, 2009). This domination of men over women mainly happened in human history and is still prevailing in our society. Society managed to allocate activities based on gender. Those activities made people judge women and gave them a stereotypical image if they failed to conform.

Women were seen as no more than a housekeeper, a mother and a wife (Faludi, 1991). They were perceived as objects and were deprived of the chance for self-realisation

[5] Women fighting for their rights to have access to vote in political elections

(Anderson & Taylor, 2009). In addition, women were required to be shy and humble (Phillips, 1995). This was the result of an oppressive system that left women without a voice in the public sphere (Anderson & Taylor, 2009).

Women recognised that to obtain an equal position in society, they must first acquire some level of political power. Thus, during World War I, members of the National Women's Party (NWP) held a strike in the United States of America (USA) outside the White House. They were carrying banners and writings about the undemocratic practices done by the government over women in America (Collins, 2000). They wanted to show the world that they were living in very bad situations, and to prove to other world leaders that there were no dreams and happiness for women in USA (Walker, 1995). They went on strike because they knew that Germany and a few other countries had already improved women's status including granting women suffrage, freedom and social rights. In that period, women institutions and organisations around the globe started to speak about women's rights to vote and express their thoughts (Coolidge, 1966).

The concept of first-wave feminism has influenced changes in Namibian laws regarding women's rights. Namibia gained independence from South Africa on March 21, 1990, and the Namibian women's movement has gained traction since then. Following independence, the Namibian constitution was drafted, and for the first time, women were granted the right to vote alongside men in a free and fair election, as well as the right to run for office. Given the country's discriminatory history, the Namibian government has enacted affirmative action policies such as the Local Authorities Act of 1992, which requires each political party endorse at least two women in local elections. This policy aided women in obtaining "37% of local seats in the 1992 elections" (Becker, 2010, p. 171).

The Married Persons Equality Act 1 of 1996 was one of the major demands of Namibia's post-independence women's movement. This equality bill abolished men's automatic marital power as well as their position as the head of the house. The act empowers women to sign contracts, register property in their own names, and serve as directors of corporations. Because of Namibia's past patriarchal influences, the Married Persons Equality Act has sparked much length debate in Namibian politics and society.

The opponents (all men) argued that women could never be equal to men based on their interpretations of African tradition and the Bible. Opponents of the bill claimed that it would interfere with 'God-given' gender relations, which were based on "traditional' African anxiety about the role of women in society (Berker, 2010, 171).

Thus, first-wave feminism promoted equal contract and property rights for women, opposing ownership of married women by their husbands. American first-wave feminism did not only end with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919, granting women voting rights (Drucker, 2018; Collins, 2000), but influenced and motivated other movements around the globe, included Namibia. The resolutions of the first wave feminism paved the way for the second wave.

3.2.1.2 Second-Wave of Feminism

The second-wave of feminism occurred between 1960s and 1980s soon after the Second World War (Beechey, 1977). During war men usually left their jobs to join the defence forces. According to Friedan (1963) women were allowed to occupy men position in the workforce. After the war the men returned and resume their positions which were occupied by the women. Thus, women were quietly expected to return to usual home activities to resume their life as loyal and subjugated wives to the men. However, women refused to be relegated to housework without pay because after having worked and being independent of male dominance during the war they developed sense of belonging in the public arena (Friedan, 1963).

Thus, as the first-wave of feminism fought for suffragette struggle for the vote, the second-wave of feminism came into existence to fight for both public and private injustices. Such injustices include rape, suppressed reproductive rights, domestic violence and unfair workplace safety (hooks, 1981, Beechey, 1977, Friedan, 1963).

Furthermore, the second-wave of feminism is characterised by a general feeling of solidarity among women fighting for equality. As a response to their demand of equal rights for both men and women in the workplace the second wave of feminism was motivated to locate women's experiences within notions of patriarchy and capitalism (Duski, 2005). Betty Friedan, Simone De Beauvoir, bell hooks and Gloria Steinem were some of the main feminists' leaders during this wave.

In her book *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan criticized patriarchy because it meant that women could only find achievement in childbearing and being housewives (Drucker, 2018; Friedan, 1963). Thus, the main aim of second-wave feminism was to focus on issues of inequality and discrimination, because the feminists felt that they were not listened to after many petitions' demanding that they be placed back onto their positions in the work force, and unrestricted access to reproductive rights, equal pay, and professional promotion in the work place (Drucker, 2018).

After a long struggle for their lost identity and their neglected dreams, and as a result of cultural and political inequalities as inseparably linked to patriarchy (Drucker, 2018), some women felt oppressed and in some places in the world they started to give up (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). However, the second-wave feminists, stood firm and encouraged women to understand how their personal lives reproduced sexist power structures (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015) if they continue to comply with the societal expectations of women.

The leaders of this movement demanded that issues related to gender equality be addressed first before any other development on matter related to women could be made (Parpart, et al., 2000). Therefore, they demanded to get total freedom in almost everything including economic, political, social and religious freedom (Doull & Sethna, 2011). The whole idea of the second-wave of feminism was to enable women to build their culture and become interested in various matters related to their wellbeing in society. For example, the idea of equality and women's identity was supported by many women (Gilligan, 1997), including black women in America and in Africa who wanted to eliminate the marks of racism and inequality (Rampell, 2010).

Second-wave of feminism acted against class discrimination and oppression brought on by capitalism by forming organisations such as the *Black Women Organized for Action* (BWOA) and the *National Black Feminist Organisation* (NBFO) (Springer, 2005). Both these organisations were aimed at eliminating discrimination on grounds of gender and race and influence national consciousness to enlighten the world that all women regardless of their colour, status, age or class are equal and they should be treated the same and with respect (Springer, 2005; Brown, 1994).

The leaders during the second-wave of feminism worked hard to empower society by rising awareness amongst women (Drucker, 2018). Ghorfati and Medini, (2015) assert that leaders of the second-wave tried to empower women and promised them a suitable place in society and not just by calling them women or a wife of or a daughter but prepared them to public sphere where they can be allowed to work just like men do. On the one hand, they started to ask about the right of women to be paid even when working in their own house (housewife) as a kind of citizen income (Drucker, 2018).

On the other hand, second-wave feminists showed people that women can live in society in harmony with men as long as they are given the opportunity to vote, to work and to marry. Moreover, they wanted to change the stereotypical ideas about the reality of feminism, not just as a women's right organisation, but also as an organisation for the privileges of all human beings in society (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015).

Moghissi (2007) asserts the second-wave feminism idea of equal opportunity was to raise awareness mainly for women and to build their identity and to understand their rights so that they define themselves and based their sense of self (Campell, 1999). Once women understand their rights they can define themselves based on their own explanation of who they are but not to depend on the definition that comes from society which it is based on discriminations and stereotyping (Correl, Judd, Park & Wittenbrink, 2010). For them, the only way to make women assume their rights of equality, dependency and freedom was by working on their real identity as they define themselves and deciding on what they wanted to be (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). The process of constructing women's identity paved the way and showed women in societies that they had the right to be equal and live their lives in the way they liked (Moghissi, 2007).

In Namibia, women are still fighting for their reproductive rights because abortion is still illegal for women and girls under Namibia's Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975, except in cases of incest, rage, or where the mother or child's life is in danger. Namibia inherited apartheid legislation from South Africa, a system of legislation that segregated and discriminated against non-white South Africans. Despite the fact that South Africa changed its law in 1996, Namibians continued to criminalize abortion (Saludeen & Adebayo, 2020). Thousands of Namibians have signed a petition calling for abortion

law reform in the fight for reproductive rights. However, some Namibians, mostly men and some women, are opposed to the petition because their religious beliefs do not allow for the termination of pregnancies.

Other African countries such as Mozambique and Ethiopia, have relaxed abortion laws, allowing girls under the age of 18 to seek abortions and terminate pregnancies of up to 16 weeks. If a woman is less than 13 weeks pregnant, she can have an abortion without giving a reason in South Africa (Saludeen & Adebayo, 2020).

The Namibian women have right to reproductive rights which include injectable, oral contraceptive male and female condoms However, not all women have access to contraceptives (MoHSS, 2000). In support, Assistant Representative of UNFPA in Namibia Loide Amkongo during the launch of 2018 state of world population report asserts that there is a large unmet need of contraceptives among Namibian women, with only 50% of women having access to contraceptives. This is caused by distances in accessing health facilities (Kapitako, 2018).

Thus, the struggle for women's rights continues, as it did not end with the second wave of feminism, as women of colour continued to face discrimination and inequality. Julia Wood (an American feminist professor and author), for example, was among those scholars who were dissatisfied and wanted to demonstrate to the public that a woman is a human being regardless of her race or identity, and she emphasized that the question is not whether you are a woman or not, but rather what kind of woman you are (Wood, 1993, 1992). This question was the key motive behind the introduction of third-wave feminism, and its emergence was not because the preceding waves failed, but because they were the first in the hierarchy of feminism.

3.2.1.3 Third-Wave of Feminism

Third-wave feminist thinking occurs from the 1990s to the present day. Rebecca Walker is the symbol of this wave. She used the term “third-wave feminism” for the first time in 1992 (Walker, 1995). According to Ghorfati and Medini (2015), third-wave feminism is informed by post-colonial and post-modern thinking. It is a response to the perceived failures of the first wave and the criticism against second-wave initiatives. This wave started with women who benefited from the privileges brought by the first

and second-wave feminists. Third-wave feminists normally define themselves as the most influential and stronger group, compared with all the other previous activities of feminisms. Schneiders (2000, p. 98) described the third-wave feminism as a movement of liberation which "is concerned not simply with the social, political, and economic equality of women with men but with a fundamental re-imagination of the whole of humanity about the whole of reality, including non-human creation". Third-wave feminists continue struggling for women's equality. The main concern for third-wave of feminism is closing the pay gap between men and women in the working place, reproductive rights, and inclusive education and eliminating gender violence within society (Dorey-Stein, 2015).

Ghorfati and Medini (2015) further explain that third-wave feminism was, by all accounts, an attractive and operational movement, and the reason behind its success was its leaders. Third-wave feminists were determined to prove that their movement is powerful and effective not only through words, but also by actions and decisions. In addition, their major and best significant goal was evading categorising women and removing stereotypical images. This new group of feminists was not looking only for political and social rights for women, but also encouraged women to participate in all the spheres of life, such as to take up leadership positions in politics, schools, and private companies among others. Another example is that during the third-wave feminism women were encouraged to have a say in their reproductive rights (Dorey-Stein, 2015). Furthermore, women were encouraged to go to school even if they are pregnant. This period also saw the appearance of many writers and scholars who wanted to make people believe that they cannot separate women from any activity in the society. Among those scholars is Judith Butler, a gender and social theorist. She has written many famous books including *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993) that discuss and criticize unfair rules and laws that discriminate against women put in place by the governments, and some anti-feminism organisations.

Another important contribution during the third-wave feminism were the concepts and proposals about cyber-feminism used by Donna Haraway (1987/1991). This helped women to be an important part of the development of technology, especially after the emergence and the evolution of new practices and knowledge (Ghorfati & Medini,

2015). Globalization was one of the main themes of feminism in the third-wave period (Kaplan, 2003).

Feminists wanted to restructure the influence that opposed feminist theory and politics and wanted to determine women's welfare and views to accommodate all groups of women (such as black, white, lesbian or transgender among others) with no exception (Phillips, 1995), but because of the mixed feelings that influenced gender inequality, restructuring did not reach its intended full support. Thus, feminists until today seek to be inclusive of the many diverse relationships and roles women fulfil (Kaplan, 2003). That is why many feminists, starting from the 1990s until now, are trying to prove that these feminists' theories and activities deserved respect and rewards in their different manifestations (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). They tried to gather the biggest number of participants from different places, races, and religions. They wanted to convince people of their importance by helping each other to overcome the segregation against women (Phillips, 1995).

Article 10 of the Namibian constitution articulates equality for all, and non-discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, and religion, social or economic status. Despite the constitutional provision, data from the Employment Equity Commission show that women hold only 22% of executive director positions and 32% of senior leadership positions in 2013-2014. (LAC, 2016). The transition from education to paid work is a critical stage that lays the groundwork for many of the inequalities that women face in the labour market throughout their working lives. Many women have entered the labour force, but they often have more difficulty finding their first job and earn less than men (LAC, 2017). Furthermore, it has been observed in Namibia that the educational choices made by young women and men perpetuate gender segregation in the labour market, with women underrepresented in business sectors and concentrated in health, educational, and administrative fields of work. To a large extent, these gender differences exist because women continue to bear the consequences of the unpaid but unpreventable domestic tasks of daily life, such as child care and housework (LAC, 2016).

The equality fought for by third-wave feminism is still present in our society. Women in Namibia will never achieve gender equality in the social, economic, and legal spheres

of Namibian society unless they are more involved in power-sharing and decision-making structures (LAC, 2017). In Namibia, the fight for gender equality is still being waged not only on a social but also on a political level (Hubbard, 2007). Pre-colonial Namibia appears to have been devoid of or suppressed discussions about alternative political systems (to traditional authorities) and power sharing (Hubbard, 2007). Today, the majority of people living in the post-apartheid reconstruction period are poor rural inhabitants. Their voices were silenced under colonial rule and apartheid, and they remain silent in independent Namibia, despite the fact that exercising their right to speak is critical to shaping and influencing national development that directly affects their lives (LAC, 2017).

According to Ahmed (2006), the third-wave of feminism is not strong enough to speak about women's rights because it lacks a unified goal, and it is often viewed as a continuation of the second wave. More importantly, it lacks a clear definition that allows it to distinguish itself and its various goals from second-wave feminism. What is important to note is that the above three waves had different high points in their respective eras. Women all over the world have been fighting for their rights, and on many occasions, they have been successful.

Even though women have succeeded, previous studies show that women, particularly teenage school-going mothers, face a number of educational challenges that prevent them from achieving the same level of success as teenage school-going fathers (Collins, 2000). I believe that because we are still serving the third-wave and for the sake of rights and inclusion, policymakers should consider the lived experiences of teenage mothers when developing policies for them. Only by addressing the needs of teenage mothers based on their experiences and feelings will the policy be meaningful to them. In general, teen mothers require a movement or someone who is fighting for them and understands what they are going through. Such a movement is required for teenage mothers to demonstrate their worth, disprove stereotypes, and maintain their self-efficacy (Salzman, 2006).

It is for this reason that the feminist theory is employed as a framework of analysis in this study because it is addresses gender related issues which are part of the focus of

this study. This study is investigating the enabling and constraining factors experienced by the teenage school-going mothers as they pursue their education.

In addition, the Feminist theory is employed to analyse data in this study because it provides the analytical tools to unravel influences of patriarchy in the Okalongo circuit in the Omusati region.

Feminist theory further gives me the linguistic infrastructure to explain my data, and to build a case that shows the social and political challenges teenage school-going mothers are dealing with, especially the perception that they are disobedient, and a bad influence on other learners (McLeod, 2013). These types of stereotypes predispose teenage school-going mothers to discrimination and stigmatization.

Within the lens of feminist theory, I can expand on the notion that teenage mothers not only face discrimination because of the double dilemma of being disobedient and a bad influence, but because their life is intersecting with socio-economic conditions, sexuality, class, and religion, in addition to gender. Each of these social identities is what prompted the feminist movements to rise and fight for women's rights against patriarchy and oppression. The same identities can place the teenage school-going mothers in the position to fight not one status but the intersection of all labels that lead to discrimination and stereotype (Salzman, 2006).

Finally, from the 1960s to the present, each of the feminist waves discussed previously has played an important role in shaping feminist theories and politics. They paved the way for other waves and activities to emerge and assist women in obtaining their social, political, cultural, religious, and sexual rights in their own distinct ways (Drucker, 2018). The section below discusses Feminist theory.

3.3 Feminist theory

A range of feminist theories were used in this study. According to deMarrais and LeCompte (1999), feminist theory is an extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, economics, women's studies, literary criticism, art history, psychoanalysis, and philosophy.

Anderson and Taylor (2009) further explain that feminist theory is a dominant existing sociological theory which evaluates the social status of women and men to use the knowledge obtained from individuals' experience to better women's lives. This study deals with gender issues as it aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality. Themes explored in feminist theory are very important to this study and include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression and patriarchy.

In addition, feminist theory is employed is this study to explain discrimination, patriarchy and oppression within our Namibian context, particularly of the Ovambadja community. While generally providing an analysis of social relations, feminist theory investigates reasons for gender inequality, and the advancement of women's rights and interests (Rosser, 2005). This study is based on the assumption that societal institutions (such as school, church, family and economic sectors) oppressed women and other oppressed groups, making them invisible and incapable by denying them a voice in the private and public sphere (Fine, 1993).

Thus, the feminist theory seeks to demolish a set of power relations, typically empowering the male-dominant research community at the expense of other groups whose voices are silenced (Fine, 1993). Feminists' ideas are relevant in this study because they seek to replace power relations with a different substantive agenda of empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality and representation for oppressed groups (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In doing so, feminism foregrounds issues of power, silencing and voicing, and questions the legitimacy of research that does not emancipate previously disempowered groups.

My interest in, and the significance of these theories, is that feminists support social justice and social transformation as they seek to study and redress many inequities and social injustices that continue to undermine and even destroy the lives of teenage mothers and their families (Hesser-Biber, 2014). This implies that throughout the history of the feminist movements the conditions and restricted laws against women have improved, and I am confident that the aims of this study will be achieved as the outcome of this study will contribute not only to knowledge about teenage school-going mothers but to the formulation of polices related to teenage mothers in future.

In addition, I am drawn to feminist theory as it highlights some of the strategies on how to intervene and replace all forms of gender oppression with a different view of empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality and representation of the oppressed group (Cohen, et al., 2011). Thus, feminist thought considered in this study is concerned with two overlapping objectives. First, it seeks to document the enabling and constraining (structural and cultural) factors experienced by teenage mothers in relation to inequity, men's supremacy and women's subjugation (Lindsey, 1997) and, secondly, it seeks to give a voice and to empower teenage school-going mothers to fight for their rights while studying (Fine 1993). This is hoped to contribute to the emancipation of other teenage mothers in future.

I am arguing that even though feminists contributed a great deal in fighting for the welfare of women, there is still more that needs policy and law makers' attention. The disparities gap between men and women still needs to be addressed, as does fighting to make sure teenage school-going mothers continue to have access to education and all necessary life opportunities, without any discrimination (MoE, 2012). In fact, the ideology of feminism does not change; it is still a fight against the patriarchy that enforces women's subordination and discrimination (hooks, 2000).

The feminist thought that couches data analysis in this study seeks to be inclusive in the education of teenage school-going mothers from all social life to avoid the consequences of early pregnancies which only disadvantage girls as they are unable to complete their education. It is in light of this argument that this study is foregrounding the lived experiences of 16 teenage school-going mothers to highlight factors for consideration.

I understand that the feminist theory idea goes further than merely documenting inequality and powerlessness (Makama, 2013). According to Thompson (1992), women oppression is concealed due to the fact that in most cases they comply and sometimes conspire with their oppressor. Thompson (1992) notes that feminists' perspectives are appropriate for a study of this nature because they challenge the representation of teenage school-going mothers as passively oppressed and victimised in schools and visualise women as active agents of their own lives, even when they are unable to control the circumstances surrounding them (Hedstrom & Senarathna, 2015).

Thus, for this study, I did not only elucidate the subservience and subjugation of teenage school-going mothers but went on to challenge the origins of those social injustices (such as unfair treatment, discriminations due to gender or age) and imbalances of power relations, as they have been experienced by them. Their responses offered multiple strategies that can influence change to ensure equality and full participation of teenage mothers in their education and social justice for both teenage fathers and teenage mothers in the future (Heisser-Biber, 2014).

In sum, this study is framed by the feminist perspective because the study is about women issues, especially teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences as they pursue their education. Thus, efforts at documenting their lived experiences might lead to the elimination of such harmful practices which impede their effective education outcomes and contribute to the many challenges faced by teenage school-going mothers. As noted earlier, this makes teenage motherhood a feminist issue and thus feminism is considered the utmost significant theory to provide the theoretical and conceptual framework (Chiponda, 2014) of this study.

3.4 Feminist perspectives

Feminists emerged from various political and social situations, and they address a variety of issues concerning women in different ways. These issues include the right to an education, access to economic resources, the right to participate in decision-making (both public and private), the recognition of property rights, and the abolition of domestic violence (Haipinge, 2013). Their theoretical approaches differ on how to understand, challenge, and eliminate patriarchy. The origins of patriarchy and the establishment of male dominance can be traced back to various factors and forces, with each point of view emphasizing different causes, consequences, and solutions (Hutchison & Smith, 2004).

Most feminists recognise that feminism is theoretically difficult and distinct because it is not a unified or global body of thought, and it is rooted in contestations and contradictions (Abbott, Wallace & Tyler, 2005). Based on this claim, and in addition to the ideology of the three waves I mentioned earlier, I chose to position this study theoretically and achieve its goals by combining different feminist perspectives. To

construct a theoretical framework, I combined some aspects of each of the chosen feminism viewpoints.

According to Chiponda (2014), it is important to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers within the context of broader philosophical and political feminist perspectives such as liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, black feminist, African feminist, and intersectionality. I have opted for the six feminisms because all have common thread that binds them together to launch a political struggle skewed towards women as they are already left out; hence the need to redress their position of already disadvantaged as compared to their male counterparts. Because women are not a homogeneous group and thus cannot be understood from a single hegemonic or universalizing feminist perspective, it was decided to provide an in-depth critical investigation and description of the phenomenon under study (Chiponda, 2014; Bhasin & Khan, 1999). In addition, the six differ in terms of the root causes of women's subordination, and solutions. Furthermore, I felt that bringing different lenses to this study could be more valuable and significant because it helped to make the subordination of teenage school-going mothers fully visible in its diversity (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993).

For chronological reasons, I begin with liberal feminism because it is the preferred type to anchor my study in comparison to other seven feminisms discussed in this Chapter. Each point of views is discussed briefly below.

3.4.1 Liberal feminism

According to Weiner (1994), liberal feminism is the first form of feminism, and it is rooted in the tradition of 16th and 17th-century liberal philosophy, which emphasized equality and freedom. It is the result of first-wave feminism, which emphasizes equal representation of all women in society's public and political life. Their emphasis was on women's legal and political rights, as well as the argument that women should be treated equally with men in the family, society, and the workplace. Liberal feminism is theoretically supported by the "principle of individualism" (Mandell, 1995, p. 6), which means it emphasised the rights of all individuals to freedom and autonomy.

Furthermore, liberals were primarily concerned with establishing a policy that advocates for women as human beings in their own right, rather than as men's property. They advocated for women's suffrage and, like subsequent second-wave feminism, fought against women's inferiority and mistreatment (Abbott et al., 2005). Their main arguments against unequal rights and legal systems were the main construction and reproduction barriers that prevent women from sharing their ideas outside of the family and home. Their argument was that women should have equal educational opportunities, and that under the law, women should have the right to vote and own property.

Despite being an older form of feminism, it is the most prevalent and widely accepted of all forms of feminism for believing in self-government, which allows for social changes in our society (Walby, 1997). Mary Wollstonecraft, the first Western feminist theorist (cf. 3.2.1.1), debated in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that women's reasoning abilities were equal to men's and that it was inappropriate to deny women political rights based on biological sex differences (Jane, 1978; Griffin, 1996; Craciun, 2002).

Wollstonecraft (1972, as cited in Parpart, et al., 2000) argued that the reason women appeared to be academically inferior was due to their inferior education, and thus was a result of inequality rather than a justification for it. Liberal feminists, according to Parpart et al., (2000), have used the distinction between biological truths and social norms when drawing the distinction between sex (biological) and gender (historical, social, and cultural) differences between women and men. Thus, liberal feminists sought to alter those norms after concluding that women's subordination is a result of gendered norms rather than a biological sex.

The purpose of enacting laws and policies, according to liberal-feminist activists, is to ensure that they do not discriminate against women and that they provide equal opportunities for women in all aspects of life. They debated that women are not fundamentally different from men in terms of ability and intelligence, but that in many cases, they are denied the opportunity to participate in activities of their choice due to legal and cultural barriers imposed on them (Jaggar, 1983; Wallby, 1997). Some of

these barriers include legislation that gives men and women different responsibilities, obligations, and opportunities (Jaggar, 1983).

For example, laws prohibiting women from making their own decisions, laws affecting women's ability to work, such as gender-based job restrictions, and a lack of childcare facilities to assist mothers at work. According to liberal feminism, these barriers are not natural, but are deeply embedded in the society's customs, laws, and traditions, and they have successively continued to limit women's potential and rights, such as female education (Walby, 1997).

Walby (1997) agrees with Eisenstein (1981) that men and women are not different, and thus they cannot be treated differently under the law. As a result of these concerns, liberal feminists demand equal rights and opportunities for women to be liberated from their subordination. She emphasizes that women should have the same rights as men, as well as equal educational and employment opportunities. In light of this, Chiponda (2014) explains that liberal feminism focuses on removing all legal barriers that prevent women from realising their full potential in all public social institutions such as education, employment, and politics. Weiner (1994, p. 54) clarifies that women's equality and liberation can be achieved through transformations without enacting “any radical changes in economic, political, educational, or cultural life”.

I find liberal feminism to be a useful theory to anchor my research because I use some of its principles as lenses to examine the structural and cultural lived experiences of the teenage school-going mothers under study. Reproductive rights, sexual harassment, education, affordable childcare, affordable health care, and bringing to light the occurrence of sexual and domestic violence against women are some of the issues important to liberal feminists that are being examined (Dibben, 2015). There is a resilient emphasis on teenage mothers' involvement in the public sphere from this theory. According to Beasley (1999), public residency and achieving equality with men in the public domain are central to liberal feminism.

I apply this principle to understand how teenage school-going mothers are perceived and involved in school, community, and home activities. I am looking into their participation to see if they are being discriminated against or denied equal rights to

pursue their own interests. I am also curious to see if teenage mothers are given the same freedoms and opportunities as teenage fathers. According to Jaggar (1983), in a discriminatory situation, an individual woman does not receive the same consideration as an individual man. Unlike a man, who is judged on his actual interests and abilities, a woman's interests and abilities are assumed to be limited in certain ways due to her gender. In other words, a man is evaluated based on his merits as an individual, whereas a woman is evaluated based on her assumed merits as a female.

Similarly, liberal feminism is used in this study because of its advocacy for equal opportunities in positions of power and in all that men do, as well as its firm belief that women are naturally, intellectually, and logically as talented as men are (Beasley, 1999; Abbot et al., 2005). This implies that, instead of being discriminated against because of their early motherhood, teenage mothers should be allowed to make their own decisions in class.

According to Jaggar (1983), customary discrimination against women began with a reluctance to appoint qualified women to certain jobs, particularly prestigious, well-paying, or supervisory positions, as well as a reluctance to allow women to obtain the necessary qualifications for those positions, possibly by refusing them admission to professional schools or other job-training programs. Bryson (1999, p. 10) is of the opinion that women became inferior in society as a result of their upbringing and lack of education, rather than a quality inherent in their nature. As a result, my analysis of the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers will centre on how they are positioned or publicly engaged in everyday activities or practices at home, school, or in the community. I examine them to see if they are male-dominated or female-dominated environments (Chiponda, 2014).

When teenage school-going mothers face discrimination and stigma, or reveal unequal participation in educational activities, I consider such situations to be influenced by patriarchy (male-dominated). However, if all mother-learners are treated equally in schools, homes, and the community, I consider them to be influenced by gender balance, which is a woman-dominated setting. Thus, teenage mothers can only be treated equally and without discrimination in gender sensitive schools, homes, or communities.

Despite its utility in studying and illuminating women's oppression, liberal feminism has been condemned by other feminists for a variety of reasons (Chiponda, 2014). For example, Bryson (1992) contends that liberal feminism fails to explain why women are constantly oppressed in society despite having equal rights and opportunities in the law, education, employment, and politics. Bryson (1999) goes on to say that full equality will never be achieved because women continue to live in a world where laws and policies are still influenced and controlled by men. Liberal feminists have also been accused of uncritically accepting male norms as social beliefs as a result of their desire to be like men and obtain what men have without questioning the importance of such ethics (Abbott et al., 2005; Beasley, 1999; Bryson, 1999).

Even though liberal feminism provides frameworks for investigating and clarifying the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers under study, I find it restrictive when applied in isolation. Chiponda (2014) agrees that women's studies cannot be studied using a single feminist approach because liberal feminism sees sex or gender as the only source of power that subordinates women at the expense of other forces.

According to Chiponda (2014, p. 66), liberal feminism "accepts women as a homogeneous group that is only affected by sexuality as a source of their problem". Radical and socialist feminists were the first to criticise liberal feminists for this hypothesis. Furthermore, liberal feminism focuses on women's issues as interpreted by Western ideology. As a result, as previously stated, using only one feminist approach would not provide sufficient knowledge on the foundations of women's subordination and would limit my ability to explain in detail the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, as intended by the purpose of this study. I agree with Villaverde (2008, p. 9) when she says that feminist researchers "should demand more from what knowledge can afford and what theories might provide". As a result, radical feminism is added to build on arguments that supplement liberal feminism's contribution to the comprehensive investigation and clarification of the teenage school-going mothers under study.

3.4.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminists claim that sexual oppression is the source of patriarchy prior to private property and subsequent economic oppression (Firestone, 1974 as cited in

Haipinge, 2013 and Sultana, 2011). According to Giardina (2010), this ideology and movement emerged in the 1960s to advocate for a radical restructuring of society in which male dominance is removed in all social and economic contexts, while recognising that other social separations, such as race, class, and sexual positioning, also affect women's experiences.

Many protestors in feminism were inspired by the Marxist theory, which was perceived to be sexist (Connelly et al., 2000). Traditional Marxism held that class was the primary cause of working-class oppression and that gender equality would follow the abolition of class in society. However, radical feminists argued that making gender equality unimportant to class equality diminishes the importance of, and delays action on, women's concerns (Firestone, 1974 as cited in Sultana, 2010). In *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, Firestone (1970) expanded on the claim by arguing that women's subordination is rooted in their biology, specifically their reproductive physiology.

Other radical feminists contend that women are biologically superior to men due to their ability to bear children (Musingafi et al., 2013; Firestone, 1970 as cited in Sultana, 2010; Parpart et al., 2000). Others argue that it is social norms that devalue female biology rather than the nature of sex differences that should distress feminists (Musingafi, Mafumbate & Khumalo, 2021). Furthermore, Connelly et al., 2000, p.124; Musingafi et al., 2013 as cited in Musingafi et al., 2021, p. 120) claim that "many radical feminists argue that women's subordination is rooted in male control over women's fertility and sexuality, that is, over women's bodies". They go on to argue that patriarchy, or male dominance over women, is fundamental and has existed in almost every known society. Women's subordination is more difficult to change than class subordination because it is deeply embedded in individual concerns and social practices (Bhasin, 1993).

Radical feminists highlight patriarchy because it pervades all aspects of culture and social life and becomes so deeply embedded in people's mental constructs that it appears natural and largely goes unnoticed by both men and privileged women (Abbot et al., 2005). Because of patriarchy, men regard women as 'Others' and as a result, they are systematically oppressed and marginalised. According to de Beauvoir (2010 [1949, pp.

5-6]), a woman is considered an ‘other’ by men because her body is seen as an impediment, a prison, and a burden by everything that has particularised it. Men describe a female based on a lack of qualities. As a result, a woman is framed as incapable of thinking for herself, as opposed to a man who can think for himself. A woman, according to this view, is nothing more than what a man decides. She is thus referred to as the 'sex,' implying that the male perceives her primarily as a sexed being; (de Beauvoir, 2010[1949]). She is determined and distinguishable in relation to a man, but he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential.

The subject, the absolute, is the man. She is the opposite. As a result, women's consideration is based on gender identity, perceived attractiveness, and sexual orientation, resulting in all inequalities in society. As a result, radical feminists argue that a woman's welfare and capabilities should not be expected to be limited in certain customs due to her gender. To radical feminists, it is critical to abolish patriarchy by opposing traditional gender roles that are responsible for women's oppression and to emphasize radical social restructuring (Brown, 1990). On the one hand, Sesay (2010) claims that using radical theory exposes the vulnerability of teenage school-going mothers by not only opposing what is considered private but also bringing it under the control of the public. On the other hand, radical feminist theory has advocated that sex, which is currently confined to the private sphere of life, be made public, particularly in countries with high rates of teenage pregnancy (Ellis-Sloan, 2014).

Even though radical feminist theory was not fully utilized in studying the experiences of the teenage motherhood discourse, it was found to be beneficial to this study, just as liberal feminism was. According to Bryson (1992, p. 181), “it is essentially theory for women that is firmly based in women's own experiences and perceptions and sees no need to compromise with existing political perspectives and agendas”. Thus, it is critical to include the perspective of radical feminists in this study because they challenges the notion of “femininity and masculinity as mutually exclusive and biologically determined categories.” Furthermore, radical feminism is a useful tool for investigating what, in social and cultural discursive spaces, makes teenage school-going mothers more vulnerable to social injustice than men (Karim-Sesay, 2006). Initially, the theory contends that women are manipulated not only in the public spheres of politics and employment, but also in the private sphere of the family (Chiponda 2014).

Because it identifies oppression and inequality in sexuality discourse, the radical feminists' perspective is useful in this study's consideration of concerns about teenage pregnancy and schooling (Ellis-Sloan, 2014; Ngabaza, 2010).

According to Mannathoko (1992), because of its radical actions in the fight for women's emancipation, radical feminism has not received widespread recognition in comparison to liberal feminism. As a result, it has been chastised on numerous occasions. Radical feminism has been criticized because it advocates that all men are oppressors of women failed to joined women in fighting for gender inequality, discrimination, and other social issues that oppress women (Beasley, 1999). Furthermore, the overemphasis on patriarchy as the primary source of women's dominance confuses other forms of oppression, such as capitalism and racism (Mannathoko, 1992).

Chiponda (2014) notes that radical feminism fails to recognise other forms of oppressive power over women, such as class and wealth, and that based on this theory alone, it would not provide adequate knowledge on how teenage mothers are oppressed if it only looked at patriarchy (Bhasin, 1998). Other social classifications, such as sex, gender, sexism, and race, must also be considered.

This observation necessitates the application of Marxist theory, which recognises another form of oppressive power for women other than patriarchy (Chiponda, 2014), namely cultural beliefs and traditions, as argued in the following section.

3.4.3 Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism arose in 1960 from Karl Marx's theory, in which feminists adapted Marxist ideas to explain women's subservience and mistreatment in capitalist societies (Abbott et al., 2005). Marxism emphasizes economic differences as the basis for gender discrimination and inequality, and class divisions have traditionally stemmed from the development of private property (Parpart et al., 2000; Bhasin, 1993).

However, in this study the main cause of economic differences among the community under study is influenced by cultural beliefs and traditions of marriage, reproduction and property inheritance as explained in *The Origin of the Family: Private Property and the State,* a classic by Friedrich Engels published in 1884. First, Engels connects

women's suppression to the monogamous system of marriage, which, according to anthropologist Morgan (1877 in Britanica, 2021), began and merged with private property and the state, which was required to protect and preserve the division of society into classes based on private property. Second, he claims that the division of labour, in which women did reproduction work and men produced, was important in defining the sexes' relationships (Engels, 2004). According to Marx, such division arose as a biological, natural division of labour, giving women an advantage over men in a situation where reproduction was the primary activity.

The issue of women to have rights over reproduction was later reconstructed as a social hierarchy. Men rose to dominance through the development and control of 'productive forces' (technology), a control that allowed them to generate some surplus wealth while increasing women's reliance on men (Engels, 2010). As a result, women became men's desire slaves and simple instruments for child production (Zarrinjooce, 2017; Engels, 1988). Engels argued that women could not be liberated unless the gender division of labour was changed and women were allowed to work as men in public production. Significantly, Engels connects private property, family, and the state by laying out two major proposals. In his opinion, the state would (a) protect men's property rights through inheritance laws and (b) could influence laws to favour men in matters of property and income. Engels does not consider the state as a neutral entity. According to him, it serves class and patriarchal interests, and with the help of control over women, it maintains power on behalf of a collective of propertied men (Engels, 2010, 2004, 1970).

Marxist feminists are aware of these feelings and recognise that knowledge under the dominance of culture and traditions does not always bring women benefits and liberation within their own desire and self-reliance (Engels, 2010). However, they see this as dishonest, discrimination and oppression of women (Neilson & Peters, 2020; Chiponda, 2014). They are adamant that, in the long run, women's emancipation and the development of productive forces are inextricably linked. The Marxists' main influence is their assertion that it is not only the ownership of the means of production that is important, but the hierarchical manner in which work is performed too, because this reflects preference for men (Engels, 2004).

Bhasin (1993) blamed capitalism on private property ownership by men, where inheritance of property and social position through the men's biological children was limited. As a result, Marxist feminists contend that as by-products of capitalism, the middle-class family and private property subordinated and oppressed women (Bhasin & Khan, 1999; Bhasin, 1993). This means that the maternity right has been superseded by the paternity right. In general, middle-class families with private property evolved into patriarchal households in which women were subjugated. Such patriarchal families are unjust as men ensured that their property was only passed down to their sons.

Unlike radical feminism, Marxist feminism focuses on labour rather than ideas and attitudes about men's involvement in power relations (Mackinnon, 1982). According to Hannam (2007, p.61), power is primarily associated with the rules of class, private wealth, property, and profit. Thus, in their approach to the public sphere, Marxism and liberal feminism share common ideas (Bowman, 2016).

According to Marxist feminists, the classified system in traditional societies and capitalism in modern societies both contribute to women's oppression by dividing them from men (Chiponda 2014). This notion opposes the radical feminist opinion which regards patriarchy as the source of women's domination and key influence of all inequalities.

Marxist feminists argue that actions to liberate women from oppression must target the class system and capitalism, rather than demanding justice, as radical and liberal feminists argue (Bryson, 1992). Furthermore, Engels (1977, p. 10) argued that:

> Women's emancipation will be possible only when a woman can participate in production on a large social scale and domestic work no longer takes up more than a minor portion of her time. And it is only now that this is possible due to modern large-scale industry, which not only allows, but actively encourages, the employment of women across a wide range of occupations, while also tending to end private domestic labour by transforming it more and more into a public industry.

Marxists argue that male dominance over women will be eliminated once and for all once private property regulation is abolished, i.e., in socialism. Meanwhile, women can reform the division of labour by participating in 'socially necessary labour' (Moseley,

1997), which is gaining economic independence, which would be enabled by a reduction in domestic work (Adams, 2002). Likewise, Bryson (1992, p. 3) states that only in an "abolished capitalist society will the economic dependency", which is the basis of women's oppression, to childcare and house-keeping disappear, and will free them from domestic labour and allow them to participate fully in productive work.

Teenage school-going mothers participating in the investigation come from a variety of households from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the majority of the households in the community under study are headed by females and most of them are unemployed, and widowed, and some are not allowed to inherit. In light of the foregoing, this study included the economic and class systems as part of the analysis because they, too, contributed to the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. In most cases, lack of financial resources leads to the exclusion of teenage mothers from the educational system.

Marxist feminism, like other feminisms, has been critiqued for its expectations of female dominance and emancipation. Other feminists have criticised Marxist feminism's claim that economic and class are the primary sources of oppression for women. Zentin (1966) and Kollontai (1977) are two feminists who oppose Marxist feminism because it reinforces class status. They claim that they did not see a genuine opportunity to unite across economic inequality because an upper-class woman would find it extremely difficult to truly understand the struggles of the lower class. According to Stephen and Markus (2007), this is possible because upper-class men and women prioritise their own interests and self-reliance, whereas lower-class men and women prioritise social relationships. As a result, abolishing capitalism to accommodate every citizen in equal sharing of the economy has become difficult, as some women from low-income backgrounds continue to struggle with equality in all spheres of life (Sultana, 2010).

In light of the above observation, the Marxist did the analysis of the women exploitation through the lens of capitalism and individual ownership of private property. However, Marxist feminism fails to clarify patriarchal relationships in non-capitalist societies (such as in the context of this study) and is unable to justify the plight of women in post-colonial or developing countries (Chiponda, 2014). In addition, Marxist feminism

is influenced by Western ideology which does not believe in tradition, thus it fails to address women exploitation through the lens of cultural beliefs of the African traditions. I agree with Weiner (1994) and Beasley (1999) that, while Marxist feminism provided a more comprehensive explanation of capitalism as the source of women's oppression, it failed to elicit widespread participation in its political situation because the combination of feminist ideas within Marxism proved to be too difficult for most women to comprehend. As a result, its inspiration began to wane, and it was eventually supplanted by socialist feminism (Beasley, 1999), as discussed in the following section.

3.4.4 Socialist feminism

According to Mitchel (1984), socialist feminism activities began in the second half of the 1970s, as a result of disagreements between radical feminists and Marxist feminists about the primary and central source of women's subjugation. She claims that, while radical feminism emphasizes patriarchy, the Marxist feminist viewpoint believes that capitalism is the primary cause of women's oppression in a classed society. As a result, in its thought and political practice, socialist feminism combines some beliefs of radical feminism and Marxist feminism (Beasley, 1999).

As a result, socialist feminists see patriarchy and capitalism as so inextricably linked and supportive of one another in their oppression of women that it is difficult to separate these two influences (Chiponda, 2014). Megivern and Kerins (2016) also argue for a greater distinction between sex and gender by claiming that the connection between child-bearing and child-rearing is social and cultural rather than biological. Furthermore, socialists add gender to the list of patriarchy, sex, and class, emphasising that economic oppression is not the primary source of oppression, but that oppression has psychological and social roots (Chiponda, 2014).

Another clarification from Macdonald (1981), as quoted in Weiner (1994, p. 57), is that "both class relations and gender relations, while existing within their histories, can nevertheless be so closely interwoven that it is theoretically very difficult to draw them apart within specific historic conjunctures". To socialists, class and women's subordination, such as their place in society, lack of access to resources, and lack of decision-making power, were equally important and had to be challenged at the same

time (Sultana, 2011). The analysis of women subordination was done in an attempt to create a theory and practice to accomplish the goal that women are being oppressed.

Socialists intended to study Marxism while incorporating radical-feminist perspectives. They believed that by doing so, they would provide a new foundation for analysis as well as a new approach to political action that would challenge both male dominance (patriarchy) and capitalism (Musingafi et al., 2021). Thus, in light of this study, the socialist feminists' opinion remains that women's liberation cannot be achieved until the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression are addressed. This argument is based on observations by Bryson (1999), Mannah (2008) and Chiponda (2014) that in most countries where Communism was or is still practiced, such as the former United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR), current Russia, Cuba, and China, women continue to face patriarchal oppression despite entering the labour market and becoming economically liberated. This confirms patriarchy's organizational and universal nature, as it pervades all aspects of life despite women being granted freedom and access to the public domain of public spheres. As a result, socialist feminists argue that patriarchy, which is protected by capitalism, is the primary oppressor of women (Chiponda, 2014).

According to Makaryan (2016), women face more than just political and legal challenges, and their access to justice is hampered by economic (lack of money), social and psychological (stigma, mobility restrictions, time constraints), and educational (limited education, limited access to information, and social network) factors, among others. She contends, for example, that men dominate higher-level business and cultural positions.

Furthermore, Mitchell (1984, as cited in Parpart et al., 2000) argued in her very early classic collection of essays, Women: *The Longest Revolution*, that there are four interlocking structures to consider in women's subordination. These are production, reproduction, sexuality, and child-rearing, and if we must analyse these structures, researchers should begin with the experience of women in order to allow women to enjoy equal privilege (Lindsey, 1997). Whelehan (1995) adds that men's appropriation and commodification of women's sexual and reproductive capacity is at the heart of the link between private property and patriarchy, the institutionalisation of slavery, women's sexual subordination, and women's economic dependency on men.

Parpart et al. (2000, p. 127) go on to say, "…if we are to understand and abolish women's subordination, we must examine the processes by which gender characteristics are defined and gender relations are constructed." This shows that socialists are aware of the social construction of gender; therefore, in the interests of justice and empowerment of women and communities, the gender relation and characteristics must be examined in order to find a new solution to their transformation. Furthermore, socialist feminists broadened their analysis to include considerations of ethnicity, religion, and sexual preference, as well as colonialism and imperialism.

Because of its ideology of "transforming basic structural arrangements of society so that categories of class, gender, and sexuality no longer act as barriers between men and women to share equal resources", socialist feminism is used in this study (Mandell, 1995, p. 9). I also contend that through the socialist feminist lens, I can identify the economic interests of capital that confine women to the domestic sphere of housework and motherhood (Lindsey, 1997). The main goal is to raise awareness among teenage school-going mothers that, in addition to being confined to the burden of housework and child-rearing, they can also focus on education, allowing them to be in productive employment and become economically independent in the future. The overall goal is to free women from the unpaid domestic labour market, which on the one hand contributes to the well-being and effectiveness of the capitalist economy while contributing to women's low status and economic reliance on men (Lindsey, 1997).

The contribution of socialist feminists to this study is also the challenge of the traditional dualistic between public and private, as well as the influence of patriarchy not only in politics, public life, and the economy, but also in all aspects of social, personal, psychological, and sexual life (Mohapatra, 2009). In the context of this study, this can lead to a psychological breakdown, which can have a significant impact on the lives of teenage mothers in terms of schooling and mothering.

In response to criticism, Chiponda (2014) claims that other feminists believe that adhering to socialist feminist ideas would result in both economic disaster and a loss of individual independence. Furthermore, socialist feminism (Marxist, liberal, and radical) reject race as a root cause of women's oppression (Bhasin, 1998). Thus, discussions about race as another source of women's oppression led to the development of other

feminist perspectives, particularly black feminism (Chiponda, 2014), the focus of the following section.

3.4.5 Black feminism

Throughout history, African American women have clashed with white women on numerous political occasions (Taylor, 1998). According to Taylor (1998, p. 234), there were two significant incidents that led black women to reshape feminist theory. The first was in 1921, when "black feminists' delegates to the National Women's Party Convention complain about deprivation of the right to vote". The second was in 1970, when "white women continue their legacy of refusing and isolating Black women in decision making during the convention". The experiences of those incidents, which were added to a slew of others, prompted black women to shape feminist theory and practice to address issues unique to them. Many of the black women involved in this movement had previously been involved in other civil rights movements but felt that their voices were not being heard due to their gender and race identities (Robnett, 1997; 1996).

Black American women such as Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, bell hooks, Alice Walker, and Patricia Hill-Collins were among the black feminists who led the movement. According to black feminist theorists, black women face a social and political double bind as a result of being both black and a woman (Brown & Davis, 2017). Thus, according to Beasley (1999, p. 111), black feminism prioritises race over sexual oppression. As a result, Bowleg (2012) contends that women's oppression is not independent and one-dimensional (there is no single source of their oppression), but rather multiple based on race, sex, and class, and should be examined from that perspective.

Furthermore, the black feminists did not fight solely for the inclusion of black women's perspectives in feminist inquiry as a matter of equality and justice, but they claimed that their historic challenge was to persuade white feminists that the debate for women's rights requires the inclusion of all women, regardless of race or class (Bryson, 1999). Many claimed that earlier waves of feminism were racist and completely excluded women of other races, and that because it was a white American movement, women from black communities could not fully relate to it. Thus, according to King (1988) and

Williams (2019), black feminists agreed with this argument and demanded different reasons for the situation of black women's lives throughout their people's history, and they exposed significant changes. Colonial and racist structures influenced black patriarchal structures and authority as well (hooks, 1989). Scholars working within this perception do not reject white feminist hypotheses; rather, they advocate for feminism that recognises the role of race in women's lives, particularly the way race synthesises the experience of class and gender relations (Crenshaw, 1989).

According to Brown and Davis (2017) issues like class, gender, sexuality, race, and age contributed to women subordination. Salzman (2006) states that each of these social identities positions black women to fight not just one status, but the multiple forces of all labels that lead to discrimination. The black feminist perspective criticized liberalism, radicalism, Marxism, and socialism as more white feminist movements, “both in terms of their practice and theories that illuminate the nature of women's oppression” (Amos & Parmar, 2001 p. 17 as cited in Pateman & Mills, 2013).

Other feminist theorists have been chastised by black feminists for focusing primarily on the problems of middle-class white women (Poster, 1995) and ignoring the sufferings of other marginalised groups (Dorey-Stein, 2015; hooks, 1989). Hooks (1989) defines the marginalised group as women of all races, minorities, the young, the elderly, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBTO+). However, in the context of this study, the term "marginalised group" refers to teenage school-going mothers who are currently enrolled in school and are either pregnant or have a child/children.

According to Collins (2000, p. 22), “black feminism's determination is to combat oppression, both its practices and the opinions” that support it. As a result, hooks (2001) contends that black women are resisting oppression caused by racism, which white feminism has ignored because it never speaks to their experiences and, when it does, it is from a racist perspective. As a result, black women felt excluded because they believed that their presence in feminist scholarship was invisible and that their experiences had been pushed to the margins of feminist theory (Amos & Parmar, 2001).

Historically, the aforementioned feminist movements have accomplished a great deal in the Western world. They campaigned for women's suffrage and reproductive rights. They have challenged employment discrimination, advocated for equitable wages and affirmative action programs, and sought property ownership and educational access rights (Gray & Boddy, 2010). They have also brought to light issues that male researchers and theorists have overlooked, particularly in their contribution to feminism, which is a component of social theory (Collins, 2000).

However, there are still huge gaps in contemporary society where the middle-class ideal does not address the concept of marginalisation (Collins, 2000), and women are still oppressed and unequal as a result of social categorisation of gender, class, sexism, and race, particularly in developing and marginalised communities. In this study, it is important to use a black feminist lens because black rural teenage school-going-mother lived experiences are underrepresented in literature. Some women in African rural communities are still confined to the private sphere, which is dominated by patriarchy, which perpetuates teenage mothers' subordination. There are still women who are hesitant to speak up, to exercise their rights, and to express their emotions. However, in the context of black feminism, their voices and lived experiences can be illuminating for the public sphere. As a result, I agree with Bryson (1999) that black feminism, as a critical social theory, aims to empower teenage school-going mothers in the context of social injustices to stand up for their rights and reclaim their human dignity.

Furthermore, as indicated by the feminist perspectives above, inequalities and power operations are experienced differently by women of their time (Brah, 1996; Collins, 2000), and inequality is still experienced today. This study draws some analytical insights from the black feminist theory in order to examine the social world that illuminate the forces that create and support gender inequality, oppression, and injustice among teenage school-going mothers. Furthermore, theoretical contributions of black feminists are relevant to this study because they have assisted in identifying the social forces, gender relations (hooks, 2015), and challenges experienced by teenage mothers through interactions within the school, community, and home. This research' recommendations can be used by policymakers in the future to ensure that the lived experiences of girls and women, particularly teenage mothers, are documented.

Despite black feminism's position in clarifying women's situations as an interaction of gender, race, and class, it has been criticised for emphasizing race as the source of women's oppression rather than considering the intersections of all other discourses such as age, culture, and education (Chiponda, 2014), which are also thought to have an impact on women's oppression and subordination. As a result, black feminists have been chastised for generalising the experiences of white American and European women as distinct from those of black women (hooks, 2001). According to Msimang (2002), the issue of black American women's subservience is more important to black American women's unique experience of slavery than to black African women who live in Africa. Chiponda (2014) adds that, despite sharing the common identity of being black and female, views of black feminism cannot adequately describe the experiences of black African teenage school-going mothers. This is due to the fact that the context of black African teenage mothers differs from that of black American women.

As a result of black feminist inability to accurately describe the situations of black-African teenage mothers, African feminism was incorporated into this study to fill this gap. This is due to the fact that the participants are African and the study was conducted in one of the African countries, Namibia, as explained further below.

3.4.6 African feminism

Another feminist perspective relevant to this study is African feminism. It is a type of feminism that emerged in the early 1980s, when African women felt that they required a transformed feminism that spoke out specifically about the conditions and needs of African women (Nkealah, 2016; Terborg-Penn, 1995).

African feminism, according to Kolawole (2002), includes African women in the movement because they have certain African traditions and identities. In addition, the issue of gender inequality is high in Africa and because black feminism originate from the USA does not necessarily relate to the experiences of black African women. Therefore, African feminisms see black feminism as unconcerned with the experiences of African women due to its influence from Western feminism ideology, which fails to comprehend the various distresses of African women (Gatwiri & Mclaren, 2016). They also claim that African feminism did not emerge from nowhere, but rather was a continuation of the call for liberation for all black-Africans in America and Africans

throughout the continent (Stuhlhofer, 2020). Tallis (2012, as cited in Gatwiri & Mclaren, 2016) emphasizes that while black feminism ideology is influenced by the Western, it is relevant to people in Africa, where a few minority groups hold nearly all power across private and political domains. Thus, African feminism theory clarifies the subjugation of African women on the African continent such as Nigeria, South Africa (Chiponda, 2014), and Namibia.

African feminism is not uniform in the same way that Western feminism is. African feminist ideology takes into account African history and diversity, including the influence of colonialism. It is concerned with the realities of the challenges that African women face on a daily basis (Atanga, 2013), which can be traced back to historical discrimination. The entire concept of African feminism is to "fight for women's rights by challenging the legitimacy of the structures that keep women oppressed and assisting in the development of tools for transformation analysis and action" (Charter of feminist Principles for African Feminists, 2006, p.4).

African feminists, who support black feminism, have criticised Western feminism for failing to address important issues that contribute to women's oppression, such as race, gender, and class (hooks, 2000). However, even though the African feminists supported the black feminists ideology of fighting gender inequality, they argue that Western feminists are racist by nature and whenever they (Western feminists) debate the rights of women in common, they consistently refer to the rights of white middle-class women, but not to the rights of African women (Chiponda, 2014).

As a result, Western feminism's fundamental understandings and explanations only apply to women in developed countries (Oyewuni, 2003). In addition, African feminists critique Western feminism for its anti-male stance. They are adamant that men should not be separated from the struggle of women because they believe that African feminism movements are created alongside men who believe in feminism (Bayu, 2019). Furthermore, Bayu (2019) claims that African feminists blame the West for focusing on secondary needs such as the burden of domestic work while ignoring basic needs fulfilment such as education, health care, gender based violence and harmful cultural practice, among others which are the primary issues confronting African women. As a

result of misrepresentation, African feminism arose to represent the needs of marginalised African women and to give them a voice (Ifechelobi, 2014).

According to Adichie (2006), African feminism, like other feminist movements, has recognised patriarchy as the root cause of all women's oppression. The original African society is a patriarchal society in which men are regarded as the head of the family (Ngubane, 2010) and is distinguished by recent and significant imbalanced power relations between men and women, in which women are systematically deprived, submissive, and oppressed (Ifechelobi, 2014). Furthermore, Ifechelobi (2014) asserts that domination, suppression, and subservience are all patriarchal factors that influence men to conquer and control women in African communities by making them submissive and less important. In the context of this study, as explained in Chapter 1 (c.f. section 1.3), the same views are applicable to the Okalongo community because the Ovambadja are patriarchal by nature. This community values its cultural values and sensibilities. The men are regarded as the head of the families, thus, in most cases the houses that are headed by female are registered under the son’s name regardless of the age.

African feminism seemed to me to be the most appropriate because, in addition to resisting patriarchy, economic deprivations and construction of gender, it advocates against silence and voicelessness, which is a key theme in Chimamanda Adichie’s novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (Adichie, 2006). In addition, African feminism is appropriate in this study because it is concerned with the realities of the challenges that African women experience in their daily lives (Atanga, 2013), which can be traced back to historical injustices that imposed silence among women. African feminism advocates that, because of patriarchy, women are silenced and unable to express themselves in public (Bayu, 2019; Adichie, 2006). According to Ifechelobi (2014), silence represents the historical muting of women under the challenging establishment known as patriarchy, that form of social organization in which males take power while females remain in a subordinate position.

Furthermore, D'Almeida (1994) claims that in a patriarchal society, many disadvantaged women thrive and many go unnoticed. Uwakwe (1995) emphasizes that silence encompasses all enacted constraints on women's social being, thinking, and expressions that are consistently or socially sanctioned. It is a patriarchal control

weapon used by the dominant male on the subordinate or subdued female in society (Ifechelobi, 2014; Uwakweh, 1995). In Africa, it is common knowledge that a woman's responsibilities end in the kitchen (Ifechelobi, 2014). Even in the religious domain, there are factors that influence the discourses surrounding women subordination. One of the biblical discourses in addition to cultural beliefs, values and practices is that a woman/wife is expected to live in submission to her man/husband (Tomalin, 2011). For example, the biblical reference, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, "Let a woman learn in quietness, in complete submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or have authority over men; she is to be quiet and silent [in religious assemblies]" (Amplified Bible). I take this reference from the Bible because the influence of Christianity on an already culturally immersed community is strong and most women conform because they do not want to equate morality with their actions and practice in a way that will have the effect of neutralising and normalising expected behaviour to women's disadvantages. Another way to put it is in a Christian context, such as the one described in this study, such a quote can be used to misrepresent a woman's best judgment, leaving her feeling guilty if she deviates from the Holy script. Furthermore, such a quote, in addition to culture, can play an important role in shaping discourses about teenage motherhood.

As a result of patriarchy, suppression, and subservience, African feminism emerged as a symbol of rejection of subservience and a search for self-importance (Ifechelobi, 2014). According to Nutsukpo (2020), Ifechelobi (2014) and Nyanhongo (2011), African feminism entails a refusal of subordination and a desire to provide the African woman with a sense of self as a worthy, effective, and contributing human being.

The African feminist movement has been misinterpreted, particularly by men, as a threat to their authority (Ifechelobi, 2014). In Africa, feminism is viewed as a threat to patriarchy, particularly in areas where patriarchal norms promote women's subordination in society (Emenyonu & Eke, 2010, as cited in Ifechelobi, 2014). The goal is not to deprive men of power and give it to women, but African feminism advocates for freedom of expression in both public and private spaces. The fear is that African men are still bound to African cultural norms and values, which African women are attempting to warn men about and challenge them to be aware of some of the discriminatory aspects of women's subjugation that are contributing to their oppression factor (Bayu, 2019).

From the time of Nigerian feminist author Flora Nwapa (1966) with her novel *Efuru*, to the present, female African feminist writers have contributed to the feminist movement (Arndt, 2002; Adichie, 2006; Namulondo, 2010, Efechelobi, 2014). During that time, African females lacked a voice and were not empowered in the same way that males were, with all of society's powers invested in them. According to Salami-Agunloye (as quoted in Emenyonu & Eke, 1970, p. 177), "women become voiceless because of the construction of gender that left women subservient, docile, timid, with low status and completely dependent on male figures around them, especially of their husbands; they are passive victims of male oppression, and without agency".

Bayu (2019) argues that the difficulties of African feminism are different than those of Western feminism, despite the fact that both are concerned with women's oppression. The realities of the two groups are dissimilar due to cultural and racial differences. However, even though that is the case both groups are battling patriarchy from the boardroom of corporate business to the teenage mothers in rural and cultural community. Thus, African feminism perspective is added to the arguments because the Western feminism may not have seen the issues faced by African girls/women because of class privilege. Therefore, culture is an important element in understanding feminism (Stuhlhofer, 2020) from both perspectives. In addition, the diversity of social realities in the African context assisted African feminists to recognise not only patriarchy as the root cause of women's oppression, but also other forms of supremacy that, according to Arndt (2002, p. 32), are described as "oppressive mechanisms", which include racism, ethnicity, religion, apartheid, class, culture, and tradition. As a result, African feminism is used in this study to inform the analysis of the lived experiences of teenage mothers by identifying and challenging gender domination in the context of additional unjust mechanisms that this study may discover and that can be influenced by culture, socioeconomic, and institutional oppression (Arndt, 2002; Kolawole, 2002).

African feminism was appropriate for this study because its perspectives enabled me to investigate and describe the structural and cultural lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers from an African perspective rather than relying solely on Western feminist perspectives. The theory provides additional information for investigating the experiences of teenage school-going mothers based not only on their sex but also on other characteristics such as race, nationality, religion, class, and roles (Chiponda,

2014). It is noteworthy that African feminism takes indigenous situations, historical, social, political, and cultural contexts into account when describing the situation of teenage mothers. It also helped to broaden the analysis in order to identify the enabling and constraining factors from the data collected.

African feminism, while serving the purpose of clarifying the position of African women in Africa, is not without criticism. Bakare-Yusuf (2003) and Oyewumi (2003) criticise African feminism for failing to recognise the deep-rooted nature of patriarchy and for claiming that once patriarchy is addressed, the status of African women in society will improve. African feminism are also chastised for failing to adopt at least comfortable approaches, such as Western and African women's sisterhood (Oyewumi, 2003). Furthermore, according to Oyewumi (2003), Western feminists are afraid of African preferences for focusing on basic needs, which cannot lead to a long-term solution to the women's problem. As a result, they emphasize that African feminists should emphasize their similarities rather than their differences because they are all fighting for the welfare of women.

The six feminisms examined in sections 3.4.1 to 3.4.6 revealed various social forces that predispose women to oppression and discrimination. Other feminisms, aside from black feminism, did not recognize the multiple intersections of those forces in women's lives.

Intersectionality, a fundamental concept in black feminist theory, entails the investigation of how differences such as race, gender, class, status, sexuality, and ability are constructed and interrelate in the lives of minority ethnic and black women (McCall, 2011; Bhopal & Preston, 2012). As a result, the following section introduces intersectionality theory as another theoretical framework for this study.

3.4.7 Intersectionality theory

The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw (1989) and is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, which is regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. By incorporating the concept of intersectionality into feminism, the movement becomes truly inclusive, allowing

women of all races, economic backgrounds, religions, identities, and orientations to be heard (Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality is similar to the feminist movements. Being a part of the black, radical, African, liberalism, or intersectional movements means that they are all fighting the same battle, but not with the same weapon (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). This is where intersectionality enters the picture. In a nutshell, intersectionality is inclusive feminism. It is inclusive because it recognises that, while the feminist movement is made up of women fighting patriarchy and other forms of oppression, not all of those women faced the same levels of discrimination. A Black Namibian woman, for example, may face not only sexism, but racism and economic imbalances in her quest for success, which a white or black Namibian woman from a privileged background is unlikely to encounter.

Furthermore, intersectionality is a framework for conceptualising a person, a group of people, or a social problem as being affected by a variety of discriminations and disadvantages. This theory was used because it considered the overlapping identities and experiences of teenage mothers in order to understand the complexities of the preconceptions they faced. In other words, an intersectional theory assisted me in declaring that teenage school-going mothers are frequently disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression identified by feminists such as liberal, radical, Marxist, socialists, black feminist, and African feminist. These describe gender inequality and female subordination caused by class, capitalism, patriarchy, religion, and other identity indicators (Crenshaw, 1989). Furthermore, intersectionality recognizes that identity indicators do not exist independently of one another and that each informs the others, often resulting in a complex convergence of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). It draws attention to the complexities and power struggles that women face in their daily lives. Feminists such as Mirza (2013), Ringrose (2013), and Collins (2000) have discussed intersectionality in ways that incorporate notions of embodied intersectionality, such as "acknowledging the psycho-social dimensions of intersectionality" (Mirza, 2013, p. 5). According to Collins (2000, p. 274), "oppression is not only understood in the mind, but it is also felt in the body in a variety of ways". Race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are viewed as mutually constitutive within intersectional frameworks.

In general, the following are the common principles of intersectionality theory: an individual person belongs to demographic structures, so the same person has a specific gender, ethnicity, and social class position. Some categories offer both benefits and drawbacks, and each has its roots in a social stratification structure. Each of these disadvantaged groups has its own set of attitudes and behaviours, but they are all intertwined (Syed, 2010). In support of Syed's contribution, Crenshaw (1989) asserted that multiple intersecting categories or identities of social group membership shape group members' perceptions, behaviour, and outcomes in a socio-environmental context defined by power and privilege. In this case, these various aspects of identity may shape the lived experiences of teenage mothers. For example, a person is never simply perceived as a woman; rather, how that person is victimised or racialised influences how that person is perceived as a woman. As a result, notions of blackness or whiteness always influence gendered experience, and no experience of gender exists apart from an experience of race. Furthermore, the gendered experience is influenced by age, sexuality, class, and ability; similarly, the race experience is influenced by gender, age, class, sexuality, and ability (Crenshaw, 1991). Thus, considering the variety of privileges and forms of oppression that one may experience concurrently in one's lifetime is the best way to analyse and understand the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers.

Collins (2001) argues that any theorising that begins with the experiences of the marginalised is reliable because people with less power and resources frequently experience the effects of oppression in ways that members of dominant groups do not. Furthermore, hooks (2015) contends that participants at the bottom of a social system have knowledge of the system's power holders as well as their own experiences, whereas the opposite is rarely true. As a result of their experiences, they have a more complete understanding of how power systems work.

Adopting an intersectionality theory, as I do in this study, allows for a broader understanding of the complex process of multiple identities of teenage mothers (McClellan, 2012) in “relation to categories of difference, power relations, social positioning, and psychological influences on the self” (Ringrose, 2007, p. 276). As a result, intersectionality theory in this study extended beyond the boundaries of gender to include other social categories such as religion, culture, age, sexual orientation,

educational attainment, economic situation, and other categories that are embedded and have thus shaped the experiences of teenage school-going mothers (Crenshaw, 1996). The list of identity differences associated with teenage motherhood is endless, which is why I go beyond the three categories of race, gender, and class (Lutz, 2002). These multiple identities can all shape their lived experiences at the same time. At times, certain aspects of their identities may be more important than others, but no one is ever without multiple identities (Grewal & Caren, 2001). Thus, identity categories are intersectional, influencing the experiences of teenage school-going mothers, allowing them to see and understand the world around them in new ways (McClellan, 2012).

It is difficult for me because using the term "teenage mother" in isolation highlights these contested meanings and experiences (Maylor, 2009), and girls who fall under the "teenage mother" umbrella may not see themselves as such (Anthias, 2005). This means that when I analyse the lived experience of teenage mothers, I also consider other multiple aspects of identity that an individual has experienced. I thought it was important to listen to the teenage school-going mothers' experiences so that I could see and understand their world through a more complex lens while also listening to their voices with an open mind. As a result, I did not approach my research through a single lens because I found it to be very limiting, and it may lead society to disregard oppressions and discrimination against teenage school-going mothers if their multiple identities are not taken into account. This is critical to this study because culture, marriage, and childbearing continue to be important for sub-Saharan African (SSA) women. Marriage and childbearing typically define a woman's status within her family and community (Benza & Liamputtong, 2015; Ngum Chi, 2012). Using only one axis of class or gender will not provide a complete picture of the individual's experiences and will not fully answer questions about the woman's existence (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989). To comprehend the position and experiences of the teenage mothers in this study, it is necessary to consider their cultural heritage, community associations, and the lives or journeys they have taken.

In this study, intersectionality theory employs a multi-axes approach to address multiple complexities and dimensions, as well as the many identities that a single woman may hold (Drummond, Mizan, Brocx & Wright, 2001). Each aspect of a person's identity has an impact on their decision-making. When examining schooling and early

motherhood experiences among this cohort of mother-learners, African teenage mothers who are also learners, from a low socioeconomic background, and with low levels of education, these multiple identities must be considered. Furthermore, the intersectionality lens is useful in this study because it demonstrates that the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by multi-layered facets (the intersectional structures) of society (Crenshaw, 1989). This is why black feminists, such as bell hooks, recognize the interconnectedness of social structures such as gender, race, sexual identity, class, and patriarchy (among others). Ignoring their intersections leads to oppression of women and alters the experience of being a woman in society (Huff, 2016). As a result, the intersectionality theoretical lens was useful in this study because it allowed me to consider a variety of social forces at the same time, whereas cultural or gender analysis alone would have limited my ability to see and understand how privilege, power, and oppression interlock (Cole, 2016).

To conclude, it is worth noting that the six feminism and intersectionality theories discussed above provided an analytical tool and a language to explain the data in this study. The summary of how these theories aided in data analysis is presented in Chapter 6 and 7.

The following section informs this study that all forms of oppression that exist in societies do not originate in a vacuum, but rather within social structures. One way to explain the lived experiences of the teenage mothers in this study was to reflect on the discourses in public and private spheres, as such a clarification brings to light the history of gendered power relations (Wright, 2012), which contributed to women's subordination and oppressions, as I will discuss below.

3.5 Social facts that may shape human behaviours

Before I analyse the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers on the enabling and constraining factors during schooling, we must first understand their condition and position within society by emphasizing the significant influence of social facts influencing the lived experience of the teenage school-going mothers. Durkheim, as quoted in Hadden (1997, p.104), defines social facts as “things that have coercive power over individuals”. These facts are generated by a combination of forces and do not

originate with the individual. Richer (1992, p. 78) goes on to say that social facts can be studied empirically (through observation and experience), not theoretically: “understanding them requires a study of history and society in order to observe their effects and comprehend their nature”. They are viewed as external rules, regulations, norms, and values that are central to how people control their lives (Haipinge, 2013). Those rules and regulations exist within the society in which we live.

3.5.1 The public and private spheres

The society is divided into two domains: the public and private spheres. According to Durkheim (1933) and Habermas (1989), these spheres provide a foundation for thinking about women and men's economic, labour, social, and cultural experiences as clearly gendered, sometimes distinct, but always intertwined with power relations.

It is obvious that men and women are assigned to different roles in our society. Every domain of society (public or private) has a gender-based division of labour for both men and women (Jone, 1999). Even today, the concept of separate spheres has a strong influence on people's perceptions of gender roles and expectations. According to literature, the woman's place was in the private sphere (family life and the home), where she was assigned tasks like gathering and preserving food, cooking, childbearing, and childrearing. Men's place was/is in the public sphere (politics and the economy) (Bhasin, 1993). Furthermore, men were traditionally assigned to responsibilities in public social and cultural activity such as trapping, herding, and clearing land for agriculture (Kim, 2006).

Different responsibilities assigned to men and women create some expectations, and these are some of the social facts that shape the discourses around teenage motherhood, and it can have an influence in the teenage mother's best decision to stay or return to school. As a result, this demonstrates that women are still confined to traditional ways of life, as the majority of them continue to conform to situations that can make them feel guilty because they are perceived as evading their responsibilities. This can have an effect on their studies because they may be unable to concentrate. According to Haipinge (2013), Durkheim distinguishes not only between the private and public spheres, but also between the discourses that are not permitted in these two spheres. These discourses are referred to as the sacred and profane by Durkheim (1933). Effects

are not regarded as sacred in the public sphere; in other words, people can express their true feelings and desires in public (Slater, 1998), and this exercise is regarded as profane by Durkheim (1933). While some aspects of social life are considered sacred, which means that people cannot express their true feelings and desires in public (Haipinge, 2013).

Teenage pregnancy is the result of sexual intercourse, which is a prohibited activity before marriage in African communities. Sex is relegated to the private sphere of life in our societies, and it is regarded as sacred in many societies that enforce strong gender differences (Haipinge, 2013). Furthermore, women in the private sphere, according to Bah (2005), are likely to be submissive and compliant not only in sex-related matters, but they are also not allowed to express themselves publicly. If a girl became pregnant, she was carefully hidden until she gave birth, especially if she was not married or had not been initiated through 'Olufuko.' According to Durkheim (1933, as cited in Haipinge, 2013), there was a time when sex was considered sacred because people recognized it as a natural gift that must be honoured. Both men and women were frequently instigated into sacred rites by a special skilled man and woman. As a result of their experiences, women gained knowledge about the value of being a woman, as well as what was required and expected of them in a specific cultural context (Haipinge, 2013). Because everyone knew it was sacred at the time, all rituals and actions were kept private (Durkheim, 1933). Sex became profane or unholy when people began to express their feelings to each other in public. As a result of this shift from the sacred to the profane, the impact of rituals that kept sex in the former was reduced (Habermas, 1992). Anyone who expressed feelings, desires, or even had sex outside of the expected rituals was judged and labelled as evil. All-natural bodily purposes became hostile, disgraceful, and taboo after sex was deemed profane (Haipinge, 2013).

Whatever is forbidden becomes taboo, and all taboos become desired (Haipinge, 2013). Teenage mothers were socialized to believe that early sexual activity is not a feminine quality, so that any woman who becomes a victim of a teenage pregnancy is regarded as unfeminine and promiscuous (Shisana, 2004; Marchand & Parpart, 1995). Such women/teenage mothers are portrayed as morally reprehensible. In this study, I argue with Kessy and Phillemon (2008, as cited in Haipinge, 2013) on their proposal that examining how the confinement of women into the private sphere advanced in a

specific cultural and historical context is beneficial not only for generalizing gender relations in all different societies, but also for understanding the historical and social in particular. That is why I believe it is critical in this study to understand how the private/public and sacred/profane distinctions served their purpose in understanding the origins of gender social relations that produce inequality, difference, oppression, and, more often than not, compliance (Haipinge, 2013). Furthermore, understanding this historical and cultural context allows me to analyse the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers from a broad perspective by conceptualising teenage motherhood.

3.5.2 Conceptualising teenage motherhood

A study that attempts to understand the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers when returning to school requires an understanding of the concepts that highlight the complex societal and community discourses which influence teenage school-going mothers' behaviours in making meaning of their lives. In this section, various terms which contribute towards the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study are clarified. These concepts belong to the domain of feminist theory as discussed below.

3.5.2.1 Teenage mothers/Teenage school-going mothers

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* (2008), it is difficult to define exactly what constitutes teenage motherhood, because of the inconsistencies in defining its age limits. The concept of teenage mothers in this study was divided into two broad views: (a) teenage mothers defined by legal age (under the age of 18) and (b) teenage mothers who are still attending school and who have not completed the primary education or junior secondary school and are between 16 to 20 years of age (Chauke, 2013, UNICEF, 2001). In the context of this study, it is very common to find 16-year old learners in primary school because some start school very late. In this study, I used the term 'teenage mothers' to refer to learners in primary and junior secondary school who do not have marketable skills and who are financially dependent upon their parents. The study refers to the term teenage mothers or teenage school-going mothers even though some are over 18 years and still in junior secondary level. The reason is that most of them became pregnant when they were teenagers. The

term *teenage mother* is used synonymously and interchangeably with *teenage school-going mothers*, *mother-learners* following WHO (2004).

3.5.2.2 Teenage motherhood and education

Being a mother, let alone a teenage mother, is a demanding role, and being a mother-learner is even more demanding. This study began with the observation that there is a conflict between these two responsibilities for teenage mothers who are attempting to complete their primary and junior secondary education while also being mothers. As a result, motherhood and education form the basis of the conceptual framework for this study.

The focus of this investigation is on how these two concepts complement, interfere, or are in tension with each other in the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. McMahon (1995) contends that teenage motherhood and fatherhood cannot be compared. Because having children is seen as women's natural destiny and the fulfilment of the natural course of events, the burden of parenthood is much greater for teenage mothers than for teenage fathers. Being a good mother is the same as being a good woman (McMahon, 1995). Motherhood necessitates self-sacrifice, nurturing, and empathy, and women are thought to be naturally and biologically suited to these responsibilities (Thurer, 1994).

As a result, society admires the ideal mother role, and childcare is seen as a natural duty for women (Dalian, 1998). Although this concept of motherhood is widely prevalent, if not universal (Thurer, 1994), many have demonstrated that it is socially constructed (Hays, 1996; Thurer, 1994; Edwards 1993). This study opposes the idea that the social construction of a good mother must come at the expense of her education just to please or obey to the historical, social, and cultural settings. The women must be given an opportunity to do things in life based on their own feelings, desires and understanding of their natural representation as women (Dalian, 1998). In addition, liberal feminism emphasises that women must break free from the yoke of social expectations of motherhood which are against their human rights (Thurer, 1994).

In this study, teenage motherhood and education are intricately linked to other forms of social identity. This section focuses on some of the study's key ideas. Among them are

teen mothers, lived experience, culture, and patriarchy, identity, agency, and gender relations. As explained below, these ideas have an impact on teenage motherhood and education.

3.5.2.3 Lived experiences

The term ‘lived experiences’ refers to the representation of a person's experiences and choices, as well as the knowledge gained from these experiences and choices (Boylorn, 2008, p. 490). People's lives are shaped by their subjective identities. Thus, when researching an individual's lived experiences, one must consider how gender, sexuality, political, economic, and cultural forces shape their individual experiences within the context of their own history and cultural institutions (Khoshaba, 2014). In addition, lived experiences foster self-awareness through interactions that recognise the truthfulness of individual life, as well as how separate life experiences can resemble and respond to larger public and social themes, thereby creating a space for clarification and meaning making (Boylorn, 2008).

As a phenomenological study, it investigates lived experiences not only to respond to teenage mothers’ experiences, but also to understand how teenage school-going mothers live through, and respond to those experiences, and how they make meaning of them (Bochner, 2002). In foregrounding lived experiences in this study, I am not aiming to critique the lives of teenage mothers, but rather to seek an understanding of their lived experiences, and to try to understand and to make meaning of their experiences of why some teenage mothers decide to remain in school when many drop out. Hence, Boylorn (2008) argues that studying lived experiences offers a perspective through which one can make a comparison for research, and at the same time the study can serve as a testimonial to survival, which can contribute to existing or even warrant further interventions.

3.5.2.4 Gender and gender inequality

According to Olivia Harris, Maureen Mackintosh, Felicity Odium, Ann Whitehead, and Kate Young, women, like men, are biological beings, however, women’s subordination is socially constructed rather than biologically determined (Parpart, et al., 2000, p. 37). In order to conceptually differentiate between these two realities, ‘sex’ must be defined as the biological differentiation between male and female, and ‘gender’ as the

differentiation between masculinity and femininity, as constructed through socialisation and education, among other factors (Esplen & Jolly, 2006; Parpart et al., 2000). According to Rao-Gupta (2000) and Parpart et al. (2000), anything biological is fixed and unchangeable, but what is social is subject to change and should be the focus of feminist theorists' attention.

Feminist researchers, as well as initiatives included in the broad documentation of gender and development work, have highlighted the difficulties that girls and women face at various stages of their lives (Taylor, 2009). Despite the fact that we no longer regard gender as existing in isolation, but as intersecting in complex ways with other forms of social identity and power relations (hooks, 2015), it is widely assumed that we continue to live in a system of universal patriarchy (Links, 2018; Walby, 1990). Furthermore, the way that current normative gender roles are constructed in our societies means that girls and women are disproportionately subjected to social and economic disadvantages (Bhana, Morrell, & Shefer, 2012).

Gender inequality, according to Bhana et al. (2012), manifests itself at all levels of our society and in all cultural practices, from birth to death. School is a primary setting for the reproduction and contestation of normative gender roles and stereotypes, which reflect social hierarchies and validate unequal gender power relations. I agree with Bhana et al. (2012) who argue that the ways in which teenage pregnancy and motherhood are addressed in schools reflect some of society's dominant discourses on gender, particularly what it means to be pregnant and a mother-learner. I contend that the concept of gender inequality is an important part of the conceptual framework of this research because it affects the proper implementation of teenage pregnancy policy in Namibian schools. In fact, the policy has limited potential to improve the social well-being of teenage mothers because, when it was implemented in schools, it reflected the moral and gendered perspectives of teachers and school authorities. Because there is no proper monitoring system in place, the policy can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on the school's own interpretation and beliefs. The policy itself is clear about what should be done, but the public may be ambivalent about it. If it is not interpreted in a gender-sensitive and supportive manner, it can be used to exclude, rather than include (Bhana et al., 2012). On that note, the policy's intended purpose may fail.

The consequences of mothering are solely in the hands of the teenage mothers, who are despised by other learners, teachers, and, in some cases, community members. As a result, understanding the concepts of gender and gender inequality through feminist theories was critical for this study because it directed me to identify some types of oppression that accompany structural oppression caused by patriarchy, class or prejudice, and marginalisation (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). Culture is another feminism concept that has contributed to patriarchy and marginalisation as briefly explained in the following section.

3.5.2.5 Teenage motherhood and culture

Becker (2006) defines culture as knowledge, social values, norms, ideas, beliefs, practices, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by people as members of society and passed down from person to person. Furthermore, Aziza (2001, p.31) defines culture as "the totality of a particular group of people's pattern of behaviour". It includes everything that distinguishes them from other groups of people, such as their greeting customs, social norms and taboos, food, songs, dance patterns, rites of passage from birth to marriage to death, traditional occupations, religion, and philosophical beliefs.

According to Fafunwa (1974, p. 48), "culture in traditional society is not taught, but rather imparted". For example, the child may observe or imitate the actions of his elders and siblings. She keeps an eye on all of the community's ceremonies, rituals, services, and activities. As a result, in a traditional society, such children are unable to escape such cultural surroundings. The strength of culture is that it is passed down from generation to generation. This indicates that anyone who grows up in a particular society is likely to become infused with that society's culture.

According to Walby (1990), culture depends on specific masculinities and femininities to reproduce themselves within the culture. Becker (2006) and Walby (1990) add to the argument that cultural practices and beliefs reflect the values and beliefs held by members of a community over time, often across generations. Some practices and beliefs benefit all members, while others, such as women, have become harmful to a group. Female genital mutilation, early marriage, the various taboos or practices that prevent women from controlling their fertility and its implications for the status of the

girl child and early pregnancy, and different role expectations are examples of harmful practices (Walby, 1990). When a person is attached to her own cultural values and norms, it is often difficult to adjust and adapt to the opinions of others from other cultural backgrounds (Becker, 2006). Furthermore, I contend that culture has a significant impact on its people, and that cultural experiences play important roles in our educational research and development.

Cultural values and norms influence gender issues and can influence teenage mothers' decisions about schooling and mothering. Culture guides a person's behaviour, values, norms, and beliefs that are acceptable in that society. Members of such a society learn to conform to those acceptable modes of behaviour and conduct. Those who do not conform to their society's values are chastised by their peers (Fafunwa, 1974).

Based on the cultural considerations in this study and some forms of cultural behaviour, certain actions and behaviours have long been condemned and continue to be so in our society. In the case of this study, teenage pregnancy is one of the unacceptable behaviours among our teenage girls, and it is rooted in a strong moral consideration of African culture (Iimene, 2015). African culture has a strong system of various beliefs and customs that each individual must follow in order to avoid bringing shame to the family. The Ovambadja community is part of African culture, and sex before marriage is strongly discouraged, with those who engage in it facing societal rebuke.

3.5.2.6 Teenage motherhood and patriarchy

Understanding patriarchy is critical to understanding the various feminist perspectives in this study. The role of a father in a male-dominated family is referred to as patriarchy. It is “a social and ideological construct that holds men (patriarchs) in superior position to women” (Bhasin, 1993, pp. 24-25). Walby (1990, p. 20) defines patriarchy as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women”. Hartmann (1981) connects patriarchy to capitalism by stating that it is based on a hierarchical and unequal system of power relations through which men control women's production, reproduction, and sexuality. It imposes masculine and feminine character stereotypes in society, thereby sustaining and securing unequal power relations between men and women. According to Bhasin (1993), the nature of women's

control and oppression varies from society to society due to differences in class, religion, ethnicity, and socio-cultural practices.

Patriarchy becomes an important concept in this study, because this research was conducted in the multicultural community of the Ovambadja, where the patriarchy system operates. Patriarchy emerges from social, political, and economic contexts and exists in a specific historical time and geographical area of African community (Becker, 2006). Because of the influence of patriarchy, masculinity is elevated in most of the African cultures while femininity is devalued. As a result, patriarchy is viewed as one of the factors that can influence lived experience, which is the main concept under investigation in this study.

3.5.2.7 Teenage motherhood and identity

Depending on the context, the word *identity* can have a variety of meanings. Identity is defined in this study as the way individual teenage school-going mothers define themselves, and are defined by others, based on sexuality and culture (Deng, 1995).

The identity presented in this study is divided into two parts: social and personal. A social category is a group of people who are labelled and distinguished by rules that determine membership and distinguishing characteristics or features. Personal identity is a set of distinguishing characteristics in which a person takes special pride, or from which he or she derives personal definition and self-understanding (Fearon, 1999). This study examined identity in terms of both social categories and the sources of an individual's self-respect and dignity (Fearon, 1999). In this study, the concept of identity assisted me in discovering how individual teenage school-going mothers position themselves in society, as well as how they express their own personalities and responsibilities.

3.5.2.8 Teenage motherhood and agency

Agency is of the main concepts adopted in this study. According to Kabeer (1999, p.437), agency is the ability to define one's goals and act toward it or them. Agarwal (1997) defines *agency* as the covert meanings and motivations that individuals give to their actions. When an individual is not only able to define and pursue his or her goals, but is also able to do so in the face of opposition, agency takes on a positive form.

Agency can also be negative when a person allows others to use violence and threats to override his or her choice of goals and actions (Kabeer, 1999). For this study, I argue that in order for teenage mothers to continue their education, they must be influenced by positive agency features within themselves. This is why they sometimes subvert or conform to socially constructed gender relations at school, home, and in the community (Wekesa, 2010). The conclusions of these arguments are discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

3.5.2.9 Teenage motherhood and gender relations

Gender relations refer to relations and interactions between women and men that are socially constructed and, in most cases, signify power relations between the masculine and the feminine (Bottorf, Ollife & Robinson, 2011). This interaction is divided into two dimensions which, according to Agarwal (1997), are *materials* and *ideological*. Agarwal describes the *materials* dimension as visible, not only in the socially recognised differential allocation of roles, responsibilities, and resources, but also in ideas and representations, ascribing to women and men different abilities, attitudes, desires and personalities. These concepts are very important to this study as they facilitated the analysis of the lived experiences of teenage mothers, either at school, home or within the community.

3.6 Concluding remarks on the feminist theory contribution to this study

In summary, the seven feminisms theoretical framework provide the perspective through which I analyse and describe the study's findings. I discovered that liberal feminism provided a lens through which I could examine the lived experiences of teenage school-mothers in relation to its belief in equal rights and opportunities for women. As I stated in Chapter 3 (3.4.1), liberal feminism was useful in this study because it raised public awareness among teenage mothers about their own rights, including legal and political rights, on the basis of the argument that they should be treated equally with men in both the public and private spheres (Haipinge 2013).

In addition to the analytic features of the study, radical feminism in Chapter 3 (3.4.2) enriches the description of the results through its critique of patriarchy as being dominant in human life. To describe how teenage school-going mothers navigate patriarchal socio-cultural expectations to return to school, radical feminism provided

an explanation tool. Furthermore, some of the theory's perspectives served as a lens for identifying patriarchal oppressions experienced by teenage school-going mothers in schools, homes, and the community. Nonetheless, as explained in Chapter 3 (3.4.2), radical feminism, like other feminisms, has faced criticism for failing to take into account other forms of power that oppress women (Allen, 1998; Chiponda, 2014). In Chapter 3 (3.4.3), Marxist feminism bridged this gap by applying its analytical lens to the economic situation of teenage school-going mothers. Furthermore, Marxist feminism recognises that, even though patriarchy exists in society, women are oppressed as a result of the coercive power derived from class and private wealth. This provided an opportunity as I investigated the economic background of teenage school-going mothers which I discovered that it affected their ability to participate and be involved in the activities of their schools, homes, and communities.

Socialist feminism, as shown in Chapter 3 (3.4.4), was appropriate for its descriptive influence on the relationship between class and gender. It also helped me as I examined the effect of class and gender at home, school and in the community. A salient observation made by Chiponda (2014) is that liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminisms exclude black and African women from their analysis and justification. Thus, in Chapter 3 (3.4.5), black feminism served as a lens to investigate the intersection of gender, class, and race, as well as other factors that emerged from the data. Again, because black feminism is based on Western culture, it did not provide enough explanations of the situation of teenage mothers from an African and rural perspective. Thus, in Chapter 3 (3.4.6), African feminism bridged this gap by providing several lenses for analysing the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers from an African perspective. Intersectionality theory, as discussed in Chapter 3 (3.4.7), is central to all feminist thinking, and it is used as a theoretical tool to bridge the gap and fight against hegemony and exclusivity (Nash, 2008, p. 2). According to McCall (2011, p. 89), intersectionality is the most significant theoretical contribution of women's studies to date. However, it is clear from this study that intersectionality theory was useful in the analysis because it played a significant role in understanding how multiple forces or identities of teenage mothers intersects and predispose them to multiple of discrimination and stigmatisation within our society. These multiple forces include, gender expectations, economic situation, class, age and culture.

Combining feminist theories while considering the intersectionality framework uncovered the plight of teenage school-going mothers while schooling, and provides me with a language to explain the nature of marginalisation, discrimination, and oppression within the school, community, and home that had affected teenage mothers' re-entry and school performance. The intersectionality framework and collective feminist thoughts provided a tool in this study to analyse the structural and cultural constraining factors that contributed to the high rate of school drop-out among teenage mothers, as well as identifying an enabling situation that encourages the 16 teenage school-going mothers to remain in school.

Finally, while feminist theory has not been fully utilised in the teenage motherhood discourse in studying the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, it has provided a useful reference point to examine what, in social and cultural discursive spaces, increases the vulnerability of oppression and discrimination among teenage mothers (Karim-Sesay, 2006). According to Sesay (2010), the use of feminist theory offers ways to expose women's vulnerability by confronting what is considered private as well as bringing it into the realm of the public.

3.7 Conclusion

The six feminism theories and intersectionality theory were considered relevant to provide the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study based on the following reasons: To begin, the teenage school-going mothers who are part of the investigation are women, and their well-being is a primary concern of feminism (Anderson & Taylor, 2009). Second, feminism is a widely accepted global theories that explain women's situations, and these theories can be used to analyse the lived experiences of teenage mothers in the rural primary and junior secondary schools (Chiponda, 2014). Feminists are committed not only to exposing the root causes of women's oppression, but also to working individually and collectively to eliminate all factors that contribute to women's discrimination and inequality (Hutchison & Smith, 2004; Donovan, 2001;). Furthermore, these theoretical frameworks influenced the methodological choice I made. The framing perspectives of various feminists provide me with the language I used to explain the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers, not only through the lens of gender, but also by engaging other intersecting sources of influences on women subordination such as class, culture, age, religion, and patriarchy, as they have

been part of the concern across feminism waves. I have also drawn the reader's attention to social facts that may shape and influence human behaviour because they not only shed light on the history of gendered power relations but also provide us with an understanding of the fundamental causes of the increase in school dropout among teenage mothers.

Finally, feminist perspectives proved to be effective tools for analysing existing forms of societal oppression that increase discrimination and stereotyping among teenage mothers. Using the seven feminists' lenses, I was able to reveal the existing constraints in schools, homes, and communities that contribute to the high rate of school dropout and prevent teenage school-going mothers from freely continuing their education (Lindsey, 1997). Finally, feminist perspectives provided tools for identifying the enabling (structural and cultural) factors encountered by teenage school-going mothers.

The empirical results of this study are presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 where the applicability of the theoretical framework as reviewed will be investigated.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In all qualitative research studies, epistemological reflexivity – the process by which the research design and methodology define the ways in which knowledge is generated – is recommended (Willig, 2001). Research methodology decisions are influenced by a variety of factors, including the research goal and objectives, feasibility, and theoretical orientation of the study (Dukas, 2014). As a result, in this design and methodology chapter, I briefly revisited the study's theoretical orientation and research goal in order to demonstrate how I arrived at reasonable and reliable answers to my research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), as stated in Chapter 1 (1.7).

This chapter describes the research approach, including a discussion of the research methodology, as well as an explanation of the research paradigm that guided the design and how the study was carried out. This chapter also discusses the research site, the target population, the research instruments used to collect data, and how the data were analysed. Other issues that are discussed in this chapter have to do with the credibility and dependability of findings, as well as the ethical protocols that were followed.

4.2 Theoretical perspective

The feminist positions described in Chapter 3 influenced the research design decisions made for this study and guided the development of the research methodology. The study has a feminist perspective and a phenomenological methodological orientation (Dukas, 2014). Feminists' perspectives in this study highlight that teenage school-going mothers' life experiences and interpretations of their relationships are a reflection of the society in which they live (Walker, 1998). Thus, it was critical to choose a research methodology that allowed me to listen to and understand the teenage mothers' own voices while investigating the enabling and constraining factors surrounding teenage motherhood and schooling in Namibia's Okalongo circuit. The views of feminist researchers such as hooks (2001), Collins (2000), Walker (1998; 2003) and Chukwuma (1994) among others, influenced this study. I adapted their contributions to describe, debate, and justify the theoretical orientation of my study. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 4.4 and 4.6, the study's aims and theoretical perspectives heavily influenced my decision to use a qualitative phenomenological research design.

4.3 Research goal and objectives

The study's main aim is to investigate the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers as they pursue their education in junior secondary school in three rural schools along the Okalongo circuit in Omusati region, Namibia. The objective of examining the lived experiences of the teenage mothers is to establish how this group's lived experiences of being a learner or a mother can affect their responsibilities of motherhood and schooling.

The study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding and analysis of teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences in terms of the enabling and constraining factors they face at home, school, and in the community. The ultimate goal of this research is to encourage those who are still in school to continue their education without fear, as intended by Namibia's Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012), and to make recommendations to help those who have dropped out return to school and complete their education.

4.4. Research Approach: Qualitative Feminist Approach

This study is largely qualitative. It incorporated feminist research principles into the qualitative approach (Chiponda, 2014). I refer to this study's methodology as qualitative feminist research. According to Flick (2006, p. 12), qualitative research is "a process that investigates a social human problem, in which the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a whole and complex representation through a rich description and explanation, as well as a careful examination of participants' words and views" (Flick, 2006, p. 12). In this qualitative study, I as the researcher, was essentially the primary agent for carrying out the research through data collection and analysis. The advantages of using the researcher as a human tool include being approachable to the participants, quickly adapting, checking responses for clarification, and pursuing unfamiliar or unclear responses (Merriam, 2002). The data collection employed to obtain in-depth and rich data from teenage school-going mothers were reflective journals, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. I chose a qualitative methodology because it allows a constructive setting in which the participants (teenage school-going mothers) can construct and interpret their experiences as reality (Cohen et al., 2011).

The qualitative feminist approach assisted me in better understanding the teenage mothers' interpretations of motherhood and schooling as they were experienced at home, school, and in the community. The qualitative approach adopted, advocates for, and supports the use of multiple data collection and analysis methods (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011).

For example, the findings derived from the analysis of teenage mothers' lived experiences using multiple methods provide a detailed understanding of how teenage mothers are encouraged to stay in school, which may influence the way teenage mothers are supported in Namibian schools in the future. Furthermore, Christensen et al. (2011, p. 53) posits that the qualitative approach employs a variety of methods "to try to get the best description of an event and the meaning it has for the individuals being studied, which provides a better understanding of the phenomenon". This implies that this qualitative feminist approach contributes to a better understanding of how teenage school-going mothers make sense of their lived experiences.

As a qualitative feminist researcher, I used thematic data analysis techniques to analyse the data derived from the responses of teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences. In accordance with this principle, I analysed the teenage mothers' context in terms of gender, culture, economic situation, agency, and patriarchy (Usher, 1996; Mannathoko, 1992).

The study, for example, looked at the differences in roles and norms for teenage mothers as they told their stories about school and motherhood. As this is a feminist study, I have looked at the various levels of power teenage mothers wield at school, at home, and in the community, as well as their varying needs, constraints, and opportunities, and the effects of those differences on their lives (Goldberg, Lang & Biasutti, n.d).

To summarise, qualitative research proved to be the most appropriate approach for my research based on the following characteristics as defined by Creswell (2007) and Merriam (2009). A) The qualitative research *focuses on meaning and understanding*. This means that qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experience, how they consult their world, and what meaning they ascribe to their

experiences. B) *Natural setting*: qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field where the participants experience the issue or problem. C) *Researchers as key instrument*: the researchers are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. They may use a protocol (an instrument of collecting data) but the researcher is the one who actually gathers the information. D) *Inductive data analysis*: the researchers build their themes, patterns, categories from the bottom up, by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information, and E) *Rich description*: the product of qualitative study is rich in words and pictures rather than numbers.

4.5 Philosophical paradigm that underpinned this study

Creswell (1994) and Mason (1996) contend that good research always begins with the selection of the topic, problem, or area of interest, as well as the paradigm. According to Rashid Shah and Al-Bargi (2013), the term ‘paradigm’ was coined by Kuhn in 1962 to denote a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists that provides them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions (Kuhn, 1977).

In general, a paradigm is a set of beliefs or worldview that informs the researcher about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and how the researcher learns what she wants to learn (methodology) (Creswell, 1998; Guba, 1990; Kuhn, 1977). The paradigm a researcher utilises creates the lens through which the research is analysed (Covey, 1989).

The study used an interpretive paradigm in this qualitative feminist research. As presented in this study, the interpretive paradigm provides insight into the complex world of lived experiences from the perspective of those who lived or experienced it (Flick, 2006).

The interpretive paradigm is adopted because it claims that social reality is not singular or objective, but rather shaped by human experience and social context, and that it is thus best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling with the individual's own subjective interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Weber & Wand, 1993, p. 220). To put it in another way, I am drawn to the interpretivists' ontological position, which holds that there is no single reality, but that reality is a social construction. Thus

reality, in this case, is determined by the meanings that the teenage school-going mothers ascribe to their own lived experiences and interactions with others, whether at school, at home, or in the community (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

For example, the teenage mothers who participated in this study come from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds, and they may perceive reality differently, depending on their surroundings or where they are from (Neuman, 2000). As a result, reality in this study is multifaceted as it represents the experiences of the 16 teenage mothers from various schools and home environments (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). This means that this study cannot claim absolute truth or fixed realities because their (the participants') multiple realities in this study represent their culture, experiences, and contexts from which they make meaning, which can make interpretation difficult and different (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In this study, the interpretivist epistemological position is that meaning and knowledge are not 'out' there waiting to be discovered, but are subjectively constructed and perceived by individuals and groups (Carson et al., 2001, p. 5; Berger & Luckman, 1967, p. 3 in Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The interpretive paradigm in this study is defined by a concern for the social world and lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers (Cohen et al., 2011). Although the researcher lives in the same environment as the young mothers, what is offered in this study is a genuine representation of how the teenage mothers reported, interpreted, and made meaning of their experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This indicates that the knowledge presented in this study is particular, derived from the 16 teenage school-going mothers' own interpretations (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

4.6 Research design

The design of this study is phenomenology. It is phenomenology because it investigated the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy in Omusati region and my sample size was the 16 teenage mother-learners. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that is appropriate for qualitative interpretive research, such as this study. It derives from the works of the philosopher Edmund Husserl and is used to describe the lived experiences of an identified phenomenon (the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers) (Cohen et al., 2011).

Husserlian phenomenology, according to Cohen et al. (2011), is an approach that focuses on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct lived experiences from the first-person point of view. Through the analysis of in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journals, I was able to determine how the participants (teenage mothers) made sense of their own lived experiences. This means that the participants were given the opportunity to tell their stories in which they were encouraged to share and make sense of their home, school, and community interactions, which were then analysed using a thematic technique to look for emerging themes and patterns in all of the participants' responses (Smith, et al., 2009).

The choice of this design was influenced by phenomenological claims that emphasise that investigation is valid when the information acquired is obtained through a rich description that allows for a true understanding of the essences of the experiencers (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because it sought to uncover the reality of lived experiences of the enabling and constraining factors through the life stories of the 16 teenage school-going mothers (Maypole & Davies, 2001; Green, 1997). The study was conducted under the assumption that some teenage mothers' experiences had previously been overlooked or went unnoticed, and as a result, most of their valuable contributions based on their experiences had never been documented. Thus, this research design assisted me into describing, rather than simply explaining, the teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences, as it begins without hypotheses or preconceptions (Creswell, 2007). Through the phenomenological approach, I was able to describe and comprehend the principles and underlying structures of teenage motherhood based on the teenage mothers' interpretations of their own experiences (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I conducted this study in my own community, and I approached the phenomenon from an emic or insider's perspective. I was an insider because we (the teenage mothers and I) are all women (identity), share the same culture, language, and environment, even though we did not share the same experience of teenage motherhood (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015).

Furthermore, I was able to get up close and personal with the participants because I live in the community and I am a school principal at the school in the community. This

means that I was able to deeply investigate the practices and beliefs (Miller, 2007) of the Ovambadja community, which I am also familiar with. I was aware of the bias that the emic perspective could create, but I managed my position as a researcher and as an insider by not allowing my personal experience to influence the report of the findings. It entails turning the researcher's lens inward to recognize and accept responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the impact it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected, and its interpretation (Berger, 2015). Furthermore, because the participants were open and comfortable sharing their experiences with me as a member of the community, conducting the research as an insider to the community served the purpose of providing descriptive in-depth reports. The insider position was advantageous to the study because I understand the participants' customs and social structures, which influenced their experiences (Miller, 2007). However, because this was a phenomenological study that required the research to exclude personal interests, I did not let my position influence the data. I set aside my own assumptions and allowed the voices of the participants to come through as is presented in Chapter 5.

4.7 Research site

The research was carried out in the Okalongo circuit, one of the Omusati region's 12 circuits. Okalongo is located in northern Namibia and has 26 schools with a total enrolment of 13,490 learners as per Okalongo termly report, 2016 (Okalongo Term Record, March 12, 2016).

I chose this site for a variety of reasons. First, it is where I live, making it easier to contact the participants and I am seeking answers to why this is happening in the community where I am an educational leader. Second, the study was sensitive because the participants were vulnerable, minors and teenage girls who would share their lived experiences or disclose personal behaviours that they may never have shared with anyone else before. Because of the sensitive nature of the study, I spoke with the Life Skills teachers in order to establish a trusting relationship with the participants in an open and honest manner. Third, the study focused on schools in rural areas, because the majority of Okalongo's schools are in rural areas. Fourth, in comparison to other schools, the Okalongo circuit reported a high rate of teenage pregnancies in 2016 (Okalongo termly report, March 12, 2016).

Finally, as a school principal whose school also has experienced high rates of teenage pregnancy, I chose this site because of my professional interest in determining the causes of high occurrences, high rates of drop out, and understanding the perspectives of teenage mothers, which may aid in the formulation of best practices at school. For these reasons, I acted more as an insider, as the study was conducted in an area where I am well-known, and I also care for teenage mothers myself. Thus, the reason for opting for this site, and my dual role as a school principal and a researcher were clearly explained to the participants.

4.8 Research sampling

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2015), sampling entails selecting a specific number of participants from a target population. Because the goal of this study was to collect rich, in-depth qualitative data, it was limited to teenage school-going mothers from three selected schools in Namibia, Omusati region.

The sampling of the selected schools was prompted by the high numbers of teenage pregnancy recorded in 2016 among all schools in the Okalongo circuit, and the three selected schools recorded particularly high rates of teenage pregnancies cases when compared to other schools. Furthermore, because there is a dearth of literature on the targeted group, the sampling focused on teenage mothers in the primary and junior secondary phases (Grade 7-10). To the best of my knowledge, no research on the lived experiences of teenage mothers in primary and junior secondary school has ever been conducted in Namibia. A questionnaire was designed to determine the demographic profile of the participants, which later assisted in better understanding the participants' life contexts (Appendix G). Chapter 5.3 contains a summary of the participants' demographic profiles.

Furthermore, this study is sensitive because the participants are vulnerable minors and very young adults, and it required people who the participants knew and could trust. Purposive sampling was chosen for this study because it is the most important type of non-probability sampling for identifying the primary participants (Welman & Kruger, 1999). Purposive sampling, according to Cohen et al. (2011, p. 157), is used to gain access to 'knowledgeable people', i.e., those with in-depth knowledge or experience of

the specific issues under investigation. As a result, the study included seven participants from one school and four and five from the other two.

In this study, the sampling procedure was based on the researcher's discretion and the purpose of the research (Schwandt, 1997; Babbie, 1995), such as looking for those who "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). The study targeted 16 teenage school-going mothers, aged 16 to 20 years, who have a child or children who lived with them during the period in which the research was conducted.

This study's sampling procedure was influenced by the feminist critical decision of standardisation across group members. This means that the sampling was done in accordance with the feminist idea of grouping participants who had similar experiences. Because they share similar characteristics and experiences, the 16 teenage mothers in this study were grouped together to share their experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007).

According to Hycner (1999, p. 156), “the phenomenon determines the method, including the type of participants”. For example, the fact that the participants were all from oppressed and socially disadvantaged groups made it easier to place them in the same discussion group that made them feel comfortable. At the same time, they shared their teenage motherhood and schooling experiences, which ultimately allowed their voices to be heard rather than silenced them (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007).

The selection process was simple because the researcher enlisted the help of Life Skills teachers in selecting and identifying participants because the topic is sensitive, and participants must be chosen with care. In order to obtain concrete results, proper analytical selection was required. Life Skills teachers were central in the selection because they are closer to the learners when it comes to life issues that concern them. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) voluntary participation, (b) teenage school-going mothers between the ages of 16 and 20, (c) enrolment in upper primary and junior secondary rural schools and having a child or children and staying with her child/children while attending school. This study included only 16 teenage school-going mothers from three different schools. The initial plan of

this study was to select five teenage school-going mothers from each of the three targeted schools, which indicated a high rate of teenage pregnancy. Despite having a high rate of teenage pregnancy in 2016, there were no single teenage mothers at the first targeted schools. When I inquired, I discovered that they had dropped out of school. There were eventually seven teenage mother-learners at the fourth school, and all of them agreed to participate in this study because there was a fear of not finding suitable numbers at the next school. As a result, the study had seven participants from one school, four from a third school, and five from a fourth school. To protect the identity of the participants and their schools, the study used pseudonyms which were chosen by the participants themselves.

All of the participants in this study had experienced the same event and had significant and meaningful lived experiences of the phenomenon (teenage motherhood and schooling) under investigation (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2013). This means that 15 of the participants had one child each, and only one had two. They all stayed at home with their children and left them in the care of either their parents or guardians while they went to school. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that the 16 participants identified for sampling provided relevant data for this study. The following section discusses the data collection procedures used during the research process.

4.9 Research process and data collection methods

In order to collect data for this qualitative feminist study, data were gathered from a variety of sources (Van As & van Schalkwyk, 2008). Thus, the research process was carried out in a specific order, beginning with the reflective journals distributed to each participant, followed by three focus group discussions, and concluded with 16 one-on-one interviews, with each process informing the others. This means that the data from the questionnaire and reflective journal aided in the formulation of the questions for the focus group discussions, while the data from the focus group discussions informed the questions for the one-on-one interviews.

Before the research began, all of the procedures and protocols that would be followed were explained to the participants, as well as what was expected of them (Appendix I). Except for the two participants for whom their parents consented on their behalf (Appendix F-1), all participants received an information letter (Appendix E) and were

given the opportunity to ask questions before filling out the consent letter (Appendix F-2).

The participants' security and privacy were prioritised throughout the research process, and questions were based on feminist research practice. This means that the questions were not discriminatory or offensive to the teenage mothers' credibility. The discussions and interviews took place in a relaxed and trust-filled school environment, with the researcher ensuring that no question would hurt the participants' feelings by starting with social conversation prompted by the scenarios (Moustakas, 1994). The focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews took place after school in their school environment, not only because it was a convenient time and place for the participants, but also because one of the Omusati Education Directorate's ethical concerns was that the research should not disrupt the participants' lessons (Appendix B2).

The discussions and interviews ranged in length from 30 to 45 minutes each. To record the interviews, a tape recorder was used for both individual interviews and focus-group discussions, which were preceded by the consent of each individual participant. The purpose of using a tape recorder was to make data collection easier so that nothing was missed, and it allowed the study to capture accurate contributions and have reliable information for analysis. As part of the ethical consideration, participants were informed that they could request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time.

Because the participants were unable to express themselves well in English, all data were collected in Oshiwambo. Later, I translated the Oshiwambo version into English. This allowed the participants to express themselves without fear of being misunderstood, or of not being able to find the appropriate words in English to express their feelings about their actual experiences. Furthermore, in a feminist study, the researcher should ensure that the participants' dignity is protected and that no participant is humiliated in any way (Wright, Noble, Ntshongwana, Neves & Barnes, 2014).

Despite the fact that I am not an English expert, I am fluent in Oshiwambo, which I translated into simple, understandable English. The words which I could not find direct English translations for are presented in Oshiwambo alongside a literal translation.

Therefore, I am confident that I accurately captured the lived experiences and perspectives of the 16 teenage school-going mothers in this study as possible.

The following sections describe how the research instruments were used and how they communicated with one another.

4.9.1 Reflective journals

All participants were given a guide for keeping a reflective journal (Appendix H), which explained how to record their daily experiences and feelings at home, school and in the community. The journal was kept for a period of six months. The journal included a series of questions to guide them, but they were not bound by them and were free to include any experiences they felt were important to share. The guidelines to completing the reflective journals were as follows:

Your reflection in the journal should indicate the following:

- The challenges and support you have experienced at school
- Effect of motherhood on your school performance
- Cultural factors within home, school and in the community which enhance (allow) or obstruct (restrict) your school attendance, performance and parenting. Feel free to,
- Record your daily best moments, serious communication incidents, feelings (joys/excitements or problems), fears, emotions and frustrations.
- You can draw images (pictures) to illustrate your thoughts and ideas.

The aim of the journals was not different from the other data sets, as all sought to elicit the lived experiences of the mother-learners at school, home and in the community. What is unique to this data set is that it covered the experiences on a daily basis. Some of the findings in the journals were used to formulate the sub-categories that I used to analyse the data. The journal's questions were written in both English and Oshiwambo. I collected and studied the journals after six months. As I was studying the journals, I maintained contact with the participants to get clarification on a few points that were unclear.

The participants produced well-written reflective journals that enhanced the interpretation of data gathered through the individual interviews and focus group discussions. Furthermore, teenage mothers' written journals allowed them to express

their daily feelings, experiences, and thoughts. As a result, some of the journal content aided the researcher in developing questions for focus group discussions and individual interviews (Friedman, Mayorga & Newman, 2007).

4.9.2 Focus-group discussions

A focus group discussion, according to Cohen et al., (2011), is a type of group interview in which participants interact with one another rather than with the interviewer. The researcher derives data and outcomes from the group's interaction. The use of focus group discussions in this feminist research elicited enough data required to investigate the research questions of this study.

In this case, the focus group discussions brought the 16 teenage mothers together to share their collective experiences (Norris, Nurius & Dimef, 1996). For example, themes identified in the focus group discussion were compared with themes identified in the reflective journals and in the one-on-one interviews.

Hesse-Biber (2014) indicates that it is important for researchers to collect data using focus group discussions because they allow the participants, in this case teenage mothers, to make explicit meanings and realities that were previously hidden. The focus group discussions (Appendix K) covered the lived experiences at school and in the community. As a result, I anticipated that their contributions would contribute to a better understanding of their social position as teenage mothers that are constrained by patriarchal social structures (Ngabaza, 2010). Feminist researchers value the focus group's collective and interactive nature because it connects to ideas of empowerment and emancipation (hooks, 2000).

The research took place in an environment chosen by the participants and comfortable for them in order to shift the power balance between the researcher and the participants. The participants were allowed to choose a convenient location, which aided in creating a comfortable discussion environment and potentially alleviated feelings of power disparity between the interviewer and interviewees (Clark, Holland & Peace et al., 2009). There were three focus group discussions (one per school), comprising participants from the particular school attended. The focus-group discussions took place at the participants' schools because they thought it would be a good place for

them. A permission letter (Appendix C) was sent to the school principal, along with a letter from the Director of Education (Appendix B).

During the discussions, I welcomed all participants and thanked them for their willingness to participate in the study at the start of the discussion. The main aim and purpose of the discussions were explained, and the participants' permission for note-taking and to be tape-recorded was requested. This request was granted. I went on to explain that they were free to leave the discussions at any time should they wish to do so. The rules for the discussion sessions were clarified, which included, among other things, respect for one another, talking loudly for the purpose of enriching note-taking and audio-tape recording, allowing each participant to speak through the chairperson, and seeking clarification if they asked a question that was not clear (Fox, 2009). During the discussions, participants were encouraged to acknowledge the perspectives of other participants (Harper, 2002).

The use of focus group discussions enabled "consciousness raising," a term associated with second-wave feminism (Wilkinson, 1998 p.115). This means that the study is not about what a researcher can do for the participants, but rather about giving the 16 teenage school-going mothers a chance to share their experiences and develop agency to act for themselves by realizing group commonalities (Wilkinson, 1998).

The collective nature of focus group discussions makes them potential agents of their own change and empowerment (Mies, 1983). Hence, Pini (2005) states that in a research it is easier for the participants to become empowered in a collective and supportive setting as opposed to an individualistic and isolating environment.

It is difficult to hold focus group discussions with vulnerable and marginalized groups of women. According to Hesse-Biber (2014), planning takes time and effort because, despite shared experiences, participants may feel uncomfortable discussing difficult issues in front of one another. Researching sensitive topics, such as the subject of this study, necessitates the use of novel methodologies (Liamputtong, 2007). For example, participants can be given an image, object, or scenario to discuss because they will be engaged on multiple levels, resulting in expressions of various types of data such as feelings, opinions, and position details (Fox, 2009; Cole & Knowles, 2008).

I facilitated the discussions by asking semi-structured (open-ended) questions and then probing for clarification during the discussions. To stimulate the discussions, the focus-group discussions for this study began with two scenarios (Appendix J) (Fox, 2009).

The scenarios used were: (cf. Appendix J)

A) *I was embarrassed; I was embarrassed with everyone [at school]. My mother was angry with me, because I could not go to school. She felt bad, because I am pregnant and unmarried. It is a big problem in our community.*

B) *My parents were very upset with me because they thought with the pregnancy I would not go back to school.*

The reading of the scenarios was followed by the question: *Do any of these scenarios relate to your situation? Can you tell me more about it?*

The focus groups at each of the three schools were conducted in the same way: sharing the scenarios, followed by questions, with each lasting 45 minutes. The researcher's authority is decentralized when scenarios are used (Cole & Knowles, 2008), and the researcher's power and influence over the group is reduced (Wilkinson, 1998). Importantly, the use of scenarios allowed participants to relax and feel at ease with the topic and with one another before sharing their own lived experiences based on the questions designed for the discussions (Fox, 2009). In addition, the use of the scenario serves the purpose of the focus group discussions which was not only to look for the lived experiences from the participants' perspective but also for their voices to be heard. Thus, follow up questions (cf. Appendix J) were set in the manner that allowed the participants to speak out. Some of the questions asked were:

1. *Do you think you have experienced challenges (at home, school or in the community) upon your return to school? What are those challenges?*
2. *How do you cope with those challenges?*
3. *How did the teachers and fellow learners treat you when you returned to school?*

In the light of the foregoing, I had the opportunity to listen to the lived experiences of the teenage school-going mothers through focus-group discussions (Hesse-Biber, 2014). During the discussions, I took careful note of and acknowledged the participants' feelings, and I frequently asked for clarification, assuring them that they were not alone

in having such feelings and experiences (Fox, 2009). I took notes on important issues that arose during the discussions for documentation purposes and used them to probe for further interpretation near the end of the discussions, as well as to help formulate the one-on-one interview questions. This also guided me when I conducted the data analysis in the formulation of the codes and themes.

In addition, I took note of the various influences that could affect the participants' engagement (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). For example, the researcher is a member of the Okalongo community, and some of the participants know each other because they grew up in the same neighbourhood, go to the same school, and have the same grades. Such relationships may have made communication between the researcher and the participants or among the participants difficult, but because the benefit of participating in the study was explained beforehand (Nkwemu, 2016), such relations did not hinder participation in the focus group interviews.

Rules of engagement were established and discussed ahead of time in order to reduce fears or discomfort the participants may have felt. These rules included respect and freedom of expression, as well as confidentiality (Nkwemu, 2016). The ground rules established were that participants were not allowed to discuss the research process with anyone including their friends, parents, and teachers outside of the interview context (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

4.9.3 One-on-one semi-structured interviews

After reading the reflective journal and leading the focus group discussions, I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with each of the 16 respondents. I explained the significance of the study to the teenage mothers again at the start of the interviews by reading the research protocols (Appendix I). I made it clear that they could share their experiences, including their thoughts, feelings, sensations, and memories, as well as anything else they believed they needed to share with me (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). Such explanations and clarifications were beneficial because participants may be reluctant to share sensitive information with the researcher directly. However, this did not occur because the teenage mothers fully participated in the interview without hesitation.

The one-on-one interviews were divided into two parts. The first section focused on the participants' life stories, which were captured through a series of semi-structured interview questions. A life story narrative approach (Appendix K) was used because I thought it was an appropriate research technique that allowed the teenage school-going mothers to express themselves, allowing them to explain the realities of their lived experiences during the interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 709), a life story or life narrative is "a way of understanding and bringing forth the history of women in a culture that has traditionally relied on masculine interpretation".

To allow the participants to tell their stories freely, I applied the same process that I used during the focus group discussions (Fox, 2009). I presented two scenarios to the participants (cf. Appendix K) based on real-life situations. They were then asked to relate the given scenarios to their own experiences.

The two scenarios were:

a) *It was not easy to have a baby. It's very hard. It is better to go to school and get a job first. Once the baby comes, it is very hard, you can't do anything, especially when you do not have someone to help you to take care of the baby while going to school. It is very hard.*

b) *It is not good to be pregnant while still at school. My uncle's wife was not good to me when I got pregnant. She kicked me out of the house. Now she does not talk to me, even if she finds me in the street she does not say hallo to me. It is not good. So it is better to have your mum. Even if your mum is angry with you it is not going to be like this. She is going to calm down a little.*

1. Do any of these scenarios relate to your experience? Can you tell me more about your situation? (Probing questions)
2. How did you feel when you found out that you were pregnant? Can you describe those feelings to me? Can you please tell me why you felt the way you are describing now?

Using the life story technique aided in understanding the participants' lived experiences as well as how they felt and perceived themselves as mothers and learners (Liamputtong, 2007). The emphasis on the life story (narratives) was thus important

because the data from these interactions provided important cultural background information for understanding the role, beliefs, and position of teenage school-going mothers in this community.

The second part of the one-on-one interviews focused on the lived experiences of teenage mothers and schooling. This part of the interview, like the first part that looked into the life stories, used semi-structured interviews that allowed for flexibility during the interview process. It is recommended to use a semi-structured strategy in feminist research because participants are not limited to specific responses (Cohen et al., 2011). This is in contrast to structured interviews, in which respondents are limited to a limited number of responses based on questions developed earlier by the researcher. In order to establish the lived experience from the more personal perspective the following questions were asked of the participants (cf. Appendix K).

1. *How did your parents react when they found out that you were pregnant?*
2. *Was your child's father expected to pay the damage price? If not, why not? If yes, how much and who managed the price?*
3. *What support do you get from your child's father's family?*
4. *Did you regret becoming a mother? Why? Why not?*
5. *Can you describe the way you see yourself as a mother? (How can you describe yourself?) Do you see yourself different from others?*

According to O'Shaughnessy and Krogman (2012), one-on-one interviews are still one of the most popular data collection tools used by feminist researchers because it empower the participants to be confident when telling their stories. It is also the best method in the environment that is generally required for mutual self-disclosure and is suitable for collecting data from vulnerable people. In the interviews, I, as the researcher probed for more specific answers and repeated a question if the response indicated that the respondent misunderstood the question (Fox. 2009). Furthermore, the individual interview method was used because it allowed participants to freely talk and express their memories, experiences, thoughts, and feelings without interruption from others (Hesse-Biber, 2014; Cohen et al., 2003).

Cultural aspects relating to the Ovambadja community customs, beliefs, and values, described in Chapter 1.3, paved the way for the one-on-one interviews. I was very careful not to say anything that might offend them during the interview process because I was aware of their cultural expectations and aspirations, which is a part of ethical considerations when conducting research (cf. 4.12) (Hoare, Levy & Robinson, 1993). As a result, scenarios and semi-structured interview questions were an effective strategy for allowing the teenage school-going mothers to freely talk and express their feelings and experiences (Campbell, 1999), as well as allowing them some degree of autonomy (Cohen et al.2011). The information gathered from the reflective journals, individual interviews, and focus-group discussions was analysed and cross-referenced, as detailed below.

4.10 Data analysis process

This study adopted an inductive process to analyse the data. Thomas (2006) describes this process and indicates that it provides a usable and systematic set of procedures for analysing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings.

In addition to the inductive process, I used thematic content analysis as an analytical strategy which is basically an inductive process that begins with the identification of words and phrases of texts in the data that speak to the research questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic content analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that can help the researcher to identify patterns or themes in the data. Thus, I used the thematic content analysis strategy to identify codes from the data elicited from the focus group interviews, the one-on-one interviews and the reflective journals. The identified codes were compared by their similarities for the purposes of forming categories that were organised into themes. I used thematic content analysis because it is a method rather than a methodology (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that thematic content analysis is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective which makes it a flexible method, which allows the analysis to be drawn from the participants' voice.

In this study I follow Moustakas (1994) and Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-steps of thematic data analysis. These are:

(a) *Familiarising with the data*: I read through all the data collected before I started analysing each participants' contribution. This involved transcribing the audio, then translating into English, reading through the text and taking initial notes, and generally looking through the data to get familiar with it.
(b) *Generating initial codes*: In this phase I started to code the data. Coding means highlighting sections of the text, usually phrases or sentences, and coming up with shorthand labels or "codes" to describe them.
(c) *Generating themes*: I looked over the codes I had created, identifying patterns among them, and started clustering them into themes.
(d) *Reviewing themes*: In this phase, I made sure that my themes were useful and accurate representations of the data collected. Here, I went back and forth to the data set and compared the themes against it to see if I had missed something. I made several adjustments until I was sure that the identified themes were represented in the data.
(e) *Defining and naming themes:* After I had identified all the themes, I started defining them (themes), which involves formulating exactly what I meant by each theme.
(f) *Creating the report*: Finally, I wrote up my analysis of the data by including all academic texts, as writing up a thematic analysis requires an introduction to address my research questions, aims and approach. I have also included a methodology section, describing how I collected the data through reflective journal, focus group discussions and one-on-one semi-structured interviews and explaining how I conducted the thematic analysis itself (cf. 5.3).

The results or findings section addresses each theme separately. I described how often the themes come up and what they mean, including examples from the data as evidence. Finally, in conclusion, I explain the main takeaways and show how the analysis has answered my research questions.

The range of feminist perspectives presented in Chapter 3 formed the basis of the data analysis presented in this study. The four main issues around gender as advocated by the three waves of feminisms and six feminisms (liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, black and African) contributed to the way I analysed the data. These include gender differences (which looked at the position of teenage mothers in community, at school and home), gender oppression (which includes patriarchy, power, subordination, oppression), gender inequality (looked at how sexual division of labour in the household, private/public

contributed to the lived experiences of teenage mothers) and structural oppression (which considered the multiple intersecting variables such as gender, age, culture among others, in shaping the lived experiences of the teenage mothers).

The teenage mothers were not only teenage mothers or learners, but some were orphans, had low socio-economic status, and some were the heads of their households when they became pregnant. All of this was considered during the analysis process. In addition, the Ovambadja cultural values and practices (cf. 1.3) informed the data analysis. Cultural values and beliefs in this context became part of the analysis because of the bias within the Ovambadja community that contributed to people judging the teenage mothers based on their own cultural preferences.

Thematic analysis was then implemented to identify themes from the patterns in the data that are important and interesting to the research questions in this study (cf. 1.7).

4.11 Credibility, dependability, validity and truthfulness

Researchers are cautioned against the positivist "need for research to demonstrate concurrent, predictive, and convergent, criterion-related, internal and external validity" in qualitative data analysis (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 134). Thus, it is impossible for the researcher to "prove absolutely that they got it right" in qualitative interpretive research, and thus the "preferred term to use related to research verification is the term credibility" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 299).

To establish credibility of the results, the qualitative research perspective relies on the use of multiple forms of data collection and on the perspectives of participants. The degree to which a researcher's analysis finds participant agreement is referred to as credibility (Lichtman, 2012). This means that the study's findings should be evaluated through the eyes of the participants, and it is up to them to determine the study's credibility. The most important credibility technique is a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). In this study, each respondent was given exclusive access to her interview transcripts and was invited to thoroughly read them for clarity and accuracy, as well as to provide additional insight and information.

Furthermore, the issue of loyalty is regarded as useful in efforts to establish the credibility of research because it “requires the researcher to be as honest as possible in the self-reporting of the research” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 134). In this study, I used the actual words of the respondents from reflective journals, focus-group discussions, and one-on-one interviews, which aided in ensuring the study's credibility and validity. I did, however, translate the actual words from Oshiwambo to English, but I assured the participants that the meanings had not been altered. When I could not find the correct English version, I put their words verbatim next to my carefully edited written words. As a result, the interpretation of the findings in this study includes the respondents' opinions and points of view. These were carefully coded to avoid data overload while retaining the essence of the respondents' contributions (Cohen et al., 2007).

Complete reliability is not possible in qualitative research. However, Denscombe (2010) notes that using the term ‘dependability' can help to mitigate this. The degree to which results are reliable in relation to the data is referred to as dependability, and it emphasizes the importance of the researcher accounting for the ever-changing context in which the research is conducted (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011). This refers to the researcher demonstrating that the research contains "procedures and decisions that other researchers can see and evaluate in terms of how far they constitute reputable procedures and reasonable decisions" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 300).

The truth-value of qualitative research is emphasized by Schurink, Schurink, and Poggenpoel (1998). In this study, I can claim that I present subjective truth because I spent enough time in the field gathering data that is rich and reflects the knowledge and experiences of the participants. Furthermore, I was aware of my personal experiences with the phenomenon under study at the start of this research project, so I spoke with some of my fellow researchers and was advised to keep a notebook where I recorded my personal experiences, biases, knowledge of previous research findings, and theory about the research topic. Throughout the analysis, I returned to the notes to check for reflexivity and to set aside preconceived notions and biases about the subject (Mouton & Marais, 1990). After reviewing and revising the notes I took about my personal experiences, the participants were given a copy of their responses to ensure that they accurately reflected their perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the data collection methods and data analysis process. Furthermore, reflective monitoring was important throughout all stages of data analysis (Willig, 2001). This included questioning the assumptions, feelings, beliefs, and actions in a given situation, as well as giving “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Bjorn & Boulus, 2011, p. 285; Dewey, 1910, p. 9). These strategies, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), included checking for researcher effects and triangulating across data sources and methods. This entailed weighing the evidence and determining which types of data were most trustworthy by looking at outlines of emerging revelations and checking out conflicting explanations through feedback from respondents (Cohen et al., 2007).

My role in this study was not to generate replicability results to address the gap by investigating the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. But to provide enough information which are logical, traceable, and documentable (Schimmack, 2012). I can state unequivocally that the findings in this study are from the Okalongo circuit and are relevant to the 16 participants in this study.

Furthermore, I am reporting that this study adhered to ethical protocols as outlined in the following section.

4.12 Ethical considerations

According to Maxwell (2005, p. 175), "ethics begins with the idea of the research project and ends with how we present and share what we have learned with others". Similarly, Babbie (2005, p. 61) and Polit and Hungler (1999, p. 701) define ethics as "a set of widely acknowledged moral principles that offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of the most appropriate conduct toward subjects and respondents, other researchers, and learners". Conducting research necessitates not only “expertise and diligence, but also honesty and integrity” (Burns & Grove 2005, p. 176). The current study considered the following ethical issues: the rights of teenage school-going mothers, the rights of schools, and the researcher's honesty. The importance of ethics in conducting this important research cannot be overstated. This means that the researcher's ethical behaviour was scrutinised. This topic, for example, is extremely sensitive because it necessitated the

disclosure of behaviour that would normally be kept private or personal (Liamputtong, 2007).

This would make respondents feel uneasy about freely expressing themselves. To ensure the safety and rights of the teenage school-going mothers, I informed and explained all of the processes, potential risks, benefits, and options involved in carrying out this research (Burns & Grove, 2005). I made certain that all participants who were not minors signed a consent letter (Appendix F-2) and that the parents of the two minors signed an assent letter to allow their daughters to participate in the study (Appendix F-1). I made certain that participants were informed about the significance of the research so that they could make an informed voluntary decision about whether or not to participate. In addition, I sought permission from the ethics committees at 1) the University of Witwatersrand (Appendix A), 2) the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture – Namibia (Appendix B1), 3) the selected school principals (Appendix C), 4) individual teenage school-going mothers, 5) (Appendix D), and 6) parents (Appendix E).

I also requested permission to record the interactions and assured participants that the information gathered would be kept private. Participants and location names have been kept anonymous (pseudonyms have been used) (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Participants were assured that the information they provided was solely for research purposes, and they were given the opportunity to review the transcripts during the analysis and remove any information with which they were dissatisfied. They were given the option to withdraw at any point during the research process if they so desired. However, none of the participants withdrew because I made it clear to them that their contribution would be of great benefit to other teenage school-going mothers, and that the information they shared might lead to positive change among other teenage mothers or policymakers in the future (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

I was aware that the information revealed by teenage school-going mothers could put me in a difficult position as an insider researcher (Saldin & Yaacob, 2016), because I am a woman, a school principal, and I have teenage mothers at home. As this was a phenomenological study, I was aware of my own subjectivity throughout the process, but I did not allow my subjectivity to dominate my findings. However, as I explain in Chapter 7, I encountered some limitations.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter provides a report on the research methodology that guided the design and how the study was carried out. The phenomenological approach as well as qualitative research have both been discussed. The population and sample size/participants were also described. A detailed report on data collection via semi-structured one-on-one interviews, as well as information on credibility and dependability, was provided. Finally, issues of data analysis and ethics were addressed. The analysis of research data is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in terms of the enabling and constraining factors they encounter at home, school and in the community as they pursue their education. The study further aimed to get information on the role of teachers, parents and community members in supporting better educational outcomes of teenage school-going mothers in collaboration with the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012) in Okalongo circuit in Omusati region, Namibia.

This chapter begins by presenting the participants' profiles. The profiles are followed by a brief explanation of the stages and processes of the analytical strategies that were used to arrive at the study's findings. The chapter further presents the analysis of the findings elicited from the reflective journals, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews that are related to the study's questions. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the significance of the findings presented. However, before presenting the data analysis the chapter foregrounds the research questions (cf. 1.7) that guided the scope and design of this study.

1. What are the enabling and constraining factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers when returning to school in the Okalongo circuit, Namibia?
2. How do teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences of being a learner affect their responsibilities as mothers?
3. How do teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences of being a mother affect their responsibilities as learners?
4. What support do schools provide to teenage mothers who drop-out and re-enter schools after they have given birth?
5. What barriers do these teenage mothers face on re-entering school?
6. What recommendations do teenage mothers suggest to increase the total number of teenage mothers who can complete their education?

As mentioned earlier, this study four data collection methods were used (cf. 4.9). Each method served a purpose.

5.2 Participants' profiles

Participants completed a demographic profile which was part of the sampling procedure to better understand their life context (c.f. 4.8). Where there was a need to complete the profiles, I made telephonic follow-up calls for additional data. I have compiled a brief profile overview for each participant (Appendix H) who took part in this study from May to October 2018 to provide yet another layer of context to situate their experiences. To maintain anonymity, I have used pseudonyms for the participants.

Kangobe was an 18-year-old mother-learner, who lived with her grandmother and her aunty. She was in Grade 10. She was 17 years old when she fell pregnant. Kangobe has one child who was five months old at the time the research was conducted. Her aunt (her mother's sister) looked after her baby when she went to school. She is an orphan. Kangobe was still in a relationship with the father of her child, who was 20 years old.

Kakuki was a 20-year-old mother-learner. She was in Grade 10. She was 16 years old when she fell pregnant. Kakuki has two children with different fathers. The firstborn was four years old and the last born was one year old. She is also an orphan, losing both parents when she was a baby. She stayed with her paternal grandmother. Her aunt stayed with her children when she went to school. Kakuki's first boyfriend was 25 years old and has never supported them. She was still in a relationship with the father of her last born who was 21 years old. He was also a learner but at a different school.

Kaupu was a 20-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 10. She was 18 years old when she fell pregnant. She had one child who was one year and six months old. She stayed with her extended family and her aunt took care of the baby while she was at school. Kaupu was still in a relationship with the father of her child, who was 23 years old at the time.

Ndumbokesha was a 17-year-old mother-learner who was in Grade 9. She was 16 years old and in Grade 8 when she fell pregnant. She has one child who was one year old at the time of the study. Both Ndumbokesha's parents are still alive and she is living with them. Her mother took care of her child when she was at school. She was in a relationship with the 21-year-old father of her child.

Kambwa was an 18-year-old mother-learner who was in Grade 10. She was 15 years old when she fell pregnant. She has one child. Her child was two years old. Even though Kambwa's parents are both still alive she stayed with her aunt. She dropped out of school for a year to nurture the baby as her mother refused to take care of the baby. After a year her mother took her in to take care of the baby while she went to school. Kambwa was still in a relationship with the 21-year-old father of her baby.

Denea was a 20-year-old mother-learner. She was in Grade 9. She has one child who was 2 years old. She was 18 years old when she fell pregnant. Denea's parents passed on when she was 15 years old. She lived with her grandmother. Like Kambwa, Denea also dropped out of school and stayed with her child for one year and four months as there was nobody to take care of her child. Eventually her uncle intervened by enrolling her in a different school during the second term and the child stayed with her grandmother. Denea indicated that she was not in a relationship because she decided to concentrate on her studies. The father of the child was 23 years old.

Betty was a 17-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 9. She was 15 years old when she fell pregnant. She has one child who was one year old. Betty's parents are still alive, but she did not stay with them. She stayed with an uncle. The child stayed with the nanny (who is being paid by her uncle) while she went to school. Betty was still in a relationship with her 23-year-old boyfriend who is also the father of her baby.

Dollar was a 20-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 8. She has one child who was one year and 6 months old. She was 18 years old when she fell pregnant. Dollar's parents are still alive, but they are not married. She stayed with her paternal grandmother, who took care of her child when she went to school. Dollar was still in a relationship with her 23-year-old boyfriend who is also the father of her child.

Rusia was an 18-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 9. She was 17 years old when she fell pregnant. She has one child who is 11 months old. The father of her child was also a learner attending school at a different school. Rusia's father passed away and she stayed with her mother, who took care of her baby when she went to school. She was still in a relationship with the 21-year-old father of her baby.

Lorence was a 20-year-old mother-learner. She was in Grade 9. She fell pregnant when she was 19 years old while she was in Grade 8. She did not drop out of school; she stayed away for only one month when she gave birth. She wrote her Grade 8 final exams and passed Grade 8. Her single mother stays with her ten month old baby while she was at school. Lorence was still in a relationship with the 23-year-old father of her child.

Trezzy was a 19-year-old mother-learner and she was repeating Grade 9. She fell pregnant in Grade 9 while she was 18 years old. Trezzy remained in school while pregnant for four months only and dropped out of school due to the long distance she had to walk (30 km) to and from school every day. Her pregnant conditions forced her to drop out of school the same year she gave birth. Her child was ten months old. The child's father was 23 years old and was unemployed. She was still in a relationship with the father of her child. Trezzy's father passed on. Her unemployed single mother was the one taking care of both her and her child.

Ndaudako was a 20-year-old school-going mother and she was in Grade 8. She fell pregnant while in Grade 7 when she was 19 years old. She has one child who was 9 months old. The father of the child was 23 years old. He was employed. She did not drop out of school but did take time off when she went on maternity leave for three months. She wrote her Grade 7 exams while she was pregnant and passed. Her baby stayed with her mother when she went to school, and she took over after school. She was still in a relationship with the 26-year-old father of her child.

Dulika was a 19-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 10. She fell pregnant when she was in Grade 9, and she was 18 years old. She has one child who was one year and five months. Her baby's father was 23 years old and was at a tertiary institution. She did not drop out of school and did not take maternity leave because she gave birth during the holiday. Both Dulika's parents are still alive, but they are not married and they do not look after her. She had not seen her mother for four years at the time the research was conducted. Most of the time she stayed alone in her grandmother's house as her grandmother was living in Angola. During the whole of her pregnancy period of 9 months she was alone in the house. Her grandmother came back to Namibia after she gave birth and is the one looking after the baby. Dulika was not in a relationship now as she decided to focus on her studies.

Mweulenga was a 20-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 10. She fell pregnant when she was 18 years old. She was in Grade 9. She has one child who was one year and seven months. The baby's father was 22 years old. She dropped out of school for ten months because there was no one to look after her. Upon her return to school, she repeated Grade 9 and passed. Mweulenga stayed with her single unemployed mother, and she was the one looking after her baby during school hours. Mweulenga was not in a relationship because the father of the baby was not supporting her. She decided to concentrate on her studies instead.

Namalimbo was 20 years old and in Grade 10. Her boyfriend was 27 years old and they have a baby who was two months and two weeks. She fell pregnant when she was 19 years old and in Grade 9. She wrote her examinations and passed. Namalimbo did not drop out of school but went on maternity leave for two months. Her father passed away and her single unemployed mother stays with the baby during school hours. She was still in a relationship with the father of her child.

Ndawanapo was a 19-year-old mother-learner and she was in Grade 9. She fell pregnant when she was 17 years old, and in Grade 8. She has one child who was one year and six months old. Ndawanapo was still in a relationship with the father of the baby who was 23 years old. She failed Grade 8 and repeated it before she was promoted to Grade 9. Ndawanapo's father passed away and she stayed with her single unemployed mother, who looked after the baby when she went to school.

The participants' profiling has been summarised in Table 5.1 on pg. 152 below.

Table 5.1: participants' profile

Pseudonyms	**Age when became a mother**	**Age the time of the interview**	**Grade when became a mother**	**Grade the time of the interview**	**Child/ren age**	**Period out of school**	**Child caretaker while going to school**	
Kangobe	17	18	9	10	5 months	0	aunt	
Kakuki	16, 18	20	8 9	10	4 years and 1 year	0	aunt	
Kaupu	18	20	9	10	1 year, 6 months	0	aunt	
Ndumbokesha	16	17	8	9	1 year	0	mother	
Kambwa	15	18	9	10	1 year	2 years	mother	
Denea	18	20	9	9	2 years	1 year and 8 months	mother	
Betty	15	17	9	9	1 year	8 months	mother	
Dollar	18	20	8	8	1 year	2 years	Grandmother	
Rusia	17	18	9	9	11 months	11 months	mother	
Lorence	19	20	9	9	0	0	Mother	
Trezzy	18	19	9	9	10 months	8 months	Mother	
Ndaudako	19	20	7	8	9 months	0	Mother	
Dulika	18	19	9	10	1 year and 5 months	0	grandmother	
Mweulenga	18	20	9	10	1 year and 7months	3 months	Mother	
Namalimbo	19	20	9	10	2 months and 2 weeks	3 months	Mother	
Ndawanapo	17	19	8	9	1 year and 6 months	0	Mother	

Summary

The brief profile presented in Table 5.1 above is for the 16 teenage school-going mothers ranging in age from 17 to 20 years at the time of the interview. They are all Christian but still subjected to traditional and cultural beliefs and customs (cf. 1.3) which further contributed to their oppression. They come from three different schools in the Okalongo circuit. The fathers of their children range in age from 21 to 27 years. Two of the respondents fell pregnant while minors[6] because they were under the age of 16. Only one of the 16 respondents has two children; the others all have one. The majority of respondents said they are still in a relationship with their children's father, with only three saying they are not in a relationship.

[6] According to Section 14 of Combating of the Immoral Practice Act 21 of 1980, a child is regarded as minor if under 16 years (Combating of the Immoral Practice Act 21 of 1980)

Seven teenage mothers were in Grade 10, seven were in Grade 9, and two were in Grade 8. All of the respondents are living with single unemployed mothers or grandmothers because three of the respondents have lost both parents and four have lost their fathers. Despite their unemployment, they are responsible for caring for their children while their mothers are at school. The teenage mothers who live with their grandmothers stated that they are dependent on their grandparents' pension and social grants. In addition, the respondents are still in school and unemployed, but because the Ovambadja are farmers they rely heavily on agricultural production for a living. The following section presents the study's analytical framework.

5.3 Data Analysis procedure

In this phenomenological study (cf. 4.6), I draw on Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Moustakas' (1994) thematic content analysis framework to describe and explain the process that guided data analysis in this study. All the data collected from reflective journals, focus group discussions and one-on-one semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematical content analysis. Six phases of thematic data analysis, as explained in Chapter 4 (cf. 4.10) were followed.

Phase 1

At the beginning of the data analysis, I made a note of my personal views on the researched topic to ensure that I presented the teenage mothers' experiences without bias or influence from my side. Once I set my own biases aside, I started familiarising myself with the data by listening to the audio recordings and transcribed everything that was said or done in the one-on-one and focus group interviews. These were listened to several times in order to become acquainted with the content and to carry out the verbatim transcriptions.

Transcripts of the Oshiwambo reflective journals, focus-group discussions, and individual interviews were then translated into English. Following that, English transcripts were translated back into Oshiwambo to ensure that they matched the meaning of the recorded data. I translated the text into English as literally as possible. However, due to differences in language structure and meaning, this was not always possible. As a result, I occasionally, but not always, followed the advice of Wildsmith-Cromarty (2008) and Amina (2010) and changed the sentence structure to

accommodate the nuances in the language used in interviews. The Oshiwambo version was then returned to the participants for verification and to allow them to remove any information that may have needed to be removed because some of the information shared by the participants was very personal and they had requested confidentiality and non-disclosure.

Phase 2

In phase 2, after I had transcribed the data, I went through all my data and took notes. While reading, I took preliminary notes (generating preliminary codes) by assigning code words to lines, sentences, and paragraphs of the transcribed data that represent the same ideas and feelings.

Phase 3

Phase 3, as noted by Moustakas (1994), is the phenomenological reduction step. In this phase, I moved into a broader stage where I started coding the data. After collecting all the data, I looked for themes among the codes and connections between emergent themes (reviewing themes) across three of the data sets, namely focus group interview, one-on-one interviews and the reflective journals. This means that the responses of the teenage mothers were compared and interpreted in the light of their perspectives, opinions, and experiences in order to make sense of them. Themes were later identified using colour coding to establish relationships, similarities, differences, and links among the coding categories (Cohen et al., 2011). For example, all the sections in the reflective journals, one-on-one and focus groups interviews which have the same ideas or feelings were collated together. I moved codes back and forth to try forming different themes. Some themes became subthemes to others, while some codes that does not fit anywhere, were set aside, as they became useful later.

Phase 4

During phase 4, I reviewed and refine the themes that I identified during phase 3. All the extracts related to codes were revised to see if they support the identified themes, or if there are contradictions and see if they overlap. Braun and Clarke (2006) also indicated that data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between the themes. Some themes became too broad; thus these were split in sub-sections of the main theme where they fitted

together. I repeatedly read through all the data again, and through this process I discovered new themes that I have missed at the beginning. I kept going back and forth until I was satisfied with the process.

Phase 5

In phase 5, themes were identified and organised into coherent categories, each with its own sub-themes. The data were organised in such a way that the similarities and differences in teenage mothers' responses could be captured using themes and sub-themes. I named and described each of the themes that I identified in the previous steps. The themes were descriptive and under each theme were categories and sub-categories, as shown in Table below:

Table 5.2 Codes clustered (to form categories) categories clustered to create themes

Themes	categories	codes
Emotional experiences of teenage motherhood and schooling	Experience of rejection and abandonment	-emotional feelings -abandonment -Mistreatment -rejection -threat -support withdrawn (power dynamic)
	Betrayal, self-blame and regret	-regret -betrayed -self-blame -self hate -sad and confused -feeling awful, useless, empty
	Multiple form of humiliation, gossip, insult and bullying	-name calling -bullying -called dirty and stink -insult from parents/other learners -gossip
	Frustrations and discouragement	-denied opportunities -discouragement -lack of support
	Shame, embarrassment and shock	-embarrassment -steering from the distance -manoeuvres (coming early to school) -feeling of shame -shock/surprise -making fun of you/foolish
	Experience of fear, isolation, stigmatising, being judged and discriminated	-discriminated/ -discriminatory phrases -fear

		-anger -intimidated -feeling of loneliness/walk alone -fear to be rejected
	Suicide and abortion attempts	-bad wishes -cursing -fear of disclosing pregnancy -termination of the pregnancy -frightened to learn that you are pregnant
Balancing schoolwork and home responsibilities	Mother and school responsibilities	-A lot of responsibilities at home -Girls heading family -The child's need and well beings -teenage mother taking care of the child alone -thoughts split into two -limited time to study
	Dropping out of school and absenteeism	-absenteeism -drop out of school -unbearable situation -immunisation/ sick child
	Lack of educational support and lesson compensation	-No compensation of lost lessons -lack of motherly love -empty promises -Policy not implemented -no remedial teaching
	Poor performance	-fail examination -repeating the grade -baby sick (lack of concentration) -No time to study at home -concentrate more on the child -abandon the book to attend to the child -children make a book a toy -lack of support from teachers/parents
Financial constraints and depending on others	Financial independent and social grants	-social grant -lack of financial support -depending on others -no money to go to the hospitals
	Family support and other moral support from friends and teachers	-advice from friends -family support -encouragement

		-teacher support/role model
Health challenges	Epilepsy and high blood pressure	-high blood pressure -epilepsy
	Morning sickness, nausea and vomiting	-nausea -morning sickness -vomiting
Feeling of maturity and responsibility	Acceptance of motherhood responsibilities	-self-determination -feeling of maturity and responsibility -create ways on how to survive (selling traditional food to earn income) -feeling of maturity
	Future plans, resilience and ambitions	-ambitious to become a teachers, doctors -enrol to vocational school -secure future wellbeing of mother and child -studying hard to pass as an obligation
	Warning to others	-advice to friends -motivational speaker
Resources, programme and support facilities in schools	Day care centres	-long distances to school -lack of day care in the community
	Awareness programme	-sex education -awareness programme on the danger of teenage pregnancy
	Provision of social workers at schools	-Counselling -social workers at schools

Phase 6

During phase 6, in the final step, meanings and essences synthesis, I read through the identified themes and searched for alternative or greater understanding before converting the emergent themes into thematic units. I use the emergent themes to compose my interpretive report (Creswell, 2007) which sourced from the three data sets (reflective journals, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews) as presented and discussed below.

5.4 Main findings

The analysis presented in this section was drawn from the participants' voices and summarises the themes and sub-themes discovered as a result of the analysis of the

reflective journals, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, as explained in 5.3 and 4.10. The findings presented are based on responses given during individual interviews (see Appendix J), which covered the life story of the 16 teenage school-going mothers at home. The focus group discussions (Appendix K) covered lived experiences at school and in the community, while the reflective journals (Appendix H) covered daily experiences at home, school, and in the community.

The teenage mothers' lived experiences are central to this study. Feminist researchers argue that theorising has to begin from the lived experiences of the marginalised people because it leads to the creation of knowledge grounded in that experience (Kang, Lessard, Heston & Nordmarken, 2017). The findings presented in this section comprise the lived experiences of teenage mothers from three selected schools in Okalongo circuit. The schools are referred to by their pseudonyms. These are Tango (T), Etale (E) and Omwedi (O). The following "key" was devised to represent the data generation methods: II (individual interview), FGD (focus group discussion) and RJ (reflective journal).

In the text the abbreviations used are as follows:

- FGDE - Focus group discussion from Etale CS
- FGDO - Focus group discussion from Omwedi CS
- FGDT - Focus group discussion from Tango CS
- IIO - Individual interview from Omwedi CS
- IIE - Individual interview from Etale CS
- IIT - Individual interview from Tango CS
- RJT - Reflective journal Tango CS
- RJO - Reflective journal Omwedi CS
- RJE - Reflective journal Etale CS.

The aim of foregrounding lived experiences is to give the voice to the 16 teenage mothers, as the basis of analysis for their shared situation. Thus, the selection of themes presented in this section was guided by the feminist frameworks developed in chapter 3. In presenting the findings analysis, I used the phenomenological analysis procedure described in Chapter 4.9. An inductive thematic content data analysis (cf. 5.3) enabled me to identify the following themes:

- Emotional experiences of teenage motherhood and schooling
- Balancing schoolwork and home responsibilities
- Financial constraints and depending on others
- Health challenges
- Feelings of maturity and responsibility
- Resources, programmes and support facilities in schools

Each of these themes will be discussed in the ensuing sections.

5.4.1 Emotional experiences of teenage mothers

The 16 participants shared the emotional experiences that shaped their understanding of what is and is not acceptable behaviour among Ovambadja women in this theme (collectively and individually). The data analysis process presented in Chapter 4.10 assisted me in identifying the following categories of description: rejection and abandonment, self-blame and regret, multiple layers of discrimination, insults and bullying, frustration and discouragement, shame, embarrassment, and shock, suicide and abortion attempts, and feelings of isolation, stigmatisation, and judgement.

5.4.1.1 Experiences of rejection and abandonment

The majority of participants reported feelings of rejection and abandonment from their parents, friends, and boyfriends after they learned that they were pregnant. In this regard, Dulika, a 19-year-old Grade 10 teenage mother, expressed a common sentiment among teenage school-going mothers when she said:

> *"My father and mother had both abandoned me. I haven't seen my mother in four years because she lives in the South. Even though we live in the same village, my father, who is married to another woman, didn't acknowledge me. As we speak, neither of my parents has bothered to visit me or my baby. They are never supportive of me…* (Paused crying), *not even a call from them"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

When Dulika started crying, I asked her why she was crying, she said:

> *"I'm crying because I'm furious with my father and mum. They don't see that I'm doing everything I can to stay alive and fix my mistake. Despite the fact that they are unemployed, I require their presence in my life. I really miss my mother's support. As her child, I need her to look after me. I'm missing her. This is how I'm now feeling"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

It is common in this community to find different families reacting differently to teenage pregnancy, and, as a result, pregnant teenage girls are often afraid to disclose their pregnancy, fearing a reaction from their parents. Furthermore, some parents punish their daughters when they find out about the pregnancy, an exercise that never happens to the boys. This happened to some of the teenage school-going mothers in this study. Mweulenga, another teenage mother in this study, has also experienced punishment and rejection from her family members. She said,

> "*When my family (mother, sisters, and brothers) found out that I was pregnant, they reprimanded me because I became pregnant very young and because I was not initiated in Olufuko. They refused to help me, so I had to depend on myself until I gave birth."*

Mweulenga revealed that the father of her child had also abandoned her. She said,

> *"My pregnancy was caused by a one-night stand. I went to visit my family in Angola, our neighbouring country... I met this man and became pregnant that night... I informed him that I am pregnant… to my surprise I never saw him again"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

The teenage mothers revealed painful experiences. Some have expressed that being abandoned while pregnant is very painful. Betty, a 17-year-old, experienced this feeling of being abandoned by her boyfriend. She said,

> *"My boyfriend abandoned me immediately after learning that I was pregnant, so I felt awful and in misery. He never phoned me again, and I lost track of him. Later, I discovered that he had changed his phone number. I didn't see him till I gave birth"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Mweulenga also shared the same feeling. She said,

> "*The realisation that I was alone in my predicament was distressing. My lover was nowhere to be found; he had abandoned me and had not bothered to look for his child until today"* IIE, 24 October 2018).

As a norm of this community, only married women or those who are initiated in Olufuko are spared from societal rebuke. However, single mothers, and especially teenage mothers, are rebuked and stigmatized if they are not married or not initiated in Olufuko. Furthermore, culturally, mothers are not allowed to go to school, as they have the responsibility of taking care of the child. The situation of a girl becoming pregnant outside marriage, or before being initiated in Olufuko is culturally unacceptable in this community. It is regarded as bringing shame to the family. Dollar, a 20-year-old, has experienced rejection from her father because she became pregnant before she was initiated in Olufuko. She said,

> *"Because I became pregnant before undergoing Olufuko initiation, my father was ashamed and unhappy with me. He informed me that because I embarrassed him, he would never support me... he advised me to rely on the support of my boyfriend"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Rusia also experienced insults from her mother because she did not undergo Olufuko. She said,

> "*Because I was not initiated in Olufuko, my mother used to call me 'ehengu ove*[7]*"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Because of such cultural expectations, teenage mothers developed feelings of regret and self-blame as the findings below indicate.

[7] Another devaluing connotation in Ovawambo culture meant to hurt and believed to teach other girls a lesson not to be involved in sex before marriage or before being initiated in Olufuko. The simple literal translation in English means 'useless/ a person with no value'.

5.4.1.2 Betrayal, self-blame and regret

All the respondents indicated that they felt regret, because they realised that they made a very big mistake in their lives. They revealed that a child is a burden, especially to them, as they are struggling and often unable to cope with two responsibilities. Namalimbo, a Grade 10 mother-learner (the day of the interview was her first day returning to school after giving birth) had this to say:

> *"I regret becoming a mother at such a young age, and I blame myself for not listening to my mother's advice. My mother used to warn me about boys and sleeping around... but look at me now... I was ignorant... and I used to think my mother was just jealous of me"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Rusia, a 17-year-old teenage school-going mother, also felt regret and blamed herself. She said,

> *"I felt terrible since I now realise I've put my future in jeopardy... And I'll never get another chance to appreciate my youth. I regret having a boyfriend before finishing my studies"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kambwa a teenage mother from Tango Combined School also blamed herself for being fooled by "fake love" as she put it. She said,

> *"I regret being deceived by fake love, and now motherhood is tormenting me. I'm not sure how I got into sex at such an early age... My studies are currently being disrupted by my parental responsibilities"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kakuki, a teenage mother of two children, in grade 10, blamed herself as well and said,

> *"I regret and blame myself for wasting my time. I was expected to be in Grade 12 at the moment, but I had failed Grade 8 when I became pregnant."*

Kakuki further said:

> *"Mum*[8] [referring to me] *I was sad and confused, and I didn't know what to do. I'm already an orphan; both of my parents died when I was a small child (I was told that I was one year old). I don't know them... or how they look... and now I'm pregnant... It's been difficult... I don't know anyone from my mother's family... I'm confused... and hating myself..."* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Almost all the teenage mothers in this study blamed themselves for becoming a mother while in school. They all felt it was their fault, except for Namalimbo who regrets falling pregnant, but blamed someone else. She said,

> *"You know what, Mrs Haipinge… I'm feeling awful, useless and empty"*

(The tone of her voice faint, very emotional, the way she looked at me was as if she wanted me to take that pain away from her). She continued by saying,

> *"My boyfriend betrayed me; even though we used condoms in the past, there is one day when we did not use it because he said he will be careful not to impregnate me that day. Unfortunately I got pregnant... I'm still unhappy with him... I believe he did it on purpose"* (IIE, 24 September 2018).

The cultural gender expectation of giving birth after marriage or after the Olufuko initiation invoked feelings of regret and guilt in the teenage mothers. They blame themselves because they were brought up in a patriarchal community that reprimands only girls who fall pregnant while boys continue to enjoy the privilege of being men. Furthermore, in Ovambadja community, teenage pregnancy is regarded as girls' carelessness, thus this can be a reason why most teenage mothers in this study have taken the blame on themselves.

[8] In Ovambadja culture children are brought up in the way of respecting every elder person, by regarding them as their own parents. It is regarded as rude to greet someone older than you by her or his name. When talking to an elder woman they have to refer to her as *meme* (mum) or to a man as *tate* (dad). Thus, these teenage mothers show respect by calling me meme or mum in English.

5.4.1.3 Multiple forms of humiliation, gossip, insults and bullying

Most of the participants in this study have experienced discrimination, name calling, insults and humiliating jokes. Ndawanapo experienced the following:

> "*To be honest, your classmates have the power to make you feel embarrassed... They appear to be looking down on you at times... You can see them whispering about you when you get close enough, but when you get closer, they appear to be fine with you"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndawanapo further said,

> "*I was once told by the boys in my class that I am dirty and stink... that I should tell the father of my child to buy me soap to wash myself... this type of bullying and humiliation has had a significant impact on my academic performance"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

The expression of being called 'dirty' has two implications, one refers to physical cleanliness, and the other one refers to morality (Kautondokwa, 2014). To this community, the Olufuko ritual is a powerful tool that can be used to judge and humiliate teenage mothers. Ndawanapo stated that she did not undergo Olufuko, and the other learners are aware of this, so it is possible for these boys to make such comments as a sign of their patriarchal bias in order to subordinate and humiliate teenage mothers. According to Kautondokwa (2014), young girls are considered 'clean' if they have been initiated through Olufuko, which is regarded as a process of ritual purification. It believed that they can be transformed into adults by cleansing them from sexual taboos, so that they would be socially accepted and thus give birth to legitimate children even if they are still single. Thus, being called 'dirty' and 'smelly' can be interpreted through such cultural expectations, which will have a negative impact on the lives of these teenage school-going mothers by contributing to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and emotional abuse. Kaupu has also confirmed that there was bullying and humiliation in schools. She said:

> *"I dropped out of school due to bullying and humiliation; I felt terrible and ashamed about how my classmates treated me. As a result, I made the decision*

to leave school and return home. I couldn't take the consequences of being shamed and humiliated on a daily basis."

She further said,

"Even after I returned from giving birth, the bullying continued; I was told to enrol at parent schools because there was no space for mamas and babies at their school" (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kambwa also experienced bullying which included name calling. As a result, she dropped out of school soon after her pregnancy became visible. This was what she said:

"My classmates, especially the boys, used to call me a bitch... girls used to draw pictures of pregnant girls on the chalkboards while making funny jokes and laughing at me" (RJT, 06 September 2018).

Kambwa recalled the incident and said:

"There were times when a boy in our class imitated a baby crying [a boy made a baby sound when crying] while the rest of the class laughed and stared at me... I had no choice but to drop out of school as soon as the pregnancy became visible because I was tired of being bullied every day.... They referred to me as 'ehengu' because 'ondamita[9]*"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Such humiliating words are already an indication that the pregnant girls are not allowed to associate with other girls. As being with them is regarded as contaminating others to do the same and the separation between them and us started.

[9] A very hurtful and humiliated word in Ovawambo culture which literal means "you become pregnant before initiation" Such name calling is only applied to the girls who became pregnant before being initiated in Olufuko.

Teenage mothers in this study did not experience bullying and discrimination only from their school mates, but they also experienced it at home and in the community. Kakuki experienced bullying from some women in her community. She said,

> "*Some 'meme'* (referred to women in their vernacular) *in my community used to question why I had a baby at my age... Was I not ashamed of myself? I was told that I needed to stay at home to feed my baby... Why should I waste my time to go to school?"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kakuki also experienced insults and bullying from her own grandmother of over 80 years old. This is what she recalled:

> *"My grandmother despises me and does not like me at all. She always treated me badly, telling me that I would fail and that I was wasting my time going to school. She even stated that she wishes for me to become pregnant for the third time. She even went to the extent of saying that she wants me to be infected with HIV and AIDS... and that she hopes to be alive to see the moment I become HIV positive... She was always making fun of me that I like sex, just like my mother, who died of HIV and AIDS"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

The above illustrates that teenage school-going mothers face many challenges that can prevent them from coping with their dual responsibilities. This shows that the people who are supposed to protect them are the ones hurting them, and this increases the feeling of frustration and discouragement among the teenage school-going mothers.

5.4.1.4 Frustrations and discouragements

Teenage school-going mothers did not only experience bullying and insults, but have also experienced discouragement from other learners, family and community members. Mweulenga recalled how she almost fell for the discouragement from the nurse at their clinic when she went for an antenatal check-up. She said,

> *"One of the nurses at the clinic discouraged me not to go to school because she felt it was a waste of my time... She advised me to go to the city and look for work."*

Mweulenga further clarified that she almost fell for the nurse's advice. She said,

> *"I desperately needed money to support my child; if it hadn't been for my brother's encouragement to stay in school, I might have dropped out"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Namalimbo also had similar experiences as Mweulenga. She said,

> *"My mother does not believe in me. She doesn't think I'll pass and make her proud one day... She mostly discouraged me from going to school... She believes I am wasting both my and her time"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Denea felt frustrated that she was mistreated by her family members because she is an orphan. She said,

> *"I wish both of my parents were still alive... They could have assisted me in staying at home with my baby while I went to school. My grandmother constantly discourages me from going to school... I dropped out of school for a year and eight months because there was no one to care for my baby"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

The teenage mothers did not only experience frustrations and discouragement but have also experienced embarrassment and shame.

5.4.1.5 Shame, embarrassment and shock

All the 16 participants indicated in one way or another that they have experienced sarcasm and mockery which has left them with feelings of shame and embarrassment. One of the biggest challenges encountered was compulsory wearing of the school uniform. They explained that schools forced them to wear school uniform. They were forbidden to wear other clothing that covered their pregnancy. The reasons given was that they are still learners and have to obey the school code of conduct. Due to economic constraints, some teenage mothers' parents cannot afford to buy bigger school uniforms. Therefore, they are left with no choice but to squeeze into their school uniform which is too tight.

Seven of the 16 participants shared their experiences of embarrassment and shame with me in the one-on-one and focus group interviews. Ndaudako, one of the teenage mothers who stayed in school until the baby was due, had this to say,

> *"You are embarrassed because you no longer fit into the school uniform; therefore, the school rule must be followed, as every learner is expected to wear a school uniform. I looked terrible in my maternity dress, which I wore instead of my school uniform. During morning devotion, you are simply embarrassed to be among the other learners dressed differently"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndawanapo from the same school also experienced the same feelings. She said,

> *"When I was pregnant, I didn't have a school uniform that fit my pregnancy, and my mother could not even afford to buy me another, so I had to squeeze into the tight uniform... It's embarrassing.... You are not free to be among other learners... You just want to be alone"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Namalimbo from the same school also experienced the embarrassment during an English lesson. She said:

> *"There are subjects such as English that require you to come up with a prepared topic and present it in front of the class… that was the most shameful and embarrassing moment for me ever… you have no choice but to face the whole class. While you are there you can tell and see how other learners make fun of you... this prevents you from performing the best you can… you get confused and rush to the conclusion so you can leave the podium and go hide your pregnancy under your table"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Lorence had this to say:

> *"Some of our classmates used to yell discriminatory humiliating phrases like "mothers in this class are annoying". How aggravating I am... I honestly don't know. They were always trying to embarrass you, especially when you tried to*

be active in class... They were always trying to demoralise and put you down simply because you are a mother" (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Other embarrassing incidents the mother learners recalled occurred when the teachers made fun of them. Rusia recalled an incident in which a teacher was involved. This is what she said:

"The teacher used to make fun of us... instead of explaining the lesson as it should have been, she code switched to scolding us... one day, a teacher commented, look at this one, she just gave birth... she came to school... she left the baby with her mother... and you believe you will pass... such comments from a respected person are so embarrassing... another learner looked at you and laughed" (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Trezzy was embarrassed by her brother-in-law at school. This is what she recalled:

"My boyfriend's brother used to insult me at school, especially during break time, while other learners looked on, making fun of me for having sex with his brother... Those insults have greatly embarrassed and affected my studies".

Trezzy has also recalled one incident when one community member on her way to the clinic called her foolish. She said,

"On my way to the clinic one day, I met a woman from our community. She began to mock me and remind(ed) me of how foolish it is for me to become pregnant at my age".

Trezzy further recalled how the nurses at the clinic never attended to her during the antenatal check-up. This is what she said:

"When I went to the clinic for an antenatal check-up, the nurses made fun of me as well... They never paid attention to me if I didn't wear a school uniform... Consider how tight it is" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Even though the majority of the teenage mothers in this study did not drop out of school, the above experiences are a testimony to how they faced challenges in schools.

5.4.1.6 Experience of fear, isolation, stigmatising and being judged

The focus group discussion, individual interviews and journals reflections revealed that the teenage school-going mothers experienced stigmatisation and judgement. They indicated that they were subjected to negative reactions of isolation from fellow classmates, from their own families and community members. Because of the feeling of being isolated and judged some learners developed ways of distancing themselves from others. Ndaudako and Dulika recalled how they manoeuvred to avoid being watched from a distance every morning. Ndaudako said,

> *"I always have to arrive at school early in order to avoid attracting the attention of other learners who mock you from a distance in the morning".*

Dulika had a similar experience.

> *"[I] started going to school earlier than other learners, so that they would find me already sitting in the class. Being mocked, every day you come to school is so painful", she explained* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kambwa indicated that as a mother-learner she stopped participating in lesson activities, because she felt restless and worried especially if the topic was about reproduction in Life Science. She experienced other learners talking about her situation. She said:

> *"Some sex education-based lesson topics have also contributed to my stigma... for example, in Life Science, whenever the teacher gets to a topic about reproduction, I have to excuse myself from the class and return when the period is over. I simply despise how other learners make mocking comments, including name calling and stereotyping"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kambwa further recalled when she was told by the boys in her class not to associate herself with other girls. She said,

> *"When I returned to school, I isolated myself from other girls because the boys once told me that walking with other girls without babies is wrong; what am I telling or teaching them"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Denea also recalled an incident in which she was told to be quiet. She stated,

> "*There was a time when I was told to shut up... I must consider my age and act like a parent; from that day forward, I ensure that I isolate myself from them"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

This is because some learners stigmatise pregnant teenage mothers through their words and by avoiding them in group work and play, making them feel isolated and marginalised. Pregnant and mothering learners admitted that their classmates teased them and treated them as adults. Kambwa recalled the following,

> *"When a teacher announced a parent meeting one day, one learner openly shouted, "Parents listen! She aimed her finger at me... You must attend the parents' meeting.... Did you not hear what the teacher said?"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Dollar shared the same sentiments when she said,

> *"I withdrew from cultural activities because I was told that if I dance with them (other learners who are not mothers), what will my child do afterwards?"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Ndaudako recalled how she experienced fear of going to school and how she lost friends because of her pregnancy. She said,

> *"You always have to wake up with fear, because there is no single day passes by without being laughed at. The fear of being pregnant and the one after giving birth is not the same. Everyone looks at you in a strange way when you are pregnant".*

She further explained how she lost friends because of her pregnancy. She said,

> *"Because of my pregnancy, I lost friends. They have stated it clearly that they do not want to associate with me because I am now a mother... we don't have anything to talk about or discuss. Even though it is painful, I let it go"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Apart from feelings of fear, isolation, judgment, and being stigmatised, the teenage mothers have also expressed thoughts of suicide and abortion, as shown below.

5.4.1.7 Suicide and abortion attempts

Pregnant learners face depression both inside and outside of school. When a learner becomes pregnant, she is generally psychologically affected by thoughts about the consequences, especially if their partners flee or are unwilling to take on family responsibilities. They were also depressed as a result of hurtful comments or remarks made by both teachers and learners at school, or when a girl's parents/guardians became abusive. The above mentioned scenarios revealed some of the emotional turmoil of the teenage school-going mothers that include having suicidal thoughts and wanting to terminate the pregnancy.

Rusia, one of the participants, stated that she was on the verge of committing suicide as a result of bullying and name-calling from her classmates, as well as insults from her mother. She stated the following:

> *"I considered suicide once because I couldn't bear the thought of facing my parents, classmates, and teachers. I was irritated and angry with myself. My classmates were also mocking me and calling me names. My mother was also insulting me and telling me that she would never give me anything because I had embarrassed her. She frequently reminded me of that 'ondamita.' Fortunately, this did not occur because I chose to drop out of school instead"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Two of the participants also recalled how they were advised to abort their pregnancies because they were desperate due the ill-treatment they were getting. Ndawanapo and Kambwa explained the process to me which I am not reporting on as this is not in the

scope of this study. Furthermore, abortion is still illegal in Namibia, unlike our neighbouring country South Africa. This is what Ndawanapo said,

> *"When my classmates found out that I was pregnant, they began to bully me, calling me a "bitch" and other derogatory terms... I was deeply hurt, and I wanted to terminate the pregnancy in accordance with the instructions and advice I received from a friend"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Kambwa also experienced the same thought as Ndawanapo. She said,

> "*It is difficult to learn that you are expecting a child.* (even though she found it difficult, she went on to say), *it is disturbing and frightening to have a life growing inside you. I considered terminating my pregnancy after a friend advised me to do so".*

Another friend eventually advised her not to do it.

> "*My other friends warned me that terminating a pregnancy is illegal and dangerous, she explained. I could die or end up in jail*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kambwa was fortunate because a friend advised her to consider giving birth and returning to school.

5.4.2 Balancing school work and home responsibilities

In this theme, I present responses from the 16 teenage school-going mothers on how they dealt with motherhood and schooling.

This theme is divided into four parts: namely,

- Motherhood and schooling responsibilities
- Dropping out of school and absenteeism
- Lack of educational support and lesson compensation
- Poor performances

5.4.2.1 Motherhood and schooling responsibilities

This research was conducted in the remote rural area of the Okalongo circuit. As it is the culture of this community, girls are expected to do all housework, which includes fetching water from nearby wells, cooking, pounding, cleaning the house, ploughing in the field during the rainy season, and a variety of other responsibilities. Some families will not allow you to eat until you have completed a task that has been assigned to you. This was no exception for all of the teenage mothers in this study.

Dollar responded to a question about how they managed two responsibilities, mothering and schooling, by saying,

> *"Being a mother and a learner at the same time is not easy, but this is what I used to do. While I do housework, I leave the baby with other children. If I want to study, I must leave the house and study under a tree in the field"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Rusia said,

> "*I struggled to balance my time with the baby and my studies. My baby cried a lot, which interfered with my ability to concentrate... there were times when my mother assisted me in staying with the baby while I was studying, cooking, or doing other housework"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Dulika, a teenage mother who stayed with her grandmother, said.

> "*I don't have enough time to study at home. If I did not study the previous day, I will have to get up early and study while walking to school… [I] always study at school and on the way to and from school"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Dulika stated that she is unable to study at night because she doesn't have a lamp.

> "*I don't study at night because I don't have a lamp*," she explained (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Mweulenga, who attends the same school as Dulika, stated:

> "*The child has interfered with my roles and responsibilities as a mother-learner. My thoughts are split in two... even if I pretend to read/study... I am constantly concerned about my child's unsatisfied needs... being financially dependent has had a significant negative impact on my studies... This isn't life, Mrs. (referring to me)... It's difficult... That is what I am saying. You can have a book in front of you, but your thoughts about your child's well-being will divert your attention"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kakuki a mother learner of two children stated:

> *"My chances of studying at home are very limited, so I divide myself as follows: While at school, I study; after school, I have to attend to my children and other housework such as cooking, bathing the children, or washing their clothes. I've tried to study after I put the kids to bed, but I'm always tired; the best option is to wake up in the middle of the night after I've had enough rest*" (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Kangobe has also struggled to balance her studies and motherhood.

> *"Being a mother and a learner at the same time has affected my study; most of the time, my focus is on my child rather than on my studies,"* she explained*"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

All of the teenage mothers stated that balancing school and motherhood responsibilities was difficult, but they were determined to work hard in the future to become responsible parents, as indicated later in this study.

5.4.2.2 Dropping out of school and absenteeism

The findings of this study demonstrated that teenage school-going mothers face numerous challenges in completing primary school (Grade 4-7). The obstacles included absenteeism and dropping out of school due to pregnancy and sometimes to over age mother-learners as some learners started school late (cf. 1.3). For example, the initial

idea to select five participants from each school failed because of dropping out of school. As a result, the study had seven participants from one school, four from a third school, and five from a fourth school (cf. 4.8). The reason given that might have contributed to the high rate of school dropout is that some of the participants in this study revealed that they found it difficult to attend classes while pregnant, or after giving birth. They revealed that their parents added their weight to the argument that they cannot go to school until they have given birth, or until the baby is old enough to stay with the family. In addition, some indicated that different situations which include long distances, over age, financial constraints and lack of support forced them to drop out of school for a period from one to two years.

Kaupu had this to say in support of the preceding sentiment and after listening to the scenarios (Appendix K).

> "*The first scenario is relevant to my case*," she explained. *It was not easy to discover you were pregnant while at school. I dropped out of school for a year and eight months because I had no one to care for my baby"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Betty recalled how her uncle forced her out of school:

> *"When my uncle found out I was pregnant, he was furious... He forced me to drop out of school. I dropped out of school when I was five months pregnant"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Dollar was also unable to cope with schooling while pregnant, and after giving birth, there was no one to care for the baby, so she had to drop out. She said,

> *"During my pregnancy, I suffered with little help from my mother, who does not live with me. The situation was unbearable; I had to walk long distances to school and had no food to bring with me, so I dropped out after two years. After two years, my grandmother agreed to care for my child while I resumed my studies"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Pregnancy and childcare are huge responsibilities in the hands of the teenage mothers. There are times that they have to visit the doctor either for themselves or to take their children. The participants in this study have also indicated that there were times when they were absent from school for different reasons, as illustrated below. Most of the reasons they gave were for an antenatal check-up and later to take their babies for immunisation. Ndumbokesha said,

> *"Yes, I was absent once because I had an antenatal check-up".*

and Kangobe said,

> "[*I] was absent once because I had to take the baby to the clinic for immunisations*" (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Apart from taking the baby to the hospital, it is common in this community for traditional healing beliefs to prevail. Mweulenga admitted that she had been absent for the following reasons:

> *"My baby was very sick, and I had to take him to his father's relatives because the baby is supposed to eat dog meat from his father's side; if the child does not, he will not be healed/cured"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

This is a deeply held belief in Ovawambo culture. Every new-born baby must be given beads from the paternal side to wear around their neck, and the same family must slaughter an animal that their clan believes to be a symbol of protection against evil spirits. As in the case of Mweulenga, the animal can be a goat, a cow, sheep, or a dog.

5.4.2.3 Lack of educational support and lesson compensation

As indicated in the preceding categories, the teenage school-going mothers required educational assistance, and the time lost must be compensated for, as stipulated in Namibia's re-entry policy (MoEAC, 2012). The policy calls for schools to provide curriculum packages for use in the event of absence in order to assist pregnant and mother-learners to remain on track with their studies (cf. 2.9). The following are responses from the participants based on their own experiences.

Despite the directives in the Policy no educational support was provided to any of the 16 participants in the event of absenteeism or leave taken for childbirth. They had to request missed work from the teacher. Namalimbo had this to say,

> *"[I] returned to school today, and no teachers approached me during my absence; I will have to ask my fellow classmates what they have learned, otherwise I would have been missing out"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Dulika said,

> *"It is always my responsibility to demand previous work from teachers" (FGDE, 11 October 2018). "[I] never received any missed task or learning support in case of absenteeism".*

Kaupu recalled.

> *"It is always my responsibility to find out what my classmates have learned while I was gone. It is my responsibility to keep myself up to date."* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Denea said,

> *"Unless you specifically request it, the teachers never gave me an extra lessons on their own. If you remain silent, you will receive nothing and will have missed out"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

The responses above support the claim that, despite the existence of a learner pregnancy policy that guides teachers, parents, and learners on how to manage pregnancy issues in schools, this policy is not being implemented because teenage mothers are not receiving the support as intended by the policy.

5.4.2.4 Poor performances

The findings below show that teenage mothers experienced poor performances over the course of the year due to an overload of motherhood responsibilities. Ndaudako, a teen mother at Etale (pseudonym) Combined School, stated:

> *"Motherly duties may cause you to miss schoolwork, which will have a negative impact on your academic performance. My current school performance is disappointing. I believe the baby is to blame for my poor performance. I am constantly worried about my child because my mother is sometimes so careless that she leaves the child with other children at home while she goes to the shebeen*" (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Ndawanapo also admitted that her performance was substandard. She said,

> *"My performance is not good, even though I managed to pass Grade 8 while pregnant, I failed the August examination, I know that being a mother-learner it is not easy at all"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Kaupu also has her reason for her poor performance. She said,

> *"My performance is poor; I passed my April tests but failed the August examination. I have epilepsy and spend most of my time out of school recovering... Teachers never revise the lost lesson when I return"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Dollar said,

> *"My performance is not completely perfect, even in subjects that I enjoy, such as Entrepreneurship and Life Science. I did not pass the April exams, but I did better in the August exams."*

Dollar also recalled how she learned with difficulty during the April tests. She said,

> "*I don't have a lamp to study by at night, and I read with my baby during the day because no one was available to care for her. I only studied during school hours, but the other learners were always making noise... during the August examination, I performed better because I had a neighbour who looked after my child while I studied"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Even though some teenage mothers reported poor performance, not all of them had the same experience, with some reporting improved performance. One of them is Kambwa. She said,

> *"[I] am doing better than before, and I am grateful that my parents are encouraging me to work hard in school. I've realized that I'm responsible for my child's well-being"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Dinea had this to say:

> *"My performance has improved since last time. My performance was unaffected by having a child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

As I find this response very interesting, I asked her the reason for her good performance. She said;

> *"First and foremost, my daughter is a reason for me to return to school, and I have a supportive and caring aunt; I promised her and myself that I will study hard and succeed in the future. I don't want my child to go through what I have experienced"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

In contrast to other teenage mothers' poor performance, Dinea in her side realised she had responsibility to bring up her baby in different ways from hers. Therefore, she had decided to remain in school, study hard and succeed in future.

5.4.3 Financial constraints and depending on others

Financial constraints was one of the themes that emerged from the findings of this study. The participants have indicated how they have suffered due to this constraint. This theme has two sub-themes as follows:

- Financial dependence and social grant
- Family support and other moral support from friends and teachers

5.4.3.1 Financial dependence and social grants

All 16 mother-learners indicated that they were not financially independent. They faced many financial challenges, but managed to overcome them and move on with their lives.

Kangobe an orphan, mother-learner, explained that she depends on her extended family for financial support. This is what she said

> *"I had some difficult times in my life, especially if you are an orphan... because there is no one to take the best care of you and your baby... like your own mother, my pregnancy came with many challenges, such as when you are at school or home and you want to eat a certain type of food [referring to this or that] but there is no money or someone to give it to you"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kakuki, a mother of two, stated that she has a monthly social grant of N$ 250 (equivalent to R250 or US$ 15.98) that is managed by her aunt, who used the money in her own interest and not Kakuki's. She said,

> *"I receive N$ 250 social grant, which is part of a government package for orphans. That is my only source of income for myself and my two children. My aunt manages the money because she believes I will waste it on unnecessary purchases, but she occasionally misuses it in her own interests"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Ndawanapo, a mother of one child, also indicated that she was receiving the same social grant as Kakuki. She said,

> *"Because my father died and my mother is unemployed, I receive the N$250 social grant every month. My mother is in charge of the finances"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Rusia said,

> *"[I] receive the N$250 as a social grant every month because my mother is unemployed and my father is deceased"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

The social grant is only available to children until the age of 20. Once someone turns 21 the grant is stopped. This happened to Namalimbo, a 21-year-old mother-learner. She said,

> *"[I] used to receive government social grants like everyone else, but the grants stopped when I turned 21. For the time being, I am solely dependent on my mother for financial support*" (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Three indicated that they were receiving the N$ 250 social grant because they are orphans; otherwise they all relied on financial support from their families.

Even though there were many orphans among the participants, not all benefited from the government social grant because some were still without a birth certificate that would allow them to receive the grant. Dulika, a mother-learner, indicated that her parents abandoned her, and she said,

> "*I am unable to receive the social grant because my parents did not obtain a birth certificate for me".*

Dulika further indicated that,

> *"My baby gets sick and I don't have money to take him to the hospital, and my grandmother, who is my only source of support, is in Angola at the time,... my*

child's father is also a student and sometimes he does not have money to give us, life is just so hard sometimes" (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Mweulenga recalled as follows:

"*My child's father is unemployed, and I only remember receiving N$100 from his family when I was pregnant a long time ago. I now rely on my brother and sister for financial support"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Apart from being financially supported by family members, some teenage mothers went so far as to find a way to support themselves. Dinea, a mother-learner who dropped out of school for a year and eight months, said,

"When I was out of school, I had to look for domestic work to earn some money so that I could support my baby" (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Dollar, another mother-learner who also dropped out of school for two years said,

"My biggest challenge is financial support. I only get a small sum of money from my mother when I go on holiday. I learned on my own how to solve money problems, such as selling paw-paw and 'eembe[10]",

Dollar further said,

"Thanks to my grandmother, who did her best to encourage me to return to school and to pay for my antenatal check-ups despite the fact that she only receives a small pension" (IIT, 26 October 2018).

The responses in this section revealed that all 16 teenage mothers have faced financial difficulties because they rely on family members for financial support. The findings also revealed that some teenage mothers were determined to solve their financial

[10] Traditional fruits which some call wild berries.

problems, demonstrating agency and determination. This point will be elaborated upon in Chapter 6.

5.4.3.2 Family support and other moral support from friends and teachers

Even though the participants faced financial difficulties, some stated that they received assistance from family and friends. Some have also stated that teachers play an important role in supporting them and their children while they are at school. The assistance includes moral support, material assistance, and counselling. Trezzy, a mother-learner who dropped out of school for eight months, said her mother and friends encouraged her to return to school. She said:

> *"My female friends advised me to return to school and finish my education because there is no difference between us. They told me that if I don't have a grade 9 certificate, which allows me to enrol in Vocational Schools, I will suffer in the future. My mother also encouraged and supported me to return to school while she was caring for my child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kangobe who is an orphan and never dropped out of school also recalled how her sister played a big role in supporting her to remain in school and take care of her and the baby. She said,

> *"My older sister encouraged me to stay in school and promised to look after my five-month-old baby"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kakuki experienced a teacher counsellor and a social worker rallying behind her decision to remain in school. She said,

> *"My aunty refused to let me return to school after I became pregnant for the second time. I informed my teacher counsellor, who later enlisted the assistance of a social worker from the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare to persuade my aunty to allow me to continue attending school"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Dulika, a 19-year-old mother-learner, stayed alone in her grandmother's house until the pregnancy was due. She experienced many challenges, but with the help of her teacher councillor and a male cousin she overcame them. This is what she said:

> *"[I] became pregnant while alone in the house, at a time when my grandmother was in Angola because she has another house there. I was by myself until I gave birth. There are many times when I don't have food, but I'm grateful to my teacher counsellor, who used to buy me food, and my male cousin, who financially supported me"* (IIE, 24 October 2019).

Rusia, a teenage mother who dropped out of school due to bullying and being stigmatised, also recalled how her mother encouraged her to return to school. She said:

> *"My mother was a big help in getting me to school, even though she was mad at me at first when she found out I was pregnant... She was there for me. After all, she had encouraged me to return to school. She told me to go back to school, and even if she died one day, I would be able to help my baby on my own*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Most of the participants who took part in this study received support from their mothers, even if they were unhappy or disappointed with their daughters' pregnancies in the beginning. Participants who received support from their mothers expressed a sense of responsibility toward them. Their feelings of love for their daughters and their babies were greatly appreciated and acknowledged by the participants.

The sentiments expressed above show how the teenage mothers were supported, allowing them to stay and return to school. Even though some men came out in support of these teenage school-going mothers, the major supportive roles were played by women, either mothers or sisters.

5.4.4 Health challenges

Some of the participants indicated that they faced health challenges during their pregnancies. Two sub-themes were identified under this theme, namely:

- Epilepsy and high blood pressure

- Morning sickness, nausea and vomiting

5.4.4.1 Epilepsy and high blood pressure

Some of the teenage school-going mothers revealed how they difficult it was to be teenage mother with some health complications. Dulika recalled how she was diagnosed with high blood pressure. She said,

> *"During my pregnancy, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure which put my pregnancy at high risk, however it was later reduced thanks to advice from my cousin, who advised me to take it easy and ask him for anything I needed"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Kaupu also missed much school during, and after she gave birth because she was diagnosed with epilepsy when she was pregnant. She said,

> *"I have to be absent a lot of the time and miss out on a lot... I have to stay at home for an extended period of time while recovering from an epilepsy attack, but not because of my baby*" (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

5.4.4.2 Morning sickness, nausea and vomiting

Two of the participants stated that they experienced morning sickness, nausea, and vomiting, but that this did not deter them from continuing their education. Lorence recalled how she used to get morning sickness, she said,

> *"Being a young mother is difficult to manage, especially with morning sickness... yooo... is unbearable... but it never stopped me from going to school"* (IIT 26 September 2018).

Ndawanapo also experienced nausea and vomiting, an experience that she will remember for the rest of her life. She said,

> *"It is difficult for me to come to school while pregnant because I'm sensitive to food and perfume smells. You have to leave the class pretending to go to the toilet, but sometimes you just vomit. That is an experience I will remember for the rest of my life"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

The teenage mothers also revealed that giving birth is an experience they accept because it brings them a sense of maturity and responsibilities.

5.4.5 Feeling of maturity and responsibilities

Despite the associated challenges, becoming a mother was largely a positive experience for these teenage school-going mothers. They were usually delighted to have their own child and felt that their lives had improved since becoming mothers, even when things were difficult each and every day. Participants learned to accept their circumstances and move on with their lives as responsible parents. They also stated that they made mistakes and that they were the only ones who could correct them. This is demonstrated in the following three categories/sub-themes.

- Acceptance of motherhood responsibilities
- Future plans, resilience and ambitions
- Warning to others

5.4.5.1 Acceptance of motherhood responsibilities

Children are expected to be cared for by their mothers, according to nature and cultural influences. This was not an exception for the teenage mothers in this study, who had accepted full responsibility for their children's well-being. Rusia, in her acceptance statement, said,

> *"[I] really feel different now that I've realised I have more responsibilities. I am constantly thinking about my baby, so I choose to study very hard in order to pass and secure a job in the future so that I can support my child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Motherhood provided some young women with a sense of maturity, increased responsibility, and a sense of purpose. They started to think of themselves as adults and more mature. They had to act like responsible adults after becoming mothers. Motherhood provided them with an immediate family structure as well as a person they could truly love. For some, it resulted in a greater sense of self-worth. Motherhood not only brought Lorence joy, but it also made her feel like a grown-up in comparison to her peers. This is what she said:

> *"In comparison to before I became a mother, I see myself as different from others [referring to learners who do not have children]. Unlike in the past, I am preoccupied with my child's well-being the rest of the time. My child is my joy, and I now have a huge responsibility to study hard so that I can support my child in the future*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kaupu saw herself as different from other girls who were not mother yet. This is what she said:

> *"When I'm in class, I notice that I'm not like the other learners, such as when they make a lot of noise. It's childish, in my opinion. I always felt like taking my book and going somewhere to study. I've learned my lesson, and I don't want to make the same mistake of failing again. I'd like to make amends for my error, as I've wasted a lot of time"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Mweulenga had this to say,

> *"In comparison to my classmate, I am more mature now. I don't play or make unnecessary comments like I used to; all I want to do now is study and find a job... to help my child in the future"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Children not only reinforced a sense of responsibility and joy in the teenage mothers, but also encouraged them to continue their education and plan for the future as indicated below.

5.4.5.2 Future plans, resilience and ambitions

All of the teenage school-going mothers expressed a desire to succeed and overcome the challenges of teenage motherhood and education. They expressed a desire to become teachers, nurses, or doctors, and some expressed a desire to enrol in vocational training schools to begin their careers and technical education. Here are some of the responses: Namalimbo stated her reason for her being in school. She said,

> *"Staying at home will have no effect. I believe it is important and best to stay in school... to study and one day have a career like my teachers"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Dulika had this to say,

> *"My motivation for attending school is to study hard and obtain a qualification. I recognize that what I did was incorrect, and I am prepared to make amends. Once I finish my studies and find a job, I plan to support my grandmother, child, and sisters"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kakuki said,

> *"My ambition is to work hard and become a doctor because Mathematics and Physical Science are my favourite subjects. [I] want to be a language teacher because my English teacher is my role model"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Dollar expressed her difficulty in learning and said,

> *"My goal is to pass Grade 10 because I may not be able to continue on to Grade 12. After Grade 10, I intend to attend vocational schools... have a career and look for work"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

These responses indicate that there is resilience and ambitions among the teenage mothers. I find this very important to this study because these ambitions and goals they set up for themselves are in direct contrast to the stereotypes and role expectations imposed on them by society. Apart from resilience and ambitions, the teenage school-going mothers cared for other girls as they sent warning message to them. The next section is highlighting some of these warnings.

5.4.5.3 Warning to other girls

All the participants issued a warning to the other girls. They mentioned how difficult it is to handle two responsibilities at once, especially if you have to rely on others for help. Some of the participants' responses are listed below.

Rusia said:

> *"I want to warn my fellow girls to avoid boyfriends and focus on their education. What I've gone through and experienced is unbearable. It changes your life and has an impact on your studies once you become a mother. Having a baby is difficult, especially when there is no one to care for the baby when you want to go to school. I became pregnant as a result of my friend's influence, and I don't want this to happen to anyone else"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Trezzy encouraged other teenage mothers. She said,

> *"[I] want to encourage other teenage mothers to continue their education; dropping out will not solve the problem. For those who are not yet mothers, I would like to caution them not to make the same mistake I did; every minute that goes by without being taught is a minute wasted"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Ndumbokesha said,

> *"Girls must put an end to love affairs while they are young, because there are risks of pregnancy, and the responsibility for the baby's well-being is always left in the hands of the mother. It is preferable to finish your education first"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kakuki, a 20-year-old and a mother of two children, had this to say:

> *"I'm warning girls that if there's no pregnancy involved, their love life is fine. When you become a mother, your life becomes more complicated, especially if you find yourself in a situation like mine. Imagine a life without support, abandoned by your children's fathers, and to make matters worse, you are an*

orphan who has no idea who her parents are, heeeeyi! (Putting her crossed arms on top of her head), life is hard" (IIO, 19 September 2018).

The participants who took part in the discussion agreed that education is the key to success. They advise studying first and having a baby after you have achieved financial independence.

5.4.6 Resources, programmes and support facilities in schools

Teenage school-going mothers in this theme indicated that if schools had support facilities, their challenges could be reduced as the following sub-themes indicated:

- Day care centre/nursery
- Awareness and intervention programme
- Provision of social workers at schools

5.4.6.1 Day care centre/Nursery

All respondents suggested that the government establish day care centres or nursery rooms in schools. Kangobe and Kakuki had the same sentiment and they said,

"The government should establish a day care/nursery room at our schools for our children so that we can attend to them whenever necessary; leaving a two-month-old baby at home is painful, and you won't be able to concentrate in class" (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Denea indicated in her journal that she wasn't paying attention in class because her child wasn't feeling well, and she wished for a nursery room at school so she could monitor her child's health during break time. She said:

"*I took my child to the clinic yesterday. This is interfering with my ability to concentrate on the lessons. I wish there was a nursery room at our school where I could have brought her so I could keep an eye on her during break time*" (RJT, 14 September 2018).

Kaupu expressed the same sentiment in her journal. She wrote:

"I am constantly thinking about my child, and I did not hear what the teacher said today. My child is ill. I wish the school provided a facility for us to breastfeed while at school" (RJO, 7 August 2018).

5.4.6.2 Awareness and intervention programmes

Ndumbokesha believes that schools should implement programmes to help teenage mothers with homework and tests in cases of absenteeism or when they go into labour. She said,

"*Schools must implement programme that allow pregnant and teenage mothers to receive homework and tasks at home in the event of absence or delivery"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Two of the teenage mothers felt that the school should have an awareness programme.

"*School must increase awareness programme that can warn or alert girls on the dangers of having boyfriends*" Ndaudako stated (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

According to Kaupu,

"*Schools need to have programme that educate us (teenage mothers) about the dangers of teenage pregnancy and how to overcome teenage parental challenges"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Trezzy suggested for intervention programme for community members. She said,

"From the day I was harassed by the woman on my way to the clinic I was angry but later I realised that perhaps the community people need to educated instead of insulting us" (IIT, 26 September, 2018).

Mweulenga from Etale Combined School was humiliated by the teacher and she felt that teachers need to be educated on how to deal with teenage mothers at school. She said,

> *"Most of the time there is this teacher who likes to make funny of me. This teacher likes to humiliate me in the class. May be teachers also need education to understand our situation"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

5.4.6.3 Provision of social workers

Ndawanapo, like Ndumbokesha and Ndaudako, believes that schools require social workers.

> "*I am recommending that each school be provided with a social worker to deal with our emotional challenges*," she stated (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndumbokesha wrote in her journal that,

> *"I didn't learn anything today; I wish I had someone to talk to about my feelings, and I wish I could talk to an expert, perhaps a social worker; I wish we had one at school"* (RJO, 16 June 2018).

Ndaudako also expressed her desire for a social worker at school, saying,

> *"I am recommending for the government to make provision for the social worker in every school, as I understand the social workers are experts when it comes to social issues and challenges that we face every day at school… they could give us advice on how to deal with teenage motherhood and schooling"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

To reduce the high rate of teenage mothers dropping out of school and increase the number of those who remain in school, the suggestions made by teenage school-going mothers must be carefully considered.

5.5 Some observable findings throughout the research

During the focus group discussions and one-on-one individual interviews, I observed a lack of knowledge about sex education among the participants. Because of this observation, I inquired whether there are Life Skills programmes in schools such as 'Window of Hope' and 'My Future is My Choice'. Thus, the responses of the

participants indicated that these critical sex education programmes are not taught at any of the three schools visited. Another notable finding is that some of the teenage mothers lack sex education due to unavailability of life skills programmes at their schools as detailed below.

5.5.1 Life Skills programme

During the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews, I discovered that the school programmes, such as 'Window of Hope' and 'My Future is My Choice' that teach life skills such as sex education, career choice and discipline, among others, are not functioning in any of the three schools I visited. The goal of these programmes is to raise awareness and educate both boys and girls about HIV and AIDS, sexuality and sexual relationships, and teenage pregnancy prevention. It is clear that these programmes are not as functional as they are meant to be. The absence of these programmes may be one of the factors contributing to the high rate of pregnancy among teenagers in our schools. The introduction of these programmes into schools will be discussed in Chapter 7 as a recommendation that arises from this study (Masemola-Yende & Mataboge, 2015).

5.5.2 Violation of human rights and child rights

Another observed factor that also disposes teenage mothers to violence, discrimination and increases their financial constraints is the violation of human and child rights. The most significant human rights violation in Namibia includes the slow pace of judicial proceedings and the resulting lengthy pre-trial detentions of the perpetrators sometimes under poor conditions, violence and discrimination against women and children, including rape and child labour. Rape was identified as a violation of human rights in this study because four of the teenage mothers were minors when they became pregnant. For example Namibia statutory rape law is violated when an individual has consensual sexual contact with a 16-year-old girl or younger (Combating of the Rape Act 8 of 2000). In fact, none of the teenage mothers mentioned rape in their stories, so they did not see it that way. However, according to human rights law, which establishes rules and minimum standards that govern international relations and establishes standards for how a state treats its citizens, this includes protection of a girl child under 17 years old. It guarantees women and girls equal rights, protection, and access to justice (Namibian constitution, 1990).

I also discovered that the teenage mothers are not benefiting from the government social welfare programmes that they are entitled to. In Namibia, a child born to an unemployed parent is entitled to receive the government welfare grant. Unfortunately, this is not possible for some of the respondents as some of the participants in this study have indicated that they do not have birth certificates themselves and the same applies to their children. This is another violation of children's rights which is recognised in Article 15 of the Namibian constitution, a right that is also in accordance with article 54 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Nonkes, 2009). This is considered a violation of children and human rights in this study because, under the CRC and Bill of Rights Article 15, every child has the right to an identity and a nationality. Currently in Namibia one in three births is not recognised and this includes children of some of the 16 teenage mothers who participated in this study. Thus, these children face the difficulty of not being able to access welfare and an education (Children of Namibia, n.d).

All the 16 teenage mothers were born in Namibia and they are entitled to acquire the Namibian birth certificate, but because of some parents' negligence and lack of understanding of the importance of identity, it left the teenage mothers stranded and the same challenge will pass on to their children. The challenges they have faced, have not only impacted heavily on their studies, but with fulfilling motherhood responsibilities as well.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter conclusion reflects on the above research findings in relation to the study's research questions that were put forward in Chapter 1 (cf.1.7). The main research question of this study investigated the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers/mother-learners on the enabling and constraining factors experienced in school, home and the community in Okalongo circuit, Omusati region in Namibia.

The main research question was answered through an investigation of several other sub-research questions. The first and second questions of these asked: How do teenage school-going mothers lived experience of being (a) a learner or (b) a mother affect their responsibilities as (a) a mother or (b) a learner? The responses to these questions were similar in all the three schools visited. The findings revealed that the participants were

unable to balance their dual responsibilities due to overloads that comes along with motherhood and learning responsibilities. The issue of division of labour at home and some of the cultural expectations constrained the education life of the participants under the study.

Furthermore, it emerged from the findings that even though the participants decided to remain or return to school, they are faced by many challenges. These include discrimination, stigmatised, humiliation, bullying, and discouragement, among others. These were the responses to question three as these form part of the barriers experienced by the mother-learners as they returned to school. The findings further revealed that they are not included in all the teaching and learning process as intended by the Teenage Pregnancy Policy. The findings revealed a huge gap between the intention of the policy and the implementation process. This was a response to question two.

Finally, it emerged from research findings that the schools in Namibia can increase the number of teenage mothers completing schools if their recommendation as they are coming from the experienced people could be evaluated and implemented. Thus, exploring the themes that comprise the chapter's content provided me with highly engaging accounts of the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers, as well as valuable insights into the enabling or constraining factors that influenced them to remain or drop out of school. The following Chapter 6 discuss the findings in relation to the theory and literature reviewed.

Chapter 6: Discussions of findings

6.1 Introduction

In chapter 5, I presented the findings from the reflective journals, individual interviews, and focus group discussions of the 16 teenage school-going mothers from Namibia's Okalongo circuit. The results of the three data collection methods used contributed to data richness through the method of triangulation. According to Lambert and Loiselle (2008), qualitative method triangulation is increasingly being advocated as a strategy for achieving more comprehensive understandings of a phenomenon.

The study examined the enabling and constraining factors that the 16 teenage school-going mothers faced as they pursued their education in the Okalongo circuit, Namibia. I applied feminist theory in the analysis to better understand and address unequal and oppressive gender relations in the Ovambadja community, which prevent teenage mothers from fully participating in their education. The study's use of feminist theory was influenced by the fact that society is still fighting for gender equality in terms of rights and opportunities.

The goal of conducting this research on teenage school-going mothers is to document their diverse experiences and knowledge while attempting to empower them to realise their full educational rights. The Namibian Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012), which allows teenage mothers to stay or return to school was examined and analysed, as the study sought to determine whether or not the policy's intended purpose was met (cf. 5.4.2.3). This analysis draws not only on the experiences of the participants, but also on some of the interpretations and discussions of the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively

Furthermore, in this feminist qualitative phenomenological study, I captured nuances from the 16 teenage mothers' lived experiences that assisted me in explaining why teenage mothers did not drop out of school, regardless of the difficulties or negative experiences they faced. They did not give up, but instead stood firm to protect their education and dignity, despite the fact that they still had many grades to complete before being admitted to higher learning institutions. A qualitative feminist approach facilitated in amplifying these marginalised voices (Ungar, 2004), and the findings

discussed in this chapter could be said to represent other teenage mothers who did not have the opportunity to participate in this study and share their experiences. The findings discussed in this chapter were guided by the following main research question stated in Chapter 1 (1.7).

"What are the enabling and constraining factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers when returning to school in Okalongo circuit, Namibia?"

Thus, the findings of the study are discussed under two main sections derived from the main research question:

- The constraining factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers when returning to school.
- The enabling factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers when returning to school.

6.2 The structural and cultural constraining factors

This study revealed that there are factors that constrain teenage mothers/mother-learners from continuing with their education, and as a result, many drop out of school. This key finding comprises five related factors discussed in the sub-sections below.

6.2.1 Constraint: discrimination and harassment

Different types of discrimination and harassment were experienced by the participants in all three schools visited. The analysis of the 16 teenage school-going mothers' stories, gave rise to the insights that their lived experiences were entangled in four social realities which disposed them to discrimination and marginalisation, namely, gender, sexuality, culture, and education.

When listening to the teenage mothers' stories in the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews I realised that their way of thinking, reasoning and how they made sense of their experiences were influenced by the customs and traditions of the community they came from (Musese, 2018; Karim, 2015). Thus, culture emerged as the most powerful variable among the four because it influenced the other three. This is because cultural practices in the Ovambadja community, as in many other African

countries, are shaped by and perpetuate gender inequality, tying women to forms of control over making their own decisions (Kambarami, 2006).

Types of discriminations are experienced in the literature reviewed by studies conducted with teenage mothers in other countries such as South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland, and the United States of America (in North Carolina and Tennessee) (Ntinda et al., 2016; Stroble 2013; Ngabaza, 2010). Such experiences hint at a universal trend in this phenomenon. The situation of unequal treatment raises questions as to why teenage school-going mothers are marginalised and discriminated against in Namibian schools when Namibia is among the countries that signed the conventions of protecting the rights of women especially by introducing the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012).

Despite the Namibian government's efforts to implement the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012) which is meant to minimise the socio-cultural impact of unplanned pregnancy and challenge educational inequality, the findings show how culture continues to have a negative influence on human behaviours towards teenage mothers. However, the mother-learners did not stop going to school. They remained in school experiencing name calling or labelling at their respective schools. This is an indication that mother-learners' subordination in this community is still influenced by patriarchy, or male domination which has been criticised because of its gender inequality and discrimination in public spheres.

One of the most striking findings from this study's data analysis is that all 16 participants experienced some form of discrimination and harassment at school, home and in the community. These include gender bullying, name calling and insults from other learners, parents and community members. Whereas discriminatory and humiliation practices were not applied to teenage fathers, despite the fact that some were also attending school.

Evidence of the harassment practices in ways in which the teenage school-going mothers are referred to or labelled (cf. 5.4.1.1) such as '*oshikumbu*' or '*ehengu*,' which translates into English as '*bitch*' (an offensive way of referring to a woman, particularly those who gave birth outside of wedlock, and are uninitiated), as well as other

humiliating phrases like *'go bath you are smelling'* (cf. 5.4.1.3). Such oppressive practices, emanating from culture, included the ways in which the mother-learners were referred to. Literature refers to such practices as a type of classification among teenage mothers known as 'labelling' (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). Labelling is a result of societal discrimination which distinguishes teenage mothers from those who delay pregnancy until adulthood. Labelling and name calling contributed to marginalisation and 'othering'. As explained in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.6.3), name calling indicates how society frames teenage mothers (Iimene, 2015).

The teenage mothers suffered from marginalisation or 'separation' as the bullies created a separation between 'us and them'. Dollar shared her experiences and said,

> *"I withdrew from cultural activities because I was told that if I dance with them (other learners who are not mothers), what will my child do afterwards"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Denea also recalled an incident in which she was told to be quiet. She stated,

> "*There was a time when I was told to shut up... I must consider my age and act like a parent; from that day forward, I ensure that I isolate myself from them"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Such an experience of 'othering' teenage mothers is observed in de Beauvoir's (2010[1949]) writing that women are considered as 'others' by men. Teenage mothers are marginalised and accused of being lacking qualities which is associated with cultural beliefs (Iimene, 2015).

In the views of African feminism one can tell that teenage mothers are 'othered' because of the influence of the cultural expectations of morality that is attached to pregnancy outside marriage, and not having gone through initiation or *Olufuko* (cf. 1.3). They cannot be regarded as girls because they have babies, yet they do not have the status of being called 'mothers' because they are not married and have not gone through the traditional initiation process. Apart from morality, MacLean (2017) a feminist theorist argues that 'othering' is also another form of bullying to discriminate against

women and it is associated with power relations (cf. 6.2.4) which are a part of all social interactions. In addition, Connel (1995) and Firestone (1970) assert that 'othering' is the kind of behaviour that boys and those in power use to display their patriarchal divide, which is the advantage men gain from subordinating and discriminating against women.

In addition, mother-learners have also experienced harassments such as mocking drawings of pregnant girls on the chalkboard, while some boys imitate a baby crying as the teenage mothers entered the classroom. Kambwa wrote in her journal, (RJO, 6 September 2018):

> *"My classmates, especially the boys, used to call me a bitch... I was told not to associate with other girls… and draw pictures of pregnant girls on the chalkboards while making funny jokes and laughing at me".*

The explanation the teenage mothers gave is that the bullies discouraged other girls (those without children) to not associate with mother-learners, contributing to the marginalising of the girls from classmates. I noted that boys from the three schools were responsible for discriminatory and thus marginalising behaviour (MacLean, 2017). According to African feminism, (cf. 3.4.6) patriarchy is the root cause of all women's oppression because in a patriarchal society men are regarded as superior above the women (Ngubane, 2010; Adichie, 2006). Ifechelobi (2014) asserts that domination, suppression, and subservience are all patriarchal factors that influence the men to conquer and control the women by making them submissive and less important. Thus, it was not surprising to see boys bullying mother-learners at school because control behaviours are imposed on them by culture.

The bullying experienced by the participants in this study was not only public and persistent, but was deeply personal, as the bullies sometimes made physical contact by touching the teenage mothers who they targeted and made sure they drew the attention of the other learners. Kambwa recalled a day when a teacher announced a parent meeting, she said,

> *"When a teacher announced a parent meeting one day, one learner openly shouted, 'Parents listen!' She aimed her finger at me... You must attend the parents' meeting.... Did you not hear what the teacher said"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Such classification created stigmas which left these teenage mothers with feelings of guilt, fear, anger and shame. For some, bullying affected the teenage mothers' self-esteem, leading to depression, abortion and suicidal thoughts as in the case of Rusia, who said,

> *"I considered suicide once because I couldn't bear the thought of facing my parents, classmates, and teachers. I was irritated and angry with myself. My classmates were also mocking me and calling me names. My mother insulted me as well and told me that she would never give me anything because I had embarrassed her. She frequently reminded me of that 'ondamita.' Fortunately, this did not occur because I chose to drop out of school instead*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

According to Blanc, Winfrey and Ross (2013), suicide is one of the most common causes of death among female teenagers. However, there is not much research that has been done regarding suicide among pregnant and mother-learners (Kapungu, Petroni & Allen, 2018). Most of the factors identified in this study could contribute to suicidal behaviours. These are economic status, poverty, rejection by parents, friends or partner and isolation by peers at school (Liz, Page & Taylor, 2011). Whenever teenage mothers are predisposed to a high risk of economic insecurity, depression or high stress, or thoughts of suicide emerge (Musyimi, Mutiso, Nyamai, Ebuenyi & Ndetu, 2020).

The social stigma of being unmarried and not undergoing Olufuko is very high among members of the Ovambadja community. Children born outside of a marriage are often discriminated against as illegitimate. Thus, the teenage mothers were not only driven to the thought of suicide, but some had thoughts of terminating the pregnancy due to the pressure imposed on them by cultural values and norms.

Two of the participants Ndawanapo and Kambwa recalled how they almost aborted their pregnancies. Ndawanapo said,

> *"When my classmates found out that I was pregnant, they began to bully me, calling me a "bitch" and other derogatory terms... I was deeply hurt, and I wanted to terminate the pregnancy in accordance with the instructions and advice I received from a friend"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Kambwa also experienced the same thought as Ndawanapo. She said,

> "*It is difficult to learn that you are expecting a child."*

Even though she found it difficult, she went on to say,

> *"I considered terminating my pregnancy after a friend advised me to do so"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Such social pressure, as experienced by the mother-learners, can trigger the suicidal and abortion behaviours in teenage mothers (Loke & Lam, 2014). According to second-wave feminism these social pressures form part of public and private injustices which include rape, reproductive rights, violence and harassment influenced by cultural and political inequalities within our society (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015; Friedan, 1963). The views of second-wave feminism of sexual freedom and rights to abortion were criticised by some African feminists as they were not the priority of African women (Mikell, 1997). In addition, the reproductive rights for women to have control over their bodies such as abortion is still illegal in Namibia. Thus, the teenage mothers are caught up between culture and Rule of law in the Namibian context. The contraceptive pills to protect against pregnancy are available in Namibia, but cultural values and norms of this community discourage girls from accessing them. It is for these reasons that pregnancies place teenagers in situations where they find themselves making difficult decisions that put their lives in danger. The call for legal abortion as advocated by second-wave feminism and as being petitioned by the Namibian people so that women can take full ownership and practice autonomy over their own bodies need serious attention. While waiting for legalising of abortion, teenage mothers need support and

guidance. Appropriate counselling and necessary information on how to cope with stress or depression would be important in assisting teenage mothers to make informal choices (Loke & Lam, 2014).

6.2.2 Discrimination and marginalisation through a feminist lens

The challenges of discrimination, and marginalisation of teenage mothers could best be explained and understood through a feminist lens. According to feminist theorists (Chiponda 2014; Bryson, 1999), our societies' traditions and customs create barriers for teenage mothers, preventing them from participating equally in the fathers' public spaces outside of the home and family. Those barriers are so deeply rooted in culture that they impede teenage school going mothers from attaining their full potential (Tong, 1989).

According to Chiponda (2014), in the past, deep-rooted customs and traditions prevented teenage mothers from fully participating in the public domain because teenage pregnancy was regarded as culturally unacceptable. As a result of the influence of cultural practices and patriarchy in the Ovambadja communities, one would not expect equal education opportunities for teenage mothers in Namibian schools. Feminists such as Wollstonecraft, Botting and Eisenstein have identified gender discrimination as a factor in women's subordination (Wollstonecraft & Botting, 2014; Wollstonecraft, 2014 [1792]). As a result, in their writing, they advocated for and promoted equal rights and opportunities as a means of liberating women from subordination (Wollstonecraft, 2014 [1792]; Eisenstein, 1981). In the context of Namibia, the struggle for gender equality over the last decade has yielded mixed results. Women are thriving in certain sectors of society and key policy objectives have been achieved. For example, the enrolment of girls in school now matches or surpasses boys at every level. The enrolment of girls compared to boys from primary school through to tertiary education are high in comparison to colonial times. “Legal reforms were carried out to address gender inequalities and to redress issues of economic and social injustices inherited from the past, discriminative cultural practices, patriarchal ideology and historical imbalances” (MGECW, 2010 p. 12).

Although Namibia has made progress in terms of the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary schools, they tend to gradually drop out in upper primary and high schools

as a result of pregnancy, poverty, sexual harassment, early marriage and other cultural practices (MGECW, 2010). Policies such as the Teenage Pregnancy Policy are in place (MoE, 2012). However, despite the policy advances made during the post-independence era, attitudes and cultural perceptions continue to promote unequal power relationships in society (MGECW, 2010), contributing to the discrimination and stigma that has forced many teenage mothers to drop out of school (cf. 1.4).

Furthermore, the issue of marginalisation, which includes stigma and discrimination of teenage school-going mothers, could be understood in the light of the radical and black feminists' belief that patriarchy is the source of women's oppression. The goal of feminism is to free both men and women from the rigidity of unequal gender roles that society has imposed on them through patriarchy (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993). Even so, the data from this study clearly demonstrates that only teenage mothers and not fathers were exposed to various oppressions and gender inequality in education which poses a problem for the implementation of Policy requirements.

Apart from radical feminists who assert that women's subordination is rooted in their biological expectations, black feminists such as hooks (2001) further claim that women are being oppressed and subordinated because of their multiple identities such as sexual orientation, age, religion and gender. It is evident from the findings that the age of teenage school-going mothers contributed to their vulnerability to discrimination. The teenage mothers were harassed not only in school, but in the community as well. They were constantly reminded of how stupid they were to fall pregnant while in school. Trezzy affirms this claim. She said,

> *"On my way to the clinic one day, I met a woman from our community. She mocked me and remind(ed) me of how foolish it is for me to become pregnant at my age"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kakuki experienced the same harassment from some women in her community as well. She said,

> "*Some 'meme'* (referred to women in their vernacular) *in my community used to question why I had a baby at my age... was I not ashamed of myself? I was told*

that I needed to stay at home to feed my baby... why should I waste my time to go to school" (IIO, 19 September 2018).

This finding demonstrates that teenage pregnancy remains a social taboo, leaving teenage mothers highly stigmatised by their own community members which also include the women (Kennedy, 2017). Furthermore, this claim stems from cultural beliefs that held teenage pregnancy to be the fault of the girls, without considering that the pregnancy is the result of sex, which means the boys involved are also to blame (Nguyen et al., 2019), but because of gender expectations of how girls and boys should behave within our society, boys do not experience such discrimination. Because of gender differences, those in power use demeaning methods, such as denying them opportunities, calling them names, shouting at them, ignoring them, and in some cases, stigmatizing and publicly shaming them (Tull, 2020).

In addition, gender differences and expectations that exposes teenage mothers to more discrimination is one of the findings (Holgate, 2012). The blame of becoming pregnant at an early age is directed at the teenage mothers alone because culturally it is regarded as a woman's fault to allow the man to impregnate her. Teenage fathers do not face discrimination and oppression as teenage mothers do, because in a patriarchal society like Namibia, men claim absolute power and authority over women (Bhasin, 2006).

As discussed in Chapter 2, patriarchy is a fundamental root cause of women's subordination. It has evolved into a universal form of male power over women that manifests itself in a variety of ways, and pervades all aspects of life (Bryson, 1999).

According to Firestone (1970), women in general are subordinated due to biological characteristics. For example, women, are perceived to be not as physically strong as men (Mill, 1989), or as being physically limited because of childbearing (Firestone, 1970). For this reason, society developed various gender roles and practices that not only discriminate against, but also contribute to women's subordination and oppression. The findings of this study confirm findings in the literature that the teenage fathers or father-learners were not teased or humiliated as the mother-learners who participated in the study were (Nguyen et al., 2019; Bhasin 2006). As a result, research into the lived experiences of teenage fathers is also required.

Teenage mothers indicated that it is difficult to say whether there are teenage fathers at their schools or not, because they barely heard any discriminatory language made against them. Dulika, from Etale Combined School said,

> "*You never know if there are any teenage fathers at this school because they don't get pregnant like us. They don't face bullying and discrimination like girls, so it's difficult to say*" (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndaudako from the same school also said,

> *"It's difficult to tell if there are any teenage fathers at our school because they don't get pregnant like us girls. Girls became victims as a result of their large stomachs"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Lorence from Tango Combined School has the same experience as the others, she said,

> *"You rarely find a teenage father being bullied or discriminated against. Since returning to school... I'm not even sure if we have any teenage fathers at our school"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Teenage fathers are never rebuked in this community, nor are they reprimanded by their parents. These findings are supported by one South African study, which found that feminist theorists focused not only on gender when dealing with the effects of teenage pregnancy and motherhood, but also on socio-cultural conditions that influence gender inequalities and power relations, as evidenced by the stories of teenage school-going mothers in this study (Mokgalabone, 1999). Dlamini (2016, p. 65) states that all the types of gender inequalities and power relations experienced in this study are "manifested in social expectations, which not only held the teenage mothers responsible for the pregnancy, but also stigmatised them as immoral and deviant in ways that men are rarely stigmatised for". According to Heinamaa (1997), the changes in pregnancy as mentioned above by the mother-learners happen specifically to a female body in a way that cannot be hidden, unlike the father-learners whose bodies never change. The mother-learners are being forced to wear a school uniform that no longer fits them.

From a feminist perspective, mother-learners are being unfairly embarrassed and intimidated over something over which they have no control.

Discrimination in the school context is another significant constraint faced by the 16 mother-learners. Teachers are viewed in school as role models as they support and motivate teenage mothers to stay in school. However, there is a contradiction as some teachers discriminated against teenage mothers when they returned to school. Some teachers made intimidating, discriminatory comments to teenage mothers, and they were discouraged from attending classes. Rusia recalled an incident involving a teacher. This is what she said:

> "*The teacher used to mock us... instead of explaining the lesson as it should have been, she code switched to scolding us... Look at this one, she just gave birth... a teacher commented, she came to school... she left the baby with her mother... and you believe you will pass... such comments from a respected person are so embarrassing... other learners looked at you and laughed"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

This type of teacher cannot relate to the plight of teenage mothers in a patriarchal society because she has internalized cultural patriarchy. This shows that she held a dominant position in this community and is attempting to use her power over teenage mothers as a symbol of instilling fear in other young girls who are not yet mothers in order to discourage them from becoming pregnant at a young age. The elders of Ovawambo believe that reprimanding someone in public teaches others not to do the same. The Oshiwambo culture is one where patriarchy rules and influences people's behaviour in society. However, based on the excerpts above, the teenage mothers' dignity is neither recognized nor respected, because culturally, a woman or a girl is expected to listen to and obey the rules and decisions of men or whoever is in power (Kanana, 2000). In fact, most traditional values and norms, as well as political law, were established by men. Namibia only gained independence in 1990, and males have always held high-ranking positions in churches, politics, headmen, and courts, and the majority of the legislation passed is geared toward men's interests (Kanana, 2000).

Furthermore, as one of the patriarchal influences, teenage mothers face oppression at the hands of their peers. As a result, some teenage mothers reported skipping some classes out of fear of being mocked, not only by teachers, but also by their peers. Some recall other learners making fun of them, particularly during the topic of the reproductive system in Life Science. Kambwa stated that as a mother-learner, she stopped participating in lesson activities because she felt restless and worried, especially when the topic in Life Science was about reproduction. She overheard other learners discussing her situation. She said:

> *"Some sex education-based lesson topics have also contributed to my stigma... for example, in Life Science, whenever the teacher discusses reproduction, I have to excuse myself from class and return when the period is over. I simply despise how other learners make disparaging remarks, including name calling and stereotyping"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Similarly, Iimene (2015) asserts that some teachers have negative perceptions of mother-learners, especially towards the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012) that allowed them to remain in school. These findings are consistent with Wanyama and Simatwa (2011) in their study conducted in Kenya, namely, that mother-learners suffer discrimination and rejection as the community and teachers continue to see them as different from others. Cultural patriarchy has permeated Namibian society so deeply that it has absorbed and forced even learners to continue stigmatising others. Through the lens of African feminism, we can see that these mother-learners are being pushed to being permanent dropouts as they are forced to follow and obey tradition, to stay at home and breastfeed the baby. In reality, if they drop out, they will have no chance of finishing school; instead, they will become an instrument for childbearing (Zarrinjooce, 2017).

This include parents, community members, and classmates who have all spoken out against teenage mothers. Despite radical feminists' claims that a woman's interests and talents should not be limited in some way because of her sex (Brown, 1990), this was not the case for some of the teenage mothers investigated. They said that their parents forbade them from going to school while they were pregnant, and some dropped out because of humiliation and shame. They were forced to drop out of school in order to

spend more time with their children, which was not the case for teenage fathers. Kaupu, Betty and Dollar were among the teenage mothers who dropped out of school while pregnant and returned after one to two years. Kaupu one of the participants has this to say,

> *"It wasn't easy to find out you were pregnant while in school... as a result, my grandmother forbade me from attending school... I dropped out of school for a year and eight months because I didn't have anyone to look after my baby"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Betty recalled how her uncle forced her out of school. She said,

> *"When my uncle found out that I was pregnant, he was furious... he forced me to drop out of school. I dropped out of school when I was five months pregnant*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Dollar was also unable to cope with schooling while pregnant because after giving birth, there was no one to care for the baby. Apart from walking long distance to school, her father's attitude also forced her to leave school, so she had to drop out. This is what she said,

> *"During my pregnancy, I suffered with little help from my mother, who does not live with me. The situation was unbearable as I had no support from my father whom I am staying with… I had also to walk long distances to school and had no food to bring with me, so I dropped out for two years. After two years, my grandmother agreed to take care for my child while I resumed*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kaupu also supports the sentiment and said,

> *"I dropped out of school because I was bullied and humiliated; I felt terrible and ashamed about how my classmates treated me… I decided to drop out of school and return home. I couldn't bear the consequences of being shamed and humiliated every day"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

These findings demonstrate how patriarchy and capitalism are inextricably linked and supportive of women's oppression. Teenage mothers are forced to drop out of school due to pressure from their parents or guardians, which is influenced by their economic status on the one hand and patriarchy and culture on the other. Males played a significant role in mother-learners dropping out of school, demonstrating that dominant power and decisions remained with them. This is happening because the majority of the mother-learners in this study come from single-parent or low-income families, and their liberation will not be possible unless the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression are addressed (Musingafi et al., 2021). As a result, the issue of women's subordination, such as their social position, lack of access to resources, and lack of decision-making power, as advocated by socialist feminism, is one of the identified constraining factors that prevent mother-learners from fully participating in their education.

6.2.3 Constraint: Stigmatisation

I found out that some mother-leaners lost friends as a result of the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy and motherhood. According to SmithBattle (2012), some people stigmatised teenage mothers by stereotyping them as ‘bad influencers’, ‘unmotivated’, ‘irresponsible’, ‘incompetent parents’ and ‘immoral’. In spite of the prevalence of these stereotypes, stigma is rarely described in the literature as a contributing factor to teenage mothers' difficulties in attending school and social inequalities. Teenage mothers and mother-learners are stigmatized because of the influence in society that claimed that teenage motherhood put girls on a downward path that leads to poverty, family breakdown, and welfare dependence (Guttmacher, 1976). However, in the light of this study, I argue that the goal is to shift the traditional way of critiquing and discriminating against teenage mothers by viewing the phenomenon through a feminist lens to identify possible opportunities to empower and raise the self-esteem of teenage school-going mothers. In addition, the findings in this study brought to light a teenage mother-centred perspective (Chambers & Erausquin, 2018) based on their own experiences.

Due to the fear of being condemned and stigmatised some of the mother-learners opted for isolation. One of the 16 teenage school-going mothers, Kambwa explained her decision to avoid being framed. She said,

> *"When I returned to school after giving birth, I isolated myself from other girls because the boys once told me that walking with other girls without babies is inappropriate; what am I telling or teaching them?"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

I argue that the stigma attached to teenage mothers remains prevalent in Namibia and is affecting the education of teenage mothers. Thus, it is important to understand that stigma has a profound effect in the lives of teenage mothers and their children. Because stigma leads to fear, shame, resentment, anger (Yardley, 2008) distress, and loss of confidence (Fulford & Ford-Gilboe, 2004). Similarly, I emphasizes that the isolation and social exclusion experienced by the 16 teenage mothers in this study has a negative impact on their mental and physical health. Furthermore, stigma reduces teenage mothers' confidence, trust, and willingness to seek help, which may result in missed lessons or dropping out of school to avoid stigma, bullying, and discrimination (Fessler, 2008).

In this study, feminist thought is relevant and can be used to advocate for equal educational rights and opportunities for teenage mothers to avoid exclusion from education of teenage mothers. The community members need to refrain from cultural and patriarchal views on teenage pregnancy and mother-learners and to understand the importance of education for teenage mothers. All barriers that prevent teenage mothers from reaching their full potential in social institutions such as school, hospitals, and churches among others, should be discouraged and removed (Chiponda 2014) because the rights of all to an education supersede the beliefs about teenage motherhood.

6.2.4 Constraint: Cultural influences

Another major finding is the *Olufuko* (cultural initiation practice) that has inflated the dominance of patriarchy around the issue of teenage motherhood and allows teenage school-going mothers to be exposed to discrimination and subordination while they are at school. Olufuko is a cultural initiation practice explained in Chapter 1 (1.3). It is an acceptable cultural initiation ritual that is believed to introduce girls to womanhood and those who undergo it uphold the honour and respect for themselves and their parents.

Traditionally, people were influenced by cultural expectations that made them believe that the teenage mothers who undergo the initiation process were not subjected to

blame, harsh remarks, bullying, or insults from their parents because their parents and community regard them as ethical and decent. This study contradicts and rejects this claim because the findings show that only two of the mother-learners initiated through *Olufuko* were not reprimanded by their parents. However, whether initiated or not, all of them faced the same discrimination at school, at home, and in the community, as any other mother-learner because they should have been married as well, as shown in the table below.

Table 6.1**: Summary of Olufuko-initiated and non-initiated teenage mothers' experiences**

Participants name	**Initiated/not initiated**	**Reprimanded/not**
Dollar	Not initiated	Reprimanded, father withdraw support, rejected, blamed, insulted
Rusia	Not initiated	Reprimanded, called names, insulted, blamed for being pregnant before initiated in Olufuko
Lorence	Not initiated	Reprimanded, called names, insulted, bullied
Trezzy	**Initiated**	Not reprimanded by the parent, but bullied at school and shamed at the clinic.
Kambwa	Not initiated	Reprimanded, insulted, called names, dropped out of school
Betty	**Initiated**	reprimanded, uncle forced her out school, bullied insult experienced
Denea	Not initiated	Reprimanded, dropped out of school
Dulika	**Initiated**	Not reprimanded, abandoned, insulted, called names
Mweulenga	Not initiated	Reprimanded, support withdrawn
Namalimbo	Not initiated	Reprimanded, called names
Ndawanapo	Not initiated	Reprimanded, called names, bullied, support withdrawn
Ndaudako	**Initiated**	Not reprimanded, but bullied at school, humiliated
Kangobe	Not initiated	Reprimanded, support withdrawn, insulted
Kakuki	Not initiated	Reprimanded by the grandmother, insulted, called names
Kaupu	Not initiated	Reprimanded, called names
Ndumbokesha	Not initiated	Reprimanded, support withdrawn

Table 6.1 summarizes whether or not the 16 teenage mothers faced discrimination, humiliation and insult whether initiated or not. It is a cultural belief in this community that the Olufuko ritual honours mother-learners if they have undergone the Olufuko. The reason for this honor is that a girl who undergoes Olufuko is known as 'omufuko' (bride) and can marry at any time to any man who can pay ‘oyoonda’ (lobola). Traditional 'omufuko' are not permitted to attend school, more so when she has given birth. In reality, as explained in the context of this study, the girl’s honour lies only in her ability to provide sexual gratification to men, not in any value she has as a human being. Effectively, the Olufuko practice is a sexist patriarchal practice designed to keep women in their place, that of rendering sexual service to men (cf. 1.3). In this community, the claim of African feminism that women's subordination is embedded in social and cultural practices that require women's reliance on men is still prevalent. Olufuko's awards are based on cultural beliefs and values that contradict human rights law, which advocates for Education for All. As a result, a pregnant or mother-learner at school is just another oddity among the other learners. As a result, they were harassed, discriminated against, and called names.

Olufuko wielded tremendous power in this community, especially among the men. The girls’ father and uncles are always the ones who are offended when a girl becomes pregnant prior to initiation. Girls are commodified by cultural practices. Patriarchy places a price on their heads before marriage. So, when girls get pregnant before marriage or initiation, they rob the patriarchy of an economic opportunity. Hence it is more about the transactional nature of marriage than about the honour of the family. The teenage mothers’ fathers get angry once their daughters become pregnant before marriage or initiation because there is no ‘oyoonda’ for them, even if they wanted to get married one day. As a result, some of the mother-learners' fathers and uncles denied them the right to attend school by withdrawing support and forcing some of them to drop out. Dollar, a 20-year-old woman, was rejected, blamed, and insulted by her father as a result of her pregnancy prior to the Olufuko initiation. Dollar's explanation is shown in the table above. She said,

> *“My father felt humiliated and angry with me because I became pregnant before my Olufuko initiation”* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Dollar's father withdrew his support as a result, claiming that he was embarrassed by his daughter's actions. Rusia was also insulted by her aunt (her father's sister), and her father chased her out of the house because she did not undergo Olufuko:

> "[*I] was insulted by my aunt for not being initiated in Olufuko; she always called me 'shihengu (ehengu) ove,' and my father chased me out of the house*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

The literal English translation of 'shihengu ove' is bitch, whore, or slut (Kleinman, Ezzell & Frost, 2009). It is a derogatory term that meant a useless or worthless person in the context of the Ovambadja. It also has a sexual connotation: in a patriarchal society, a woman who is referred to as a bitch is considered even risky to associate with other girls (Hodgson, 2008). Traditionally men are discouraged from women who became pregnant before initiation (Anyolo, 2008).

In addition, such woman cannot speak out even though they have the best intentions to contribute to society. However, if she becomes pregnant out of wedlock, people will not take her seriously. They may even be silenced in public. Such treatment is a result of cultural and social expectations, such as the Olufuko rituals, which continue to oppress girls by undervaluing and demoralising their abilities and capabilities, not only within themselves, but also in their education.

6.2.5 Constraint: Power imbalances

Power is also a contributor to the conceptual framework in the analysis because, as identified in this study, the bully and the victims have different levels of power. In this study, the identified bullies are parents, teachers, nurses, boys, and older girls who have the power to influence or oppress teenage mothers. This is undeniable because becoming pregnant at a young age is an unwelcome situation in the Ovambadja community, regardless of whether you have been initiated or not, and teenage mothers can expect to be chastised by those in power.

> *"I experienced rejection from my family when I fell pregnant,"*

Mweulenga says.

> *They refused to help me after they discovered I was pregnant... it was made worse by the fact that I was not initiated... they were embarrassed"* (FGDE, 11 October, 2018).

She continues,

> *"They were very angry, and as a punishment, they (my mother, sisters, and brothers) told me that I would not stay in their house… I must find a place for my baby to stay*" (FGDE, 11 October, 2018).

Namalimbo also experiences rejection and insults from her mother. This is what she recalled,

> "*My mother was not happy. There are times I went to bed without eating, because of the insults I received from her. She blamed me for falling pregnant before Olufuko. She used to call me 'Shimeda ove (shihengu ove)' you bitch, shame on you, you just run around with men… now look what they will give you... You won't get anything from me"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Betty was initiated but her uncle withdraw his support and forced her out of school. She said,

> "*My uncle was furious when he finds out that I was pregnant. He forced me out of school and told me that I will not get any support from him*" (IIT 26 September, 2018).

Karim (2015) corroborates these findings in the Kenyan context that, due to cultural influences, teenage mothers face insults and discrimination in Kenya. Wanda (2006, p. 56) claims that teenage school-going mothers face discrimination because they are framed as a "threat that has the potential to spark an epidemic of immoral and promiscuous behaviour" in the school and community environments in which they live.

Furthermore, despite being subjected to bullying, name calling, and insults, the teenage mothers did not retaliate or fight back. In response to the question of what they did in response to name calling and insults, Dulika stated,

> *"I did not say anything, I just laughed and ignored, because I know that if I responded back, I will face and suffer more humiliation" (*FGDE, 11 October 2018*).*

Mweulenga also stated,

> *"I chose silence because I cannot fight back, especially against the boys... if you respond to the insults, they will continue to bully you more"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

In view of an African feminist perspective, women are silenced, and not encouraged to speak up. This is symbolic of the power relations between men and women within these communities. In other words culture forbids them to speak up. Such practices leave them without a voice and suffering in silence, while also subordinating them and relegating them to the margins of society (Adichie, 2012; Collins, 2000).

The Ovambadja community where the teenage mothers come from discourages women from speaking up and expressing their feelings in public (Haipinge, 2013). The most acceptable behaviour in this community is to conform and respect whoever is in power, such as the elders' or men's decisions. They are brought up in the community to accept the blame, because they simply have no choice. According to the African feminist framework, teenage mothers would be silenced and are unable to express their voices in public because of dominant cultural patriarchy (Iimene, 2015). Furthermore, according to Adichie (2006), as cited in Okuyade (2009), silence represents the cultural and historical muting of women under the formidable institution of patriarchy that encourages male superiority and power, and creates inferior and submissive status for females. In ovambadja community, such behaviours of conforming to the bullying are aided by culture merging with Christianity, making the teenage mothers believe that

they had sinned[11] as they went against the acceptable social, cultural and religious sexual behaviours in both Christianity (culture and religion) and their indigenous beliefs associated with Olufuko (culture). It is because of such conformity and by adopting to the social condemnation of their deviancy that they thought that they had no right to retaliate against bullying.

According to Kanana (2000), women's conformity resulted from historical oppression among the patriarchal Ovawambo community (cf. 1.3). Traditionally, men command and discipline family members. Everyone must listen to and obey the men's commands. Women and children who do not listen are subjected to beatings and other harsh disciplinary measures, making women more vulnerable in decision-making. Kanana (2000) goes on to say that traditionally, women and children were not allowed to argue with men. Such behaviour has influenced the women of the Ovawambo community to remain quiet and without a voice in the public sphere.

According to Bourdieu (1991), such conformity indicates that boys accept bullying as a legitimate behaviour, which gives boys symbolic capital or power over girls. However, this claim cannot be proven, and according to my analysis, conformity resulted from the manner in which teenage mothers in this study were raised. Furthermore, some African feminists, such as Emenyou and Eke (2010), assert that women have lost their voices as a result of the construction of gender roles, which has rendered women subservient, docile, and coy, particularly in the presence of their male counterparts.

It is for this reason that feminist theorists' perspectives are drawn on in this research with the aim to allow the 16 teenage mothers an opportunity to express their feelings freely and make their voice audible and visible in the eyes of the public.

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[11] Sin is a belief associated with Christianity. The people of this community are also Christians. Thus, Christianity is merged with traditional beliefs to add to the feelings of wrong doing. This means that teenage mothers were judged from two angles of society (culture and religion). As a religious norms anyone who becomes pregnant or impregnate a girl out of wedlock has to undergo confession/reconciliation classes for a certain period to ask for forgiveness. It is then after the pastor pronounce the forgiveness such individual can then allowed to take part in church activities.

6.2.6 Constraint: Societal gender expectations, schooling and motherhood

Another key finding that constraining mother-learners to balance schooling and motherhood successfully is societal gender expectations. This study was conducted in an African community that values motherhood as an important part of a woman's identity. To this community, becoming a mother is more than just a matter of giving birth; it is also linked to natural destiny and the fulfilment of the female role, just as it is in any other culture (McMahon, 1995). According to feminists, women are frequently confined to the family home, where their activities are restricted to reproduction and household chores (Williams, 2019). This finding shows that the reality of social and cultural expectations in this community influences the experiences of teenage mothers with motherhood and schooling. All the 16 teenage school-going mothers indicated that they have a lot of responsibilities at home and in most cases they do not have time to study during the day. Kangobe confirms in her explanation of how the responsibilities at home interfere with her studies. She said,

> *"As a mother, I am responsible for feeding my child, washing her clothes, fetching water and wood, cooking, and studying at night because I do not have time to study during the day"* (FGDO, 6 September 2018).

Dulika, one of the 16 teenage mothers, agrees with this claim.

> *"I always study at school, as well as on my way to and from school. I don't have time to study at home. If I do not study the previous day, I must get up early in the morning to study before going to school"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Responsibilities at home led the teenage mothers to face educational deprivation because of societal gender expectations. As discussed in Rao Gupta (2000), these expectations stem from the belief that certain characteristics, behaviours, and roles are natural for men while others are natural for women. As a result of such expectations, girls who become pregnant, and mothers prematurely, are silenced by cultural values and norms and in most cases discrimination and marginalisation occur. The teenage mothers are mocked as irresponsible parents and incompetent mother learners for wasting their time by going to school.

The participants also stated that, despite being permitted to remain or return to school, they have encountered more challenges than opportunities in attempting to balance their multiple responsibilities. Some have stated that, aside from being mothers, they are also daughters and learners. Their parents expected them to carry out their responsibilities as women should. Most of them have had difficulty balancing their dual responsibilities as a result of the burden of responsibilities assigned to them at school or at home. *Ndawanapo* confirms the claim. She said,

> *"I study while at school because my mother expects me to do other things at home, such as doing chores like cooking, pounding, and cleaning the house"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

In the traditional division of labour, for example, girls/women are assigned to household chores such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water, child-care, weeding, and harvesting, among others. The findings indicated that the teenage mothers have struggled to meet the multiple needs of themselves and their children because the burden of house chores, falls on their shoulders after school. To affirm to this finding, Kakuki stated,

> *"My chances of studying at home are very limited, so I divide myself as follows: While at school, I study; after school, I have to attend to my children and other housework such as cooking, bathing the children, or washing their clothes. I've tried to study after I put the kids to bed, but I am always tired; the best option is to wake up in the middle of the night after I have had enough rest"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Rusia from Tango Combined School further affirm the same claim. She said,

> *"I found it difficult to balance my time with the baby and my studies… my baby cried a lot, which made it difficult for me to concentrate... there were times when my mother helped me by staying with the baby while I was studying, cooking, or doing other housework"* (FGDT, 12 October 2018).

A similar emotion was felt amongst teenage mothers in a study conducted in Zambia (Moonga, 2914). The teenage mothers who participated in this study, found it difficult to complete their responsibilities due to time constraints associated with motherhood and schooling. According to Agarwal (1997), girls' or women's roles have some ideological dimensions that dictate acceptable behaviour for mother-learners, as learners and mothers. As a learner, teenage mothers must fulfil all of the responsibilities of the school routine and schedule, just as other learners are expected to do. However, as an African woman, she is required to assist with housework as part of her preparation for her future role as a wife. Furthermore, as a mother, she must ensure that her child's needs are met. These responsibilities clash, particularly when teenage school-going mothers reported missing school (the role expected of them as teenagers) to attend to their sick children or take them for vaccinations (the role expected of women initiated in Olufuko and/or married) (Nyambura, 2000 cited in Okwany, 2004).

The findings in the present study confirm the findings in Wekesa's 2010 study (Wekesa, 2010). In both studies, it was found that the responsibilities of being a mother and learner are carried out concurrently, putting a significant burden on teenage mothers. Feminists argue that women are dominated, not only in the public sphere, but also in the private sphere of the family (Sultana, 2010). Traditionally, the women were relegated to the private sphere where they were subjected to men and assigned to all domestic life (Durkheim, 1933).

According to Pateman (1989 p.120), domestic life "is associated with nature, emotion, intimate relation, personal, female and children". In addition, women in the private sphere were more frequently assigned to tasks such as gathering and preserving food, cooking and childbearing. Men's place was in the public sphere (in politics and the economic world) which became increasingly separate from home life with the development of private property laws (Bhasin, 1993 as cited in Haipinge, 2013). Men rose from such hierarchy of divisions of labour to dominate the development and control of productive forces (technology), (cf. 3.4.3) a control that allowed them to generate surplus wealth while increasing women reliance on them (Engels, 2010). Gender expectations brought inequality and discriminations within our society as men gain privilege of controlling the universe (Boudreau, 1995). It is for this reason second-wave feminism came into existence to fight for inequality and discrimination. The

second-wave feminists demanded to get total freedom (cf. 3.2.1.2) in economic, political, social and religious fields (Doul & Sethna, 2011). They demanded that women be paid even when working in their home because the work they do is more demanding than the men do (Drucker, 2018).

The data collected, for example, show that teenage school-going mothers had to perform their socially prescribed roles as daughters and mothers within their cultural contexts and gender divisions of labour (Moonga, 2014). As a result, this comprises and poses a significant challenge because such social and cultural expectations disadvantage girls from this community, because they are women who are expected to conform, and some of those expectations devalued and demoralised their abilities and capabilities, not only in themselves, but also in their studies. Furthermore, such expectations have influenced the behaviours of teenage mothers into accepting and conforming to it, despite the fact that the practice promotes gender inequality in society. Such conformity stems from gender expectations that have evolved over time and are embedded in patriarchal society (Firestone, 1970), a society that dominates, exploits, and oppresses women by maintaining and imposing an unjust power relationship between men and women. It is because of the workload resulting from gender expectations that the teenage mothers find it difficult to balance the work load of mothering and schooling.

6.2.7 Constraint: Emotional distress

Emotional distress is also a key finding in this study. All the 16 mother-learners mentioned having intense emotions when they found out they were pregnant. As a result, they all stated that they were subjected to emotional and psychological distress.

Ndaudako stated that

> *"You always wake up scared, because there isn't a single day that goes by without you being laughed at… the shame of being teased while pregnant and the shame of being teased while you are a mother are not the same. When you are pregnant, everyone looks at you surprisingly"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kaupu also had this to say,

> "*I was bullied, discriminated against, and stereotyped. When I returned to school, I was told that I had to enroll in a parents' school because there were no spaces for those with babies... I felt bad... and such treatment traumatised me and developed a fear to go to school"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kambwa backed up Kaupu's claim by saying,

> *"I was very ashamed of myself when I became pregnant. I dropped out of school when my pregnancies became public and my classmates began to bully me*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Lorence further explained,

> *"I felt bad because I realized what I did was wrong, at my age, I was not supposed to become pregnant. It is contrary to our culture. I was embarrassed to go to school while pregnant. Other learners used to stare at me, gossip about me, and mock me. Other learners used to tell me, that you are wasting your time, what am I doing at school?"* (IIT, 26 September 2018)

Anxiety and stress were two other emotional experiences they had experienced. Some reported experiencing rage and rejection from friends, parents, learners and boyfriends. Kaupu said,

> *"My bricklayer boyfriend rejected my pregnancy... there was no support for me or the baby. I only became pregnant because of him, and he abandoned me... my child is now one year and six months old. I am the sole caregiver for my baby, with only a little assistance from my family… I felt bad"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Betty said,

> *"Because my boyfriend abandoned me just as soon as he found out I was pregnant. I heard him flee because he was afraid of being beaten by my uncle. I didn't hear from him again until after I gave birth"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

The 16 mother-learners' stories as related in the focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews and as shared in the journals, revealed that the teenage mothers had experienced traumatic situations that contributed to their fear and self-blame. According to African feminists, women in Africa experience rejection and abandonment because teenage pregnancy is culturally unacceptable (Kolawole, 2002). As a result of trauma caused by rejection the teenage mothers are intimidated to speak out against patriarchy. These cultural and structural constraints forced teenage mothers to suffer in silence (hooks, 2001). As Trezzy one of the16 teenage school-going mothers said,

> *"I learned to ignore bullies and insults, even if it hurt, because what happened to me could happen to anyone"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

This finding is also observed in Chisale (2017), that silence has psychological consequences and can lead to depression. According to Estrada (2012), fear and blame can increase an individual's stress levels, and too much stress is dangerous in the lives of teenage mothers. As noted by Masten (2011 as cited in Estrada, 2012), stressful situations and adversity are caused by teenage pregnancy, chronic poverty, child abuse, neglect, marginalisation, violent environments, and prenatal stress. Thus, becoming pregnant at a young age has some consequences in the lives of teenage mothers, including an increased risk of post-natal depression in their lives. If these risks are not identified and addressed immediately, they can have long-term consequences. Estrada (2012) goes on to say that risk factors can pose both external and internal barriers to the development and learning of mother-learners. External barriers to teenage mothers' attendance as identified by Estrada (2012) were also identified as the most common barriers in the present study. External risk factors are the barriers that are reported to be the primary causes of most learning, behaviour, and emotional problems. The external

risk are caused by negative comments coming from the community, family members, teachers, and peers.

The reaction of their parents heightened the teenage mothers' fear, as the result of socialisation in African culture to blame, insult, and punish teenage mothers (Kolawole, 2002), as evident in the Ovambadja community, demonstrated in the cases of Trezzy, Ndawanapo and Namalimbo. Teenage mothers are not even given the opportunity to explain themselves or their situations because society has already condemned them due to the culture of blaming. Trezzy recalled this being her experience in the local clinic. She said,

> *"At the clinic the nurses also used to make fun of me. They never attended to me if I did not wear a school uniform. Just imagine how tight it was"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

As in the case of Ndawanapo, her mother was furious when she found out that her daughter was pregnant. She said,

> *"My mother was enraged, and she chased me out of the house and immediately sent me to my boyfriend's house"*. Ndawanapo went on to say, *"Because of fear and a lot of blame from my mother, I almost committed a crime because I wanted to terminate the pregnancy at one point"* (IIE, 24 September 2018).

Namalimbo has also experienced fear because of bullying and discrimination. She said,

> *"I was bullied and discriminated against at school. Such treatment intensified my fear... at this school, there are some learners who discriminate against mother-learners by treating us as strangers despite the fact that we have been attending school together our entire lives. The list of insults at home and in the community is endless. 'Oi', look at you...giving birth at such a young age, the boys in the neighbourhood used to say. You are a disgrace!"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

The same experiences of fear have been observed in the literature, with Yates (2013) stating that the issue of teenage pregnancy has led to teenage mothers being unable to accept maternal responsibilities, shock, depression, and mental exhaustion. As a result, teenage mothers are left with traumatic experiences and condemnation, which demoralise them and, in most cases, cause psychological damage if they do not seek help on time. Counselling can help a person overcome depression (Cooke, 2020).

Teenage mothers can express their feelings based on their situation through counselling, and with the help of the counsellor, they can be empowered to face the challenges that may arise. However, the findings from the focus group discussions revealed that this is not what teenage mothers' experience. Denea from Tango Combined School pointed out that,

> *"I am not aware of a teacher counsellor at our school because I am only in my second term. I had never heard of him or her before"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

The findings of focus group discussions and individual interviews show that most of the teenage school-going mothers did not receive emotional support from school authorities to alleviate their distress and anxiety. This was not possible because schools did not provide for counselling sessions. However, two of the 16 teenage mothers did have access to counselling. This was confirmed by Kakuki who said,

> *"When I fell pregnant for the second time my grandmother refused me to return to school. The teacher counsellor had to involve the social worker from the Ministry of gender to come and persuade them to allow me to return to school"* (FGDO, 6 September 2018).

During the interviews, the teenage mothers expressed a desire for counselling and moral support. Kaupu expressed the desire for counselling at school. She said,

> *"Schools should increase counselling sessions and programs that educate us about the dangers of teenage pregnancy and how to overcome teenage parental challenges"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Ndaudako added to this claim, she said,

> *"Counselling needs to be strengthened at our school because there were times when I needed to talk to someone about life challenges"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

During the discussions, I as the researcher observed crying and changes in the facial expressions of the teenage mothers. This was experienced with Dulika who cried during the individual interview. When I asked her why she was crying, she said,

> *"I felt bad… (crying) uuh… looking to my situation, already alone in the house, and now pregnant yooooo… I had doubts of who will take care of me and my baby now"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

This painted a picture of teenage mothers in need of someone to talk to and to discuss their situations with. In Namibia, there are trained teacher counsellors in every school. However, the findings revealed the opposite, which is an indication that the schools failed to provide counselling opportunities to the teenage mothers as required in the teenage pregnancy management policy. Schools continue to engage in exclusionary practices by creating a hostile school environment that can force teenage mothers out of school, thereby denying their constitutional rights to education (Chigona and Chetty, 2008).

The framework of the public (profane) and private (sacred) spheres clarified by Durkheim (1933) and Habermas (1989) provides some insight into why some teenage mothers may not have had access to counselling. Teenage motherhood is a result of sexual activity, but it is taboo in the Ovambadja community to discuss sex and sexuality in public. As a result, sexuality is relegated to the private sphere, which is linked to the personal. It has traditionally been difficult to find teenage mothers willing to share their personal lives, such as feelings or frustration caused by teenage motherhood, with anyone, because they have learned that anything personal should be kept private (Elwell, 2003). Furthermore, if schools are influenced by such cultural expectations, the opportunity for teenage mothers to receive or seek counselling remains limited.

Liberal feminism asserts that our society's traditions and customs make it difficult for women to participate equally and freely in the public domain outside of the home and family (Bryson, 1999; Walby, 1997). In this context, it is clear that teachers' attitudes towards teenage mothers are so deeply ingrained in traditions and customs that they are moralistic and react negatively to issues concerning teenage mothers. This observation contradicts the liberal feminism concept of equal rights and opportunities for women to be liberated from their subordination. As a result, the school must empower the teenage mothers by providing them with access to counselling.

6.2.8 Constraint: Lack of educational and moral support

Lack of educational and moral support are some of the key findings of this study. The intention of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012) to treat teenage school-going mothers as learners with special needs who require attention due to the pressure and anxiety they face in their schools, homes, and communities was not met at any of the three schools in the sample. Thus, this is one of the constraints in the education of the teenage mothers in the three visited schools.

Moonga (2014) states that teenage mothers should be treated with special care due to their personalities and the circumstances surrounding them. Despite the fact that this was meant to be the case, the interview results clearly revealed that the Teenage Pregnant Policy had been introduced in the three schools visited because teenage mothers were permitted to remain in school, but it had not been fully implemented as intended, as evidenced by the following findings.

The policy, as explained in detail in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.9), states unequivocally how teenage mothers should be supported. Teachers must provide all necessary psychological and educational support to teenage school-going mothers both before and after the birth of their child. This directive contradicts the experiences of the teenage mothers. Namalimbo from Etale Combined School verified this lack of provision and had this to say,

> *"[I] returned to school today, and no teachers approached me during my absence; I always have to ask my classmates what they've learned, or I'll miss out"* (IIE, 24 October 2021).

The same lack of provision was experienced at Omwedi Combined School as Kaupu recalled. She said,

> *"In the event of my absence, I never received any learning or psychological support from my teachers... It is always my responsibility to find out what my classmates have learned while I have been absent. It is my responsibility to stay up-to-date"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Denea from Tango Combined School agreed that her situation was the same as the other two schools. She said,

> *"The teachers never gave me any extra lessons on their own, unless you specifically request it, if you remain silent, you will receive nothing and will have missed out"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

The findings, for example, clearly articulated a lack of support from the responsible teachers. To this claim the teenage school-going mothers have indicated that teachers failed to provide psychological support or organise teaching and learning materials for them to catch up work missed during their absence as required by the policy. All of them have indicated that they have to demand work covered from different teachers in case of absenteeism. Such behaviours are an indication that the Teenage Pregnancy Policy is not properly implemented. Further this is an indication that teenage mothers are still being discriminated against and excluded from participating fully in the education system. Therefore, as a form of punishment, teachers did not make any effort to assist the teenage mothers in their learning as intended by the Teenage Pregnancy Policy. Onyeka et al (2001) further argues that some community members have negative perceptions of teenage mothers and intimidate them in order to discourage them from attending school. Because of this negative perception, there was lack of support for the teenage mothers from teachers and community members, leaving them feeling victimised. This claim is articulated in Kangobe's reflective journal, where she says,

> *"I think some of the community members are not happy for us being in school because today I met a woman and she told me that I am wasting my time in school…*" (RJO, 7 September 2018).

The non-compliance to the Teenage Pregnancy Policy affected teenage mothers' academic performance. Some have explained that their performance was not as good as expected because they missed a lot due to absenteeism. Some have indicated that they have repeated the grade and some have failed the term examination. For example, Ndawanapo admitted that her performance was substandard. She said:

> *"My performance is not good; despite passing Grade 8 while pregnant, I failed the August examination; I understand that being a mother-learner is not easy at all"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Kaupu has her own explanation for her poor performance.

> *"My performance is poor; I passed my April tests but failed the August examination," she explained. I have epilepsy and spend the most of my time away from school recovering... teachers never review the lost lessons when I return"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Being epileptic can have a negative effect on the school performance of teenage mothers who are faced with dual responsibilities. In addition, as Bamao-Kiptanui et al (2015) argue, schools can have all the necessary teaching and learning facilities, but teenage pregnancy can lead to poor performance if there is no adequate support provided by the teachers or parents. Holgate, Evans and Yuen (2006) have further argued that the opportunity for teachers to realise that teenage motherhood suffered from a serious, long term, constant emotional relationship in their lives, may thus be missed. They also note that within the requirements of many national curricula there is little doubt that the teaching of teenage school-going mothers is not a priority and in many cases they are not getting enough attention as the school policy requires. The perception of teenage motherhood as a problematic concern cannot be divorced from cultural and economic perspectives of individual societies at a particular point in time (Holgate, Evans & Yuen, 2006). The issue of teenage mothers being labelled as deviant (behaviour that is socially unacceptable) (O'Connor, 1990) has emerged, and as O'Connor argues, this can contribute to poor performance among teenage school-going mothers.

Despite the availability of a Teenage Pregnancy Policy, cultural perceptions of people in the community towards teenage mothers can obstruct the policy's proper implementation. Clearly, there is a gap of access to education and moral support between the global rights movements described in Chapter 2 (2.9) and the reality on the ground. This indicated that those international conventions are introduced but not fully implemented due to the influence of social context and culture, as evidenced by the findings of this study.

According to Avdeyeva (2007), there is growing evidence that states' official acceptance of international human rights conventions has little impact on the local level of human rights practice. There is a need to increase efforts at the national level to raise awareness among members of parliament, school administrators, and all policymakers in order to develop a monitoring system that will improve policy implementation in Namibian schools. The understanding is that policy implementation comes with investment in resources and incentives that need to be available for proper implementation in schools.

6.2.9 Constraint: Financial dependence

Financial dependence is another constraint that all of the participants have experienced. They shared how they suffered financially as a result of their status as minors, still in school and because most come from backgrounds where unemployment is a reality.

Even though financial difficulties did not prevent teenage mothers from attending school (these are non-fee paying schools), they indicated that they were financially dependent on their parents and guardians to take care of their children. Some recall having to buy certain types of food because certain foods caused them to vomit during their pregnancy, but they did not have any money. Some said there was a time when they wanted to buy soap and lotion for their children but could not because they could not afford any of them. Kangobe, an orphan mother-learner, explained and supported this finding that she depends on her extended family for financial support. This is what she said,

> *"I had a difficult time in my life, especially if you are an orphan... because there is no one to take the best care of you and your baby... like your own mother, my*

> *pregnancy came with many challenges, such as when I was at school or home and I wanted to eat a certain type of food (referring to this or that), but there is no money or someone to give it to you"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Dulika experienced the challenges as well She said,

> *"My baby gets sick, and I don't have the money for transport and hospital bill, and my grandmother, who is my only source of support, was in Angola at the time... my child's father is also a student, and sometimes he doesn't have money to give us, and life is just so difficult at times"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

The study also discovered that some of the participants faced economic difficulties as a result of the loss of one or both of their parents, who were the main source of financial support. The findings of this study showed that seven of the respondents lost their fathers, three lost both parents, and five indicated that both of their parents are still alive but unemployed. The majority of the 16 participants in this study live with grandmothers or unemployed single mothers.

From a Marxist feminist perspective this finding is significant because of the economic implications. Poverty leads to inequality and therefore discrimination and marginalisation, also influenced by the economic situation in society (Parpart et al, 2000). According to Engels (2004) ownership of property created a significant division between men and women in which women were the inferior. Feminists blame states because it serves class and patriarchy interests, and with control over women, it maintains power on behalf of the collective of propertied men (Engels, 2010). Significantly, Engels advocated for the abolishment of divisions of labour, to allow women to work as men in public production to own property for self-reliance. Marxism's main influence is for emancipation and the development of productive forces for both men and women (Engels, 2004). Furthermore, Marxist idea supports Engels ideas of the family to maintain capitalism (family property). This means that when a person dies the property they own is passed on to their children.

Women in patriarchal societies rely on their husbands' financial support, which they lose when their husbands die, a situation that gives men economic power and thus

increases women's subordination (Karim-Sesay, 2006; Shisana, 2004) (cf. 3.2.1.1). The teenage mothers who lost their fathers, indicated that some of their belongings were inherited by their fathers' family members, leaving them with nothing, as in the case of Ndawanapo (19-year-old). She said,

> *"My father died, and his belongings, including cows, goats, and money, were inherited by his relatives, causing my unemployed mother to struggle to support us"* (IIE, October 24, 2018).

Namalimbo also said,

> *"When my father died, I saw how some of his family members grabbed our father's belongings and left us with nothing… for the time being, I am financially dependent on my unemployed mother"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Due to such traditional inheritance practices, the teenage mothers explained that they were left in the care of their mothers and grandmothers, who were unable to financially support them. These findings support the feminist claim that patriarchy naturally elevates men over women, shamelessly maintains women's reliance on men, and all power and authority within the family and society remain entirely in the hands of men (Sultana, 2011).

Marxist and socialist feminists (cf. 3.4.3; 3.4.4) emphasize that women do not simply face political and legal disadvantages but the origin of inequality lies in the social and economic structures in society (Mandell, 1995). In this study, economic disparity among teenage mothers cannot be divorced from the reality of the patriarchal practice of inheritance amongst males only. In a patriarchal community, property is owned by men, where inheritance of property and social position are passed on only to the sons (Bhasin, 1993).

One of the main contributions of Marxist feminism to this study is that the disenfranchisement of the girls' mothers, grandmothers, and other key women in their lives, has affected these teenage mothers. This is evidence of how the hierarchy in patriarchy influences who will inherit the father's property. It's like a chain reaction:

when the father dies, his wealth passes to other men in his family, including his father, brother, and even cousins. Women are economically disenfranchised as a result of patriarchy, which denies them the legal right to inherit their husbands' property (Sultana, 2011). Such patriarchal practices have resulted in some teenage mothers living in poverty because their mothers or grandmothers have nothing to offer. Furthermore, those women (participants' mothers/grandmothers) are confined to the domestic sphere of housework and motherhood, which explains women's low social status and economic reliance on men (Lindsey, 1997). This finding is consistent with Marxist feminist theory, which holds that women who lack economic power are more likely to rely on men for economic resources (Farmer, Connors & Simmons, 1996). However, because the girls' father's property was inherited by others, their mothers were financially disadvantaged and teenage mothers have to suffer because there is no support from the babies' fathers' families or working fathers. As a result, teenage mothers are impacted twice because they must rely on their mothers or grandmothers because they are still young and still in school

Furthermore, financial constraints include the fact that teenage mothers do not receive government social grants which they are entitled to. In Namibia, a child born to an unemployed parent is entitled to government welfare benefits; however, this is not possible for some of the respondents because they do not have birth certificates for themselves or their children. Dulika, a mother-learner, indicated that her parents were so negligent that they failed to obtain a birth certificate for her. She said,

> *"I am unable to receive the social grant because my parents did not obtain a birth certificate for me"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

This discovery added to the long list of women's oppression and violations of children's rights, which are recognised in the Namibian Constitution Article 15 and are also in accordance with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 54 (Nonkes, 2009). This claim is a violation of children's and human rights because, according to the CRC and the Bill of Rights in the Namibian constitution, every child has the right to an identity and to acquire nationality. Currently, one in every three births in Namibia is unrecognized, including the children of some of the 16 teenage mothers participating in this study (Children of Namibia, n.d).

All the 16 teenage mothers were born in Namibia and have the right to obtain Namibian birth certificates; however, due to some parents' negligence and lack of understanding of the importance of identity, some of the teenage mothers have suffered and the same challenge has been passed on to their children. Furthermore, teenage mothers and their children may face discrimination if they are unable to access welfare and safe education for an extended period of time (Children of Namibia, n.d). The above-mentioned violations of human rights, as well as the teenage mothers' low socioeconomic status, contributed to their need for financial assistance from others. Unsupportive boyfriends of these teenage mothers have also contributed to their plight. One could argue that their socialization into cultural attitudes towards teenage pregnancy could be blamed for not holding boys accountable for their actions. Taking care of a child alone, according to the teenage mothers, is a significant challenge that has had a severe impact on their studies.

Dlamini (2016) confirmed these findings, stating that for teenage mothers to be able to focus on their studies, they must first overcome the economic and psychological challenges of supporting their children, which they regard as their top priority. Engels (1977; 1970) blamed economic constraints on sex relations and labour division, in which women did reproduction work and men did production work. As a result, men became powerful through the development and control of productive forces such as technology, a control that allowed them (men) to accumulate surplus wealth while increasing women's dependence (Bhasin, 1993). In light of Marxist feminism, equality can only be achieved through equal distribution of resources, in which women will be given opportunities in the labour market to earn money and be able to rely on themselves (Bhasin & Khan, 1999).

6.2.10 Constraint: Inequality in child rearing responsibility

The issue of an unsupportive environment, especially due to absent fathers was one of the main findings of this study. During the individual interviews some of the teenage mothers have indicated how difficult it is to be a mother and a learner at the same time (cf. 5.4.2.1). Mweulenga recalled how she suffered abandonment by the father of her child. She said,

> *"My pregnancy was caused by a one-night stand. I went to visit my family in Angola, our neighbouring country... I met this man and became pregnant that night... I never saw him again"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Mweulenga further explained her experience. She said,

> "*The realisation that I was alone in my predicament was distressing. My baby's father was nowhere to be found; he had abandoned me and had not bothered to look for his child until today"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Betty, also a 17-year-old, experienced this feeling of being abandoned by her boyfriend. She said,

> *"My boyfriend abandoned me immediately after learning that I was pregnant, so I felt awful and in misery. He never phoned me again, and I lost track of him. Later, I discovered that he had changed his phone number. I didn't see him till I gave birth"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Feminists believe the responsibility for the child belongs equally to both the father and the mother (Adichie, 2017), because fathers and children can be as attached as mothers and children (Kelly, 2000). If one parent is absent from their child's upbringing, the child (ren) cannot form attachments to both parents. Contrary to this assertion, all the 16 teenage school-going mothers care for their children on their own, with no assistance from the paternity side. This means that the fathers of the babies were frequently absent during the pregnancy and after the mothers gave birth. The fathers were unable to provide the necessary financial, emotional, and physical support. The finding reveals that the majority of respondents did not receive any support - material or emotional from their boyfriends, let alone their family members. Betty, in support of this claim, said,

> *"I did not receive anything from my father's child or his family, not even now or when I was pregnant. I am taking care of my child with help of my family even though I required assistance from them because of lot of responsibilities and financial constraints"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kakuki a mother of two from Omwedi Combined School notes that both fathers of her children are not supporting her. She said,

> *"Mhhhh, 'atye!!' (not at all) no one supports my children, my first boyfriend is in grade 11 now and the second one* dropped *out of school and is unemployed. Only my aunt and I try our best to provide for my children*" (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Kangobe on her side said,

> *"My child's father and his family don't really do much in support of the child because my boyfriend is also a learner. He is in grade 9 just like me at a different school"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

Rusia also has this to say,

> *"I never received any support from them. My in-laws are not self-depended… even if you demand any help most of the time it never came"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

According to Mangeli, Rayyani, Cheraghi and Trigari (2017), without adequate support, teenage mothers face significant challenges in attending school and caring for their children. Thus, women are left to raise children alone. This is due to the distribution of labour in which women are relegated to the private sphere of the household, which includes child rearing, care and cooking, leaving them without a choice or voice in the public sphere (Anderson & Taylor, 2009).

The majority of participants stated that they are constantly forced to seek assistance from the children's fathers' families due to the pressure of child needs, and that in most cases, they receive nothing. Some teenage mothers, on the other hand, are content with what they have without realizing it, and as a result, they conform to their own subordination. One participant, for example, appreciated her boyfriend's family's N$100 gift, whereas another appreciated the child's name. "Mweulenga recalled as follows:

> "*My child's father is unemployed, and I only remember receiving N$100 from his family when I was pregnant a long time ago. I now rely on my sister for financial support"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Mweulenga further shows her appreciation for the name of her child. She said,

> *"I am only glad they gave my child a name"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

The same expression came out also in one of the one one-on-one interviews, as Rusia further added her experience. She said,

> *"There was only one time when the father of my baby gave me N$ 100 to take the baby for immunization... despite the fact that my in-laws are unable to financially support me. I'm glad they recognise my child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

From a theoretical point of view, the teenage mothers in this study positioned themselves only in the private sphere where they have no voice. For a teenage mother to merely accept the acknowledgement of the baby reflects compliance and the normalising of patriarchal domination, which in most cases pressured women to collude in their own subordination. If the boys are too young to take responsibility, their parents should do so because they are equally responsible for their children's misdeeds. Obviously, Namibian culture is failing women by not even holding the parents of the boys to task. An acknowledgement of the baby should be the responsibility of both father and mother, and if they are not working because they are learners, both families should ensure that the baby's needs are satisfied. To leave the responsibility in the hands of the teenage mothers alone and her family demonstrates an ongoing oppression and mistreatment of women. By way of summary, all of the aforementioned has demonstrated that patriarchy influences teenage mothers' and the fathers' decisions. As a result, conformity contributed to the inferior status of the teenage mothers and ability to reason and stand up for what is right for them (Lerner, 1989).

In a patriarchal society, the existing maintenance law is discriminatory because it protects men while leaving the responsibilities of childcare in the hands of women.

According to Namibia's constitution, article 15 (1), "children shall have the right to a name from birth...the right to know and be cared for by their parents" (p. 9). Similarly, according to Article 18 of the Maintenance Act 9 of 2003, "...both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child" (p. 4). Furthermore, according to Article 27 (2), "the parents or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the living conditions required for the child's development" (p. 4).

The law made it clear who should care for the child; however, in the discriminatory part, the child must be six years old before the mother can approach the maintenance courts. Furthermore, the law does not require maintenance payments from people who do not have a job and no financial resources. The realities of this phenomenon are that both mothers-learners and fathers of their children are unemployed. It is obvious that the families of teenage mothers must bear the consequences of raising the child alone because there is no law that can compel them to do so. In this regard, I believe that there is unequal participation in child rearing.

Jackson (1998, p. 126) provides three distinct social explanations to help us understand why women account for more child rearing responsibility than men. To begin, he explains that “the sex role socialisation approach emphasises the development of divergent feminine and masculine identities in children”. It contends that different expectations are placed on girls and boys by their parents, teachers, and the culture in which they live.

Second, “the psychoanalytic-functionalist approach emphasises the development of distinct male and female personalities, which makes women a better choice for child rearing”. This approach assumes that men and women develop different personality profiles as a result of their early emotional relationships with their parents. Social processes within families and other institutions then direct both sexes toward roles that are appropriate for their personalities.

Third, “the power and conflict approach contends that women accept child-rearing responsibilities because they have no other option” (Jackson, 1998 p. 126). This is simply an example of patriarchy in some African communities such as Ovambadja,

where the child is considered to be a member of her mother's clan rather than a member of a father's. Such irresponsible fathers' patriarchal behaviour contributed to the resurgence of gender inequality. Furthermore, teenage mothers complied with this expectation out of fear of having their child disowned. In this regard, teenage school-going mothers have been placed in the position of having to care for the baby on their own. This is an active cultural belief that continues to oppress, subjugate, and even abuse women (Anderson & Taylor, 2009).

In normal circumstances of adulthood and marriage, taking care of the child, according to Cummings, Goeke-Morey and Raymond (2004), is a shared responsibility for both mother and father. Since this is not the case the teenage mothers are left with this responsibility alone. The presence of father figures in the life of any child serve as a source of maternal emotional support, and that if the father is unsupportive, the child may suffer psychologically. Teenage mothers required assistance with a variety of issues, including childcare, financial and emotional support for themselves and their children. According to Stroble (2013), teenage school-going mothers, like other women, are faced with new and significant expenses such as baby nutrition, care, and the cost of child treatment. Men in general have failed to recognise and have continue to ignore the fact that they are part of the child's care and must play an important role in life planning and childcare support of any kind (Watts, Liamputtong, & Mcmichael, 2015), just as the teenage mothers have had to do.

Teenage pregnancy among underage girls is regarded as the result of illegal sex in Namibia, particularly in the Oshiwambo culture and especially in the Ovambadja community. Children born out of wedlock are regarded as illegitimate children. Illegitimate children face discrimination and are denied their legal rights simply because they are born out of wedlock. This leads to another form of oppression because many paternal families do not attempt to support such a child or mother. This has a negative impact on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers as well as the child's life because it can affect them both psychologically.

Several studies have also revealed that teenage mothers receive only one-sided support because on the one hand their children's fathers fail to provide adequate support to their children and mothers (Aparicio, Pecukonis, & O'Neale, 2015; Barmao-Kiptanui,

Kindiki, & Lelani, 2015). On the other hand, there is no law that can force the children's father to support their children. Because the current maintenance law is only applicable to employed men. According to Lamb (2004), there is a possibility of self-confidence and motivation in children who supported by their fathers from birth. This is an important point to make because most African fathers do not realise how important they are in their children's development. According to Cooksey and Fondell (1996) and Carlson (2006), fathers' involvement in their children's lives has been shown to be positively related to children's academic performances and behaviours.

This study purposefully highlights this finding because the blame for teenage motherhood is solely placed on the shoulders of teenage or school-going mothers, while the system or policymakers are ignoring the fact that this is contributing to the high rate of school dropout and poor performance among teenage mothers. If feminists call for stricter measures to hold men accountable for their responsibilities, I believe teenage pregnancies can be reduced. The emphasis of this study is that women and girls cannot do it alone. Even though women are caring people by socialisation, and culturally and religiously, it requires collectively responsibility to raise the child (Miller, 1998). Fathers can play an important role in achieving gender equality and a child's well-being by creating an equal environment at home, school and in the community.

In this study, I discovered that the teenage mothers faced many challenges such as stigma, discrimination and harassment resulting from the dynamic interaction of multiple marginalised social identities. The multiple identities identified are: gender, culture, age, single mothers, learners, economic status, and black Namibian women. All these intersected to create multiple levels of social injustice. (cf. 6.2).

To conclude the discussion of this finding, I argue that the way the boys described in this study enjoyed bullying the teenage mothers is an indication of affirming their 'superior' status and reinforcing sexist norms (Haskel & Burtch, 1991). It is also an indication that not only patriarchy is still contributing to women's subordination (Firestones, 1970), but that other forms of power, such as culture, class, age and traditional expectations, are also continuing to oppress women (Arndt, 2002; Kolawole, 2002). As a result, this study contends that, even if teenage mothers or mother-learners do their best in school, their contributions may go unnoticed due to patriarchal

assumptions and expectations. The main arguments of liberal feminism of unequal rights and illegal systems are still the main barriers that impede teenage mothers from participating fully in their right to an education. It is supported in this study that the teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences are determined by male-dominated settings because it is they who have experienced stigma, discrimination and unequal participation in education engagement.

Finally, in terms of the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in the Okalongo circuit, I would argue that this finding largely confirms the literature explored in Africa and other parts of the world (Nkwemu et al., 2019; Musese 2018; Stroble, 2013), which indicates that teenage mothers are more vulnerable than teenage fathers when it comes to schooling and motherhood. The marginalisation of teenage mothers in Namibian schools, as observed in this study, can be traced back to discriminatory customs and traditions of the past are still prevalent in society today, such as patriarchy, gender roles, and social expectations. Despite the constraints discussed in this section, the teenage mothers eventually developed coping strategies, discussed in the following section.

6.3 Enabling factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers

This section discusses the enabling factors that influence the behaviours of teenage mothers to remain and continue their education despite the numerous challenges they have experienced as explained in the preceding section. Such factors are thought to be the driving force that transform negative thoughts about dropping out of school into positive ones not only by the 16 teenage mothers who took part in this study, but can be extended to the future teenage mothers as well (Luthar & Ciccheti, 2000). The implementation of a Teenage Pregnancy Policy and the prevalence of resilience among teenage mothers are two key enabling factors that emerged from the analysis of the focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews and the journals (see Chapter 5).

6.3.1 Enabling factor: Provision of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy

The introduction of a Teenage Pregnancy Policy in Namibian schools is in response to the feminist call, which states that education is the best way for women to assume their place in society as equals with men (hooks, 2000; Collins, 2000; Wollstonecraft, 1792). The participants indicated their appreciation of the government's efforts in

implementing the Teenage Pregnancy Policy in Namibia. According to some of the participants, such efforts gave them hope that they would be able to stay in school and work hard in order to pass their classes and continue their education. Dulika, one of the 16 teenage mothers who supported this claim, stated,

> *"I am in school because I know I am protected by the teenage pregnancy policy... and I am urging other teenage mothers who drop out of school to come back and finish their education"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndumbokesha also explained why she was in school.

> *"I don't care about the insult and discouragement from my classmates; my hope is in the policy that allowing me to stay in school further protects me from dropping out,"* she said. *"I am confident that I will succeed in my studies."* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

The teenage mothers emphasised that the policy safeguarded their rights and allowed them to attend school.

The government contributed to the concept of equal opportunity, allowing teenage mothers to realise their full potential. Literature has also acknowledged the policy's implementation, claiming that Namibia is one of 26 African countries that have introduced continuation or re-entry policies and strategies to ensure that teenage mothers remain in school (Sharma, 2018). In the eyes of feminists, such a move is an achievement and realisation of inclusive education and gender equality within our education system. According to Sharma, (2018) such a move is a response to black feminists who fought for equality and justice for all by involving all those in power in ensuring women's rights are respected.

Even though Namibian teenage mothers are celebrating the re-entry policy's introduction by the Ministry of Education, on the one hand, the findings revealed that the policy is not implemented as intended (cf. 5.4.2.3 and cf. 6.2.4). On the other hand, literature (cf. 2.9) also revealed that in Namibia the re-entry policy was positively received only by human rights activists and legal experts while, the local community

opposed it due to traditional views on premarital and teenage sexuality (Iimene, 2015). In addition, some African countries, such as Senegal and Malawi, have introduced the re-entry policy but have also imposed strict measures, such as requiring teenage mothers to take long periods of maternity leave or provide a medical certification before re-applying (Sharma, 2018). According to Sharma (2018), a significant number of countries continue to enact laws and policies that directly discriminate against teenage mothers in education. Some countries, such as Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, exclude pregnant girls from school and deny teenage mothers the right to attend public schools. However, unlike other teenage mothers in some parts of Africa, the teenage mothers who participated in this study felt lucky to be given opportunities to go to school, even though they faced many challenges. Aside from the provision of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy, another point of discussion that emerged from the findings is resilience among the 16 teenage mothers, as explained in the ensuing section.

6.3.2 Enabling factor: Prevalence of resilience amongst the teenage mothers

I discovered that the teenage mothers had faced many challenges that could have forced them to drop out of school as I listened to their stories and how they make sense of their lived experiences (cf. 6.2). The participants in this study demonstrated the ability to face challenges such as trauma, stigma, discrimination, and stereotype, to name a few According to Iita (2021), the ability of teenage mothers and pregnant learners to remain in school despite many challenges of gender stereotyping and discrimination is a sign of resilience. Furthermore, mother-learners decided to remain in school by going against their cultural expectations and the disapproval of them going school (Deng, 1995). Despite the teenage mothers being exposed to a variety of challenges, there are various stories of survivors in life, such as children leading families after both parents die, people surviving terrible accidents, and children being rejected by their fathers (Ungar, 2004). The teenage mothers who took part in this study reported being insulted, discriminated against, stereotyped, and stigmatised. Despite the fact that teenage mothers have been subjected to a barrage of insults from peers, teachers, parents, and community members, they tolerate humiliation, name calling and marginalisation (cf. 6.2). In this case, someone who can withstand the insults and name-calling experienced by the 16 teenage mothers must possess special qualities within herself. The 16 teenage school-going mothers who participated in this study revealed a slew of obstacles that could have demoralised them into dropping out permanently, but they were determined

to face those challenges without fear or intimidation, and thus full of hope to succeed in life. Moreover, despite the provoking, none of the teenage mothers displayed any violent retaliation. Stories like the ones in this study have one thing in common: the person who survived such incidents learned to be resilient.

The study chose to examine the lived experiences of the 16 teenage school-going mothers through the lens of feminist resilience because the emphasis is on enabling and positive outcomes rather than reporting problematic and negative ones (Collins, 2010). It also allowed us to analyse and comprehend the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers through a variety of lenses. Furthermore, the feminist resilience perspective is highlighted in the discussion of the findings because it strengthens the growing consensus that, despite its many reported argumentative consequences, teenage motherhood can lead to positive outcomes for mother-learners in the presence of the right protective factors and adaptation strategies (Clarke, 2013).

According to Resnick (2000), emphasising a feminist resilience perspective provides a solution-oriented approach that emphasises hope and potential rather than looking for risks and causes. This approach, one could argue, reflects a philosophical commitment to viewing teenage mothers as a "resource to be developed rather than a problem to be solved" (Resnick, 2000, p. 161), because teenage motherhood is regarded as a problem around the world, and societies are preoccupied with finding solutions to this cohort rather than attempting to understand their lived experiences and possibly implementing their recommendations. This is because the primary goal and knowledge sharing of this study is to identify appropriate strategies based on their experiences to increase protective and enabling measures within our social context that can increase the possibility of teenage mothers remaining in school and completing their education. In the light of feminist theory the aim is to eliminate all the factors that dispose teenage mothers to gender inequality by acknowledging their roles, experiences and interest. Hence, teenage mothers stayed in school for two reasons, namely: internal and external motivation.

6.3.2.1 Internal motivation

Teenage school-going mothers remain on the periphery of society, as they continue to face discrimination, oppression, and marginalisation. In today's society, the issue of

inequality and power is still present. Teenage mothers are still finding it difficult to express themselves in public. However, this study confirmed Rutter's (1999) findings as it discovered that the teenage mothers who participated in this study possessed individual characteristics such as a positive outlook to enter into the public sphere and the reasoning ability to process positive experiences while denying the reality of oppression. To explain the internal motivation of the teenage mothers, I adapted Gordon-Rouse's identification of four common characteristics of individual enabling influences. These include social skills, problem-solving abilities, autonomy and agency, and a sense of purpose and future (Gordon-Rouse, 2001). However, I added faith and forgiveness to the list.

Social Skills

In terms of social skills, the teenage mothers demonstrated that they were able to attend school because they exhibited qualities such as responsiveness and the ability to elicit positive responses from others such as understanding, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humour during focus group discussions and individual interviews (Estrada, 2012). As a result of how the teenage mothers expressed their feelings and the feelings of others, social competence became a category in this analysis and discussion. The issue of teenage motherhood compelled the 16 teenage mothers to put others ahead of themselves. Some have stated that what they went through was unbearable for them, and they do not want other girls to experience the same pain and feelings. For instance, Rusia from Tango Combined School explained her experience of motherhood and she said,

> *"I want to warn my fellow girls to avoid boyfriends and focus on their education. What I have gone through and experienced is unbearable. It changes your life and has an impact on your studies once you become a mother. Having a baby is difficult, especially when there is no one to care for the baby when you want to go to school. I became pregnant as a result of my friend's influence, and I don't want this to happen to anyone else"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Lorence from the same school as Rusia also said,

> *"Being a young mother is difficult to manage, especially with morning sickness... yooo... is unbearable... but it never stopped me from going to school" (IIT 26 September 2018).*

As a result, of such experiences some, such as Dulika from Etale combined school, became motivational speakers at their schools to warn others to refrain from early sexual intercourse. She stated,

> *"I became a motivational speaker at most of our school's events, such as African Child Day and Human Rights Day, because I do not want other girls to go through what I went through"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

To me the teenage mothers developed coping skills as they learned to adapt to their surroundings and deal with daily challenges. Their behaviour towards other learners also showed resilience because the teenage mothers decided to be live a life of purpose and fulfilment (Henry & Milstein, 2004) which include motivating others not to be become victims of teenage pregnancy.

In addition, Namalimbo and Kaupu also showed their coping and resilient characters as they stated their reason for being in school. Namalimbo said,

> *"Staying at home will have no effect. I believe it is important and best to stay in school... to study and one day have a career like my teachers"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kaupu has the purpose to live and succeed. She said,

> *"When I am in class, I notice that I am not like the other learners, such as when they make a lot of noise. It is childish, in my opinion. I always felt like taking my book and going somewhere to study. I have learned my lesson, and I don't want to make the same mistake of failing again. I would like to make amends for my error, as I have wasted a lot of time"* (IIO 19 September 2018).

This is the fact that the teenage mothers admitted to experiencing discrimination, stigma, stereotyping and many more other challenges that they do not want others to experience. This indicates that they have learned to maintain positive relationships with others (Bernard, 1993) and to maintain discipline by caring for others. Such abilities provide resilience in the face of stressors and aid in the prevention of behavioural and emotional problems in their lives (Gordon-Rouse, 2001). There is a feminist dimension of educational empowerment at work here. Empowerment is a fundamental concept in feminist theory in which the oppressed play critical roles in the process of change (Stromquist, 2015). The teenage mothers' behaviour toward other girls who are not yet mothers is a collectively feminist ideology of finding ways to strengthen themselves, resist forces of dominance as experienced (cf. 6.2), and transform their lives (Sahni, 2017) into a successful and responsible people.

According to Herz and Sperling (2004), education empowers women by improving their own well-being as well as the well-being of their children and society. More importantly, this feminist study seeks to give voice to the teenage mothers' thoughts, concerns, and feelings, as well as to use their own experiences and feelings as a valid source of knowledge (hooks, 1994). The overall goal of fighting for girls' education is to eliminate all gender disparities in education (UN, 2000 MDG 3) that are impeding our society's progress toward gender equality. Gender equality in education is a result of girls gaining the same literacy, numeracy, and other academic skills as boys (Halim, Yount, Cunninghan, & Pande, 2016) and the rights of girls to receive education.

The 16 teenage school-going mothers' contribution in this study demonstrated more positive values than negative school behaviours. These include respect for self and others, positivity for good character, well-being and happiness, and responsibility for their learning. As a result, their coping strategies improved, which included increasing aspects of social competence such as confidence, interpersonal trust, and self-reliance (Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood, 2003). The participants accepted responsibility for their actions and stated that they would work hard in school to correct the mistakes they had made, which is a good strategy from the findings.

> *"My motivation for attending school is to study hard and obtain a qualification,"* Dulika says. *I admit that what I did was incorrect... I am not*

blaming anyone but myself, and I am willing to make amends. I intend to support my grandmother, child, and sisters once I finish my studies and find a job" (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

According to Skinner et al. (2006), blaming others contributes to low social competences, whereas accepting responsibility leads to problem-solving.

Problem-solving skills

The 16 teenage mothers who took part in this study all came from low-income families. They have not stated whether or not their parents or guardians work. The vast majority of respondents are raised by single mothers or grandmothers. They faced numerous challenges, including financial constraints, loss of friends, and abandonment, among others, but they learned to solve their many problems. They learned to be self-sufficient and to distance themselves from the pressures of their families, friends, and surroundings. They have developed the ability to think abstractly, reflect, and find alternative solutions to both reasoning and social problems as a result of balancing motherhood and schooling. Some of the teenage mothers in this study reported that their parents had taken away benefits to which they were entitled prior to becoming pregnant. There are times when they need money to go to the clinic, buy certain foods, soaps, and other necessities, but such assistance has ceased since they became mothers. Despite this, they choose to sell fruits such as pawpaw and oshingome[12] to feed and support themselves and their children. Dollar in support said,

"My biggest challenge is financial support. I only get a small sum of money from my mother when I go on holiday. I learned on my own how to solve money problems, such as selling paw-paw and 'eembe, and oshingome" (IIT, 26 October 20189).

In addition, teenage pregnancy is always associated with physical changes in an individual's life, such as a large stomach. Other learners are drawn to such changes, but the teenage school-going mothers explained how they survived the spectators of the

[12] Traditional bread called oshingome made from Mahangu flour. Mahangu is the main crop production of Ovawambo. This is the crop that sustains them from January to December. Mainly it is used for porridge.

morning by manoeuvring the situations. They stated that they learned to arrive at school early when other learners are not present in order to avoid gossip and intimidation. Dulika, one of the 16 teenage mothers, confirms this claim by saying,

> *"I learned to arrive at school before everyone else so that when they arrive, they find me already seated in class"* (FGDE, 11 October, 2018).

Pregnancy in teenagers is an indicator of the transition to adulthood, and the large tummy can arouse the interest of curiosity in other learners, as experienced by the 16 teenage mothers in this study. Manoeuvring the situation, on the one hand, demonstrates how the teenage mothers learned appropriate behaviours to keep themselves out of trouble. On the other hand, it demonstrates the development of coping strategies such as self-reliance and maintaining their dignity.

Furthermore, some of the 16 teenage mothers stated that they do not have lamps to study at night, but they make use of the opportunity to walk and study. They consider it the best way to read on the way to and from school because they are also expected to fulfil their girls' roles at home. Dulika, a teenage mother who stayed alone at home while pregnant and later her grandmother came to her rescue to stay with her child while going to school, said.

> "*I don't have enough time to study at home. If I did not study the previous day, I will have to get up early and study while walking to school".*

Dulika further stated that she is unable to study at night because she did not have a lamp.

> "*I don't study at night because I don't have a lamp*", she explained (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

It is indicated in this study that the babies' fathers denied responsibilities which meant that they did not provide either financial or social support for their children. According to Pillow (2004; 117), "teenagers most impacted by teenage pregnancy are young women who are already living in impoverished conditions prior to becoming pregnant". This experience confirmed the intersectional idea that teenage mothers are frequently disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression caused by patriarchy, ability and

economic constraints (cf. 3.4.7). However, the teenage mothers did not allow the pressure of their multiple identities to influence them. Their transformation into mothers quickly altered their mind-sets, causing them to focus less on their impoverished circumstances and more on the importance of education by solving problems in their own way.

Moreover, the teenage mothers developed an attitude of fighting for their rights, as the findings of this study explained in Chapter 5 (5.4.2.3). The findings indicated that teachers failed to provide remedial services to teenage mothers in case of absence. The teenage mothers indicated that they learned to solve such a challenge because they made an effort to consult with and obtain information from others who had previously attended school. In this study, for example, teenage mothers indicated that they had to demand previous activities from teachers if they were absent. Demanding what is due to you indicates that you are fully responsible for your own benefits (Bernard, 1993), in contrast to the situation in which some teenage mothers are silenced due to their teachers' attitudes toward them.

Some of the teenage mothers have shown the need for emotional support. After their parents refused them returning to school, one of the participants indicated that she had to inform her teacher counsellor to intervene. This happened to Kakuki, a mother of two children, and thanks to her efforts to report the matter, a social worker from the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare intervened and Kakuki was able to re-enrol in school. This is what she said,

> *"My aunty refused to let me return to school after I became pregnant for the second time. I informed my teacher counsellor, who later enlisted the assistance of a social worker from the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare to persuade my aunty to allow me to continue attending school"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

To learn to solve problems is an example of coping that leads to resilient outcomes and an indication of empowerment as teenage mothers fight social injustice. Because of these characteristics, teenage mothers in this study never let the negative attitudes of teachers, parents, community members, and other learners discourage them from

attending school. The teenage mothers also demonstrated a high level of autonomy and agency (cf. 1.13.8), as indicated in the examples provided in the previous paragraph. The teenage mothers did not allow the teachers, social values and practices to limit their aspirations and desire of continuing with their education. They converted their desire and motivation for schooling into action as they made decision to fight back and demand their right to an education (Nussbaum, 2001).

The teenage mothers in this study demonstrated a sense of purpose (cf. 1.13.7) and the ability to act independently, as well as the ability to maintain self-satisfaction. Similarly, they are also limited significantly by their circumstances, the nature of the society they live in, as they are expected to raise their children on their own because the culture where they come from cannot allow them to give up their children for adoption. Concurrently, the Namibian law does not permit abortion.

Autonomy and Agency

The teenage mothers did not perceive themselves as deviant or promiscuous, as Namibian society does. They demonstrated a sense of self-determination and agency (Gordon-Rouse, 2001). They've learned to respect others and distance themselves from those who stereotype them. Dollar from Tango Combined School, for example, claims that,

> *"Because of the name calling and being accused of being a bad influencer, I have decided to walk alone to and from school"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Dulika from Etale Combined School expresses her opinion that,

> *"Most of my classmates are not serious about their studies. They have no idea what real life is... They may discourage you from participating in and concentrating on your studies at times. I used to do the same thing before I became a mother... now I am not so sure. I have decided to make my own decisions, to work alone and to stay alone because this is my life and my child's life"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

According to African feminism, rejecting subservience and inferiority can help teenage mothers develop a sense of self-worth and self-determination (Chukwuma, 1994). Despite the constraints discussed earlier in (see cf. 6.2), the 16 teenage school-going mothers in this study made sound decisions to continue or return to school after childbearing. Their stories and experiences differ because some of the teenage mothers received little support during the early stages of their pregnancy, while the majority faced numerous challenges. Some parents, for example, refused to stay with the baby while the teenage mothers went to school. Parents' refusal to stay with the baby forced some of the teenage mothers to drop out of school for a period ranging from two years to a few months. Dinea was among those who had been absent from school for an extended period of time. She stated that she worked as a housekeeper for the time she was forced out of school. She said,

> *"When I was out of school, I had to look for domestic work to earn some money so that I could support my baby"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

The goal was to raise funds for the survival of herself and her child.

The findings of this study demonstrate that temporary work was not only a means of survival, but it was intended to prepare and facilitate the teenage mother's return to school (Wekesa, 2010). According to Kabeer (1999), this type of facilitation is the conceptualisation of agency or power to choose and pursue a course of action. Agency was discovered to be an enabling factor in the 16 teenage school-going mothers in this study. Many times, people conform to social construction expectations despite their values and beliefs. For example, teenage mothers are socially and culturally expected to stay at home, nurture the baby, and fulfil all of the responsibilities that a mother or woman is assigned to. Going to school while still living at home with the child is not culturally acceptable, let alone going to school while pregnant. Such behaviour is socially and culturally frowned upon and condemned (Gupta, 2000). As a result, the teenage mothers who participated in this study defy such expectations and chose to stay in school. According to Gupta (2000), only a person with a high level of agency is capable of subverting her own cultural values. All the 16 teenage mothers were enrolled in school, which means they refused to conform and comply with social expectations

that relegate women and pregnant girls to the private sphere, meaning they were required to stay at home.

The findings of this study indicate that these teenage mothers were extremely brave to stand out and face the labelling because of perceptions of deviating from cultural norms. Second, they were concerned about the consequences of developing and articulating their voices (hooks, 2000). Third, they confronted the fear of social exclusion by society, as well as being labelled as bad influencers by other learners, teachers, and members of the community (Chukwuma, 1994). By exercising their educational rights, they were able to move beyond the traditional belief that teenage motherhood should be relegated to the private sphere. Instead, they firmly established motherhood in the public domain of schools, demonstrating the transformative nature of teenage school-going mothers' positive agency (Wekesa, 2010).

Sense of Purpose and future plans

The teenage mothers not only demonstrated autonomy and agency, but their stories are true examples of being at school with a sense of purpose and future, which was another finding from the research. The feminist idea is to encourage women to fight for their rights including their rights to employment, education, and a variety of other opportunities in life. The feminist enlightenment regarding gender equality gave teenage mothers the opportunity to develop a sense of purpose in their lives. In the light of this study, the characteristics evident among the 16 teenage mothers were goal setting, having educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, and a sense of a bright future. The 16 teenage school-going mothers in this study described themselves as mature, and they expressed a sense of happiness and caring about their new role as parents. Mweulenga had this to say,

> *"In comparison to my classmates, I am more mature now. I do not play or make unnecessary comments like I used to; all I want to do now is study and find a job... to help my child in the future"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Rusia further said,

> *"[I] really feel different now that I have realised I have more responsibilities. I am constantly thinking about my baby, so I choose to study very hard in order to pass and secure a job in the future so that I can support my child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

According to Ntinda, Thwala, and Dlamini (2016), in South Africa, despite the challenges and hardships faced by teenage mothers, early motherhood provided them with a sense of maturity and purpose in their lives. In this study I discovered that motherhood introduces significance and meaning (Spear, 2001) in the teenage mother's life and it provided her with the sense of a better future. Furthermore, I have also observed that motherhood has stimulated maturity among the 16 teenage mother by encouraging them to stay or return to school and become better learners and mothers. Each of the teenage school-going mothers in this study expressed a strong desire to make a better future for themselves and their children. Lorence for one stated that,

> *"In comparison to before I became a mother, I saw myself as different from others (referring to learners who do not have children). Unlike in the past, I am preoccupied with my child's well-being the rest of the time. My child is my joy, and I now have a huge responsibility to study hard so that I can support my child in the future*" (IIT, 26 September 2018).

The 16 teenage mothers have demonstrated determination. A person with determination can overcome any obstacles that stand in her way (Estrada, 2012).

In my view a sense of purpose and hope assisted the teenage school-going mothers in overcoming obstacles, motivating them to find solutions to their problems, and providing them with the courage to persevere. Thus, the 16 teenage mothers have indicated that their return to school is motivated by their children, and that they must study hard in order to secure a job opportunity in the future. They stated that they do not want their children to go through what they went through as a result of showing commitment to their decision to stay in school, and they have all indicated the career paths that they intend to pursue. Some teenage mothers want to be teachers, nurses, or doctors, among others. While others aspire to work as chefs in restaurants. Namalimbo stated her reason for her being in school. She said,

> *"Staying at home will have no effect. I believe it is important and best to stay in school... to study and one day have a career like my teachers"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Kakuki had this to say,

> *"My ambition is to work hard and become a doctor because Mathematics and Physical Science are my favourite subjects. [I] want to be a language teacher because my English teacher is my role model"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Dollar expressed her difficulty with learning but she has a target that she aimed for. She said,

> *"My goal is to pass Grade 10 because I may not be able to continue on to Grade 12. After Grade 10, I intend to attend vocational schools... have a career and look for a job"* (FGDT, 12 September 2018).

Such characteristics are indicative of the transformations, emancipations, and empowerments that influenced teenage mothers' behaviours, as advocated by black feminists. Throughout the discussions and interviews, they expressed determination and hope. They demonstrated self-assurance and maturity.

Faith and forgiveness

In addition to the four coping strategies described above, I discovered a fifth coping strategy from my research: faith and forgiveness. These traits emerged from the data because teenage mothers stated that as Christians, they always prayed when they were feeling down. They stated that prayers assisted them in overcoming many obstacles. The teenage mothers felt blessed and as if they had nothing to worry about. In her journal, Kakuki wrote:

> *"Some of the girls in my class made fun of me today... Instead of retaliating, I prayed to God (the word she used in vernacular is (tate Kalunga) to forgive these girls, knowing they have no idea what I am going through. I didn't give up*

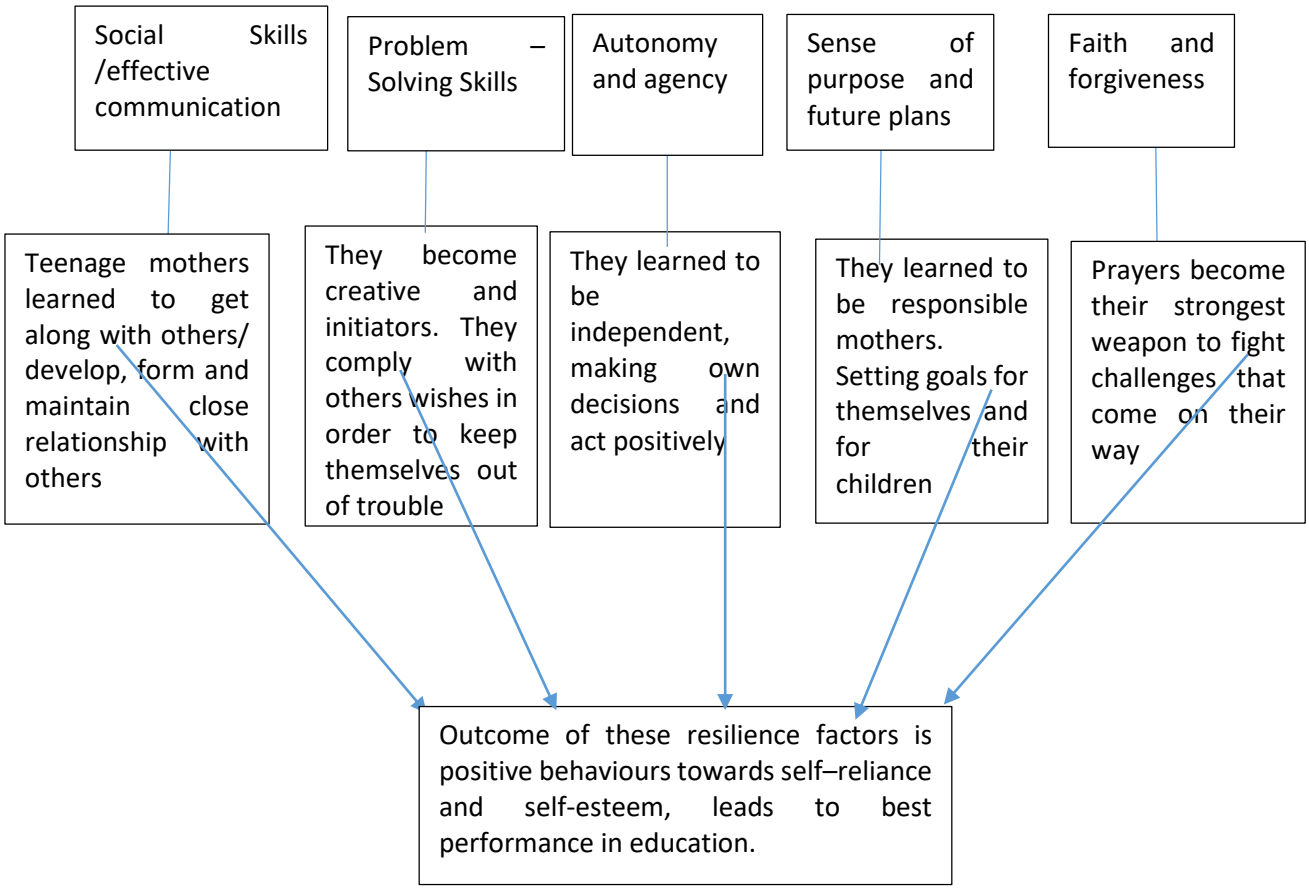
> *on my studies with God's help because I believe he will help me"* (RJO, 09 April 2018).

Kaupu also wrote about it in her journal to back up this claim. She said,

> *"Some of my classmates wrote in my summary book that because I am pregnant, I should leave school and work as a house helper because I deserve it… I prayed to God to forgive them so that they would no longer mistreat pregnant learners"* (RJO, 20 September 2018).

In a similar study conducted in Zambia, the teenage mothers chose prayer as one of their coping strategies. According to Katowa-Mukwato, Maimbolwa, Mwape, and Mutinta (2017), teenage mothers regard prayer as the assurance of the strongest motivation and possibility of remaining or returning to school. Thus, if teenage mothers consider prayer to be one of their coping strategies, policymakers should consider such experience and devise strategies for changing the traditional perspective. Furthermore, teenage motherhood and schooling responsibilities cannot be met simultaneously by one person but must be shared by all those with a voice in bringing about change in our society.

Table 6.2: Summary of the five internal motivations as experienced by the 16 teenage school-going mothers



6.3.2.2 Enabling factor: External motivation

Numerous external motivations were identified as enabling factors in the analysis of the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. External factors in this study represent the support teenage mothers received from teachers, peers, the family and community members. According to Thompson and Ravlin (2016), external motivation is one of the protective factors that contribute to resilience, and these became part of the analysis to find out if the teenage mothers were alone in their situation or if they received any support that helped them to navigate the challenges of motherhood and schooling. Teenage school-going mothers who have more support are more likely to stay in school despite difficulties with parenting, academics, and social environments (Bernard, 1991).

This study found out that positive support from family members is critical for teenage mothers. Apart from the government's support for access when the teenage pregnancy

policy was introduced in Namibian schools (as mentioned in Chapter 6 (6.3.1), the teenage school-going mothers have also stated that they were able to attend or return to school because someone in their families volunteered to care for their children while they were at school. For example, in this case, Dollar said,

> *"Thanks to my grandmother, who did her best to encourage me to return to school and to pay for my antenatal check-ups despite the fact that she only receives a small pension"* (IIT, 26 October 2018).

Trezzy also affirmed this and said,

> *"My female friends advised me to return to school and finish my education because there is no difference between us. They told me that if I don't have a grade 9 certificate, which allows me to enrol in Vocational Schools, I will suffer in the future. My mother also encouraged and supported me to return to school while she was caring for my child"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

Kangobe further supports the same claim. She said,

> *"My older sister encouraged me to stay in school and promised to look after my five-month-old baby"* (IIO, 19 September 2018).

The issue of gender differences was important for the purpose of this feminist study and of this analysis because female family members are part of the primary support structure. Based on the 16 teenage mothers' experiences, only female family members assisted them in staying with their children while they continued their education; no male family members were involved. According to the findings, the teenage mothers' families provided emotional and financial support, allowing them to stay or return to school. All of the teenage mothers in this study relied on their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers, while the men in this regard played a role in reprimanding, mockery, blaming and judging them. Most teenage mothers relied on their family for support and shared most of the responsibilities with their mothers and grandmothers. In Ovambadja culture, motherhood and mothering are intertwined with issues of women's identity. Traditionally, men and women are assigned to different roles and expectations.

Women's place is in the home where she has to take care of the family and children, while the men's place is in politics and the economy (cf. 3.5). The cultural belief is that women are caring, and for this reason should stay at home and care for the children. The young mothers described the critical support they received from their families and the positive impact it had on their lives, allowing them to balance all that motherhood had to offer while still thriving in education. In turn, Burciaga (2019) emphasizes that the importance of having this family support has been transferred to their own mothering abilities. The love and support they received, or did not receive, informed them of the type of parent they wished to be for their own children. By assisting them in understanding their situation and remaining in school, the assistance provided to the 16 participants demonstrated that it fostered their sense of identity and purpose. According to Fearon (1999), family caregiving and support helps teenage mothers develop positive self-identities that include self-respect and dignity.

Reflecting on the feminist concepts of empowerment and emancipation, I am struck by how strong these teenage school-going mothers were as they transitioned from teenager to motherhood while also juggling the demands of school. They are autonomous and have a strong desire to be who they want to be in the future. They are resilient (Burciaga, 2019).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the 16 teenage school-going mothers' lived experiences, which are presented under two broad themes: the constraining and enabling factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers who remained in school. Under the constraints, I would strongly argue that despite the introduction of the teenage pregnancy policy, the opportunity for teenage school-going mothers to remain in school remains limited. They are still attached to their cultures and traditions in the society in which they live. The issue of gender expectations and gender roles, as articulated by radical feminism, is still dominating and influencing society's view of teenage motherhood and education. Thus, this study established that patriarchy is still the major constraining factor that predisposes teenage mothers to stigmatisation and harassment within some school in Okalongo circuit. Furthermore, traces of discrimination influenced by culture, age, capitalism (economic status), and

Ovambadja community traditions were also established as reasons for teenage mothers' subordination and oppression within Okalongo circuit schools.

I admitted that the overlapping identities and experiences of the teenage school-going mothers were the focus of analysis, and this study can confirm that the teenage mothers experienced discrimination and marginalisation as a result of intersecting multiple sources of oppression such as patriarchy, age, economic status, and gender. As a result of the oppression, teenage mothers developed different identities, including being young mothers, poor learners, orphaned children and dependent people. These identities influenced one another, resulting in a complex convergence of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, teenage school-going mothers became pregnant at a young age, some were orphaned, and their financial situation was poor. Furthermore, the 16 teenage mothers were not only subjected to a difficult economic situation, but they were also subjected to societal criticism, which expected them to stay at home and care for their children. They learned at school to put up with bullying and stereotypes. The other learners, ‘othered' them and disassociated themselves from them. As a result, they were filled with feelings of shame and regret.

Despite the fact that patriarchy continues to have a strong influence in the Ovambadja community, teenage school-going mothers in this study have demonstrated resilience. Regardless of the oppression they have faced, they have continued to attend school. They chose to stay in school in order to challenge and illuminate all of the forces that contribute to and support gender inequality in education, oppression, and social injustice, as advocated by black feminists. As a result, the findings of this study confirm feminist conclusions that teenage school-going mothers are still oppressed because of their gender, age, and class. In addition, the findings conclude that there is hope for emancipation and empowerment because some teenage mothers' agency is so strong that they never allowed their choice to be overridden and influenced by other learners, teachers, and community members (Kabeer, 1999). Furthermore, the teenage school-going mothers never let structures like social class, gender, religion, ability, and customs limit their agency and decision to stay in school.

Chapter 7: Final reflection, recommendation and conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings of this study. The rationale, theoretical and the methodological approaches that were used in the study are also reaffirmed.

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of mother-learners in terms of the enabling and constraining factors they encountered when they returned to school after giving birth. The study investigated how the 16 mother-learners dealt with the dual roles of learner and mother.

The study sought to determine whether the recently implemented Namibia Learner Pregnancy Policy (MoE, 2012) is influencing teenage mothers' ability to complete their education successfully. The phenomena of teenage pregnancy and motherhood in the Okalongo circuit were investigated through a feminist theoretical framework which included six feminisms (liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, black, and African) and intersectionality theory, to gain a thorough understanding of the 16 mothers-learners' experiences. Because of the qualitative nature of the study, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire Okalongo circuit school population, but they will provide useful recommendations to the Department of Education as evidence of a lack of alignment between policy and lived experiences, which may be generalised to the wider Namibian society.

The study intends to persuade policymakers and school administrators to better understand the experiences of teenage school-going mothers to develop policies, strategies, and best practices that will allow future teenage mothers to continue their education, without discrimination brought about by stigma, stereotyping and harassment during pregnancy. It is hoped that the study outcomes will help the schools in developing strategies on how to increase access and improve the quality of education of teenage mothers in fulfilment of the rights of the child as stipulated in the Education for All Policy (MoEAC, 2020), and as a commitment to the global United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2001). The government of the Republic of Namibia under the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture has made remarkable progress in introducing the Education for All Policy to increase access to education for all

Namibian children, regardless of their gender. Thus, this progress is a commitment to the global United Nations Children Fund priority. UNICEF sees girls' education as a gateway to achieving Education for All, and a vehicle for increasing access to, and improving the quality of education for all children (cf. Chapter 1. 2).

The key findings in this study contributed to knowledge production, particularly in the context of Namibian teenage mothers' lived experiences specifically in the Okalongo circuit in the Omusati region, as this is the first study of its kind to be conducted in this community.

7.2 Summary of the study

The study sought to understand how mother-learners managed to remain in school despite challenges that forced many to drop out of school. The study explored this by investigated the mother-learners lived experiences in their school, home and in the community. To arrive at this understanding the study aims presented in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.6) directed the study. To address the aims, the study was divided into seven chapters, each of which serve the purpose of telling the story in the following ways.

Chapter 1 set the scene for the entire study by introducing problematic issues which were relevant to the study, as well as the context in which the study was conducted. The chapter singled out that the number of the teenage pregnancies in Namibian is increasing and the mother-learners tended to drop out of school due to their pregnancy. Therefore, the aim of the study was to investigate the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy in the region and my sample size was the 16 teenage mother-learners. It investigated the lived experiences of the teenage school-going mothers in terms of the enabling and constraining factors they encountered at home, school and in the community. The rationale for the study was driven by the increase of teenage pregnancies and dropouts among teenage girls in Okalongo circuit, Omusati region. In addition, there is a dearth in literature concerning the lived experiences of teenage mothers from Okalongo circuit. Furthermore, there is negative and misleading information dominating social media headlines. Thus, to avoid the misinterpretations of the teenage school-going mothers' situation in future, this study is aimed at documenting the experiences of teenage motherhood and schooling. The chapter rationale ensured that the outcome of the study will be used to encourage the mother-

learners who are in schools to remain without fear and intimidation, and to motivate the dropouts to return to schools and complete their education. Some main concepts relevant to the study such as lived experiences, motherhood, agency, gender inequality and culture were explained in this chapter.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature relevant to the study conducted in other countries, including South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Australia, and Namibia. The literature was reviewed in order to determine the study's position and to create a platform for discussing the findings. The studies reviewed are those related to teenage motherhood, in terms of power relations and gender inequality. Furthermore, different studies that examined the Teenage Pregnancy Policy were also reviewed in order to determine the disjuncture between policy and the lived experiences of the mother-learners.

Chapter 3 focused on feminist theory which formed the basis of the theoretical and conceptual framework for explaining the lived experiences of teenage mothers, which was the focus of this study. Feminist theory provided the lens through which the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy was investigated in the region. These include liberalism, radical, Marxism, socialism, and black and African feminism. Intersectionality theory was another theoretical framework that contributed to the study's theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 provides an explanation of the research design and methodology used in this study. To begin, the chapter provided details on the study's philosophical and theoretical orientation, which informed the methodological choices made. This study considered the social world from an interpretivist perspective, in which the participants' subjective perspectives were expected to constitute social reality. Because the study is about lived experiences of women, a qualitative phenomenological feminist research approach was used, specifically to investigate the lived experiences of mother-learners. To obtain participants' perspectives, data were collected using qualitative research instruments such as reflective journals, focus group interviews, and one-on-one individual interviews.

Chapter 5 presented the data analysis. It begins by presenting the participants' profiles. The profiles are followed by a brief explanation of the stages and processes of the analytical strategies that were used to arrive at the study's findings. All the data collected from the reflective journals, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis that are related to the study's questions. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on the significance of the findings presented.

Chapter 6 presented a discussion of the results of the data analysis. The findings were discussed in the context of the research literature and feminist theory. The findings confirmed the findings of previous studies from various contexts such as international, national, and regional, even though cultural aspects and way of life differ. However, the overall findings indicated that teenage mother oppression is a global issue, not just a Namibian or African one.

Chapter 7 provides a brief summary of the entire study by highlighting the study's key findings and spelling out the study's key contributions. Based on the findings, the study concluded that patriarchy's ongoing imposed gender roles continue to influence people's behaviours, in Okalongo circuit in Omusati region, Namibia. The impositions were identified as the major constraining factor that inhibits mother-learners from continuing their education freely. Other power factors identified as constraining factors included the economic situation of the teenage mothers' families, African culture, traditions, and customs which may also have a basis in a patriarchal system.

7.3 Synthesis of the study

In this section, a brief synthesis of the primary findings of the study are presented. The recommendations are made for further studies in the field. The evidence from the Chapter 5 and 6 discussions provide answers to the research questions (cf. 1.7)

As stated in Chapter 1, the study was based on the assumption that there are constraints that force the majority of mother-learners to drop out of school (cf. 1.4). An additional assumption of this study is that there were enabling factors that encouraged the minority of this cohort to continue their education. Thus, the study investigated the enabling and

constraining factors experienced by mother-learners in schools, at home, and in the community as they returned to school based on these assumptions.

The data findings show that the Republic of Namibia's Constitution guarantees the education of teenage mothers by instituting the Teenage Pregnancy Policy (cf. 6.3.1). The key finding, however, is that the Teenage Pregnancy Policy is not being implemented as intended; otherwise, teachers in the three schools visited could have provided adequate learning and caring support to teenage mothers. The study reveals that there is a disconnection between the policy and practice brought on by the cultural beliefs and practices in Ovambadja's traditional community. The evidence provided in the reflective journals, focus group discussions, and one-on-one individual interviews clearly indicated that the policy failed on its two main objectives, which are the prevention and management of learners' pregnancy in Namibia.

Prevention side:

The Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture has also failed to provide Life Skills teachers in many schools to assume the responsibility of providing information on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, mutual respect in relationships, self-esteem, empowerment, and the right to sexual autonomy (MoE, 2012). Despite this, I maintain that the policy cannot aid in pregnancy prevention, nor can it improve life skills or information dissemination to learners. It is not a straight line. Failure, in my opinion, is what the Ministry did to assist teenagers in preventing pregnancy. Even when information is provided, the policy cannot enforce desired behaviour. Unless and until schools begin to teach teenagers a thorough understanding of abstinence, contraceptive methods, and consequences.

Management side:

The schools failed to assist pregnant learners, expectant fathers, and mother-learners in continuing their education and juggling the responsibilities of parenthood. They also failed to provide psychological support to pregnant students. The school principals did not appoint a support person to monitor and follow up on the pregnant learners' progress until they returned to school. Schools also failed to provide a curriculum package for use during leave of absence and subsequent return to school to assist mother-learners in staying on track with the curriculum. The schools also failed to provide a safe school

environment, as discrimination against pregnant and mother-learners was reported in this study.

The policy requires schools to keep accurate records of students' pregnancies, including the dropout period and subsequent return rates of mother-learners (MoE, 2012). The findings indicate that schools did not keep accurate records of students' pregnancies as required by the policy.

There is no effective channel of communication available for teenage mothers to express their concerns. As a result, the vast majority of teenage mother incidents go unreported. Despite the fact that the study does not wish to generalize, the situation in these schools is likely to be similar to that in other schools.

The overall findings clearly indicated that being a mother and a learner at the same time is very demanding and entails huge responsibilities for the young mothers. In all three schools visited in the Okalongo circuit mother-learners experienced lack of equal treatment and discrimination in the hands of their own parents, teachers, other learners and community members. Evidence of harassment, stigmatization, cultural influences, power imbalances, societal gender expectations, emotional distress, financial dependence, and lack of educational support and inequality in child rearing are reported in this study (cf. 6.2.1- 6.2.6).

As the study shows, there is a direct connection between the community members and their traditional beliefs, values and norms. Thus, arguably, one of the root causes of gender inequality and continuation of women's oppression in education, especially among the mother-learners in three of the schools visited, lies within their communal, traditional practices. Society and culture have influenced community members' beliefs and perspectives on how teenage mothers should be viewed and positioned. Thus, feminist theory provided the tools to identify that traditional culture and patriarchy are the main contributing factors to teenage mothers' oppression in schools, home and in the community. As I explained in Chapter 1 (cf. 3.5.2.5), culture includes knowledge, social values, norms, ideas, beliefs, practices and habits acquired by people as members of society. These are passed down from one generation to the next generation (Berker, 2006). Further, I have also explained in Chapter 1 (cf. 3.5.2.6) that patriarchy "is a

social and ideological construct that holds men (patriarchs) in superior position to women" (Bhasin, 1993, pp. 24-25). These two concepts were drawn from the feminist theory and they reinforce each other in the oppression of teenage mothers.

The teenage mothers' opportunity to remain in school is challenged by both social and cultural expectations in the Ovambadja community. In a patriarchal society, such as the Ovambadja, men are inevitably valued above all genders, and liberal feminism holds that traditional arrangements of work, roles, and responsibilities to different genders create inequality, denying women freedom of choice (Mandell, 1995). As women's dignity is not recognized in this community, patriarchy reigns supreme. Women must listen to and obey men's rules and decisions (Kanana, 2001). Traditional expectations based on the idea that certain characteristics, behaviours, roles, and needs are natural for men while others are natural for women shaped how mother-learners in this sample understood their roles as mothers and as learners (Haipinge, 2013). Therefore, women in general and the teenage mothers in particular in this study experience powerless, discrimination, poor self-esteem and self-confidence, and all these contributed to their poor performances in school (Wekesa, 2010).

The issue of gender expectations and cultural practices as advocated by the feminists can have an impact on the proper implementation of the Teenage Pregnancy Policy in schools because culturally, motherhood is associated with home and child-rearing (Dalian, 1998; Rao-Gupta, 2002). In addition, a 'true' African woman must conform to traditional values and norms of her community for identity purposes (Chacarova, 2003).

Furthermore, the Teenage Pregnancy Policy is not the only gender policy that has failed to deliver as expected; through a literature review, I discovered that most of the policies developed in Namibia to address gender inequality, gender stereotypes, and gender differences, as stipulated in the National Gender Policy and plan of action 2010-2020 (LAC, 2017; MGECW, 2010), have failed to achieve their intended outcomes. I am assuming that they are based on Western ideology, which may be in conflict with the African ideology. The Namibian National Gender Policy includes 12 key program areas aimed at reducing gender inequality. Teenage Pregnancy Policy is one of these programs. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Gender, Legal Affairs, and Human Rights are also highlighted in this study. Despite the existence of the Combating

Domestic Violence Act of 2003, which provides protection and mechanisms to protect women and children, violence against them is still common. According to the Ombudsman's office, the ever-increasing number of gender-based violence has become a concern (National Human Rights Institution, [NHRI], 2021). During the period 2012-2016, Namibian police identified five of the most common violent crimes in the country: assault grievous bodily harm (22,174), assault common (18,054), rape (2, 839), attempted murder (1,138), and murder 734. GBV is identified to be deeply embedded in socio-cultural norms, undermining women's decision-making power and contributing to women's subordination.

Furthermore, despite the government's efforts to enact laws and comply with international agreements designed to protect women from discriminatory practices, gender inequality persists. Most importantly, due to a lack of funding and human resources, inadequate training, and insufficient monitoring, the implementation of progressive gender-related laws remains ineffective (MGECW, 2010). This indicated that there is a significant disparity between the gender equality legislation and the socio-cultural norms that are prevalent in Namibia. Women are regarded as inferior to men in the old patriarchal cultural atmosphere, which has begun to fade with the rise of a new youth movement (MoHSS, 2014). As previously stated, these laws are unusual in African communities because most socio-cultural norms have an impact on how people understand and interpret these laws.

In most cases, women themselves normalised the social and cultural practices that, in most cases, reflected compliance and normalised beliefs, dispositions, and values, all of which pushed women to collaborate in their own subordination (Haipinge, 2013). For example, in a 2013 Namibian survey, 28 percent of Namibian women justified physical violence as a sufficient disciplinary tactic, while 22 percent of Namibian men agreed (MoHSS, 2014). Thus, this study draws attention to African and black feminist approaches because, in my opinion, they serve the purpose of addressing gender inequality from an African cultural perspective. Despite the fact that liberal, radical, Marxist, and socialist feminisms provided me with a tool for analyzing issues such as gender equality, patriarchy, equal opportunities, rights to education, and equal distribution of power at school, home, and in the community, their approaches were primarily based on Western ideology (cf. 3.4.6) and did not consider traditional beliefs

and cultural practices as a barrier to women's subordination and oppression (Bayu, 2019).

As a result of the policy's incorrect implementation, mother-learners were subjected to additional societal chastisement and condemnation. It is also evidence that mother-learners are denied educational rights, which reinforces marginalization and the belief that they are incapable learners (Wekesa, 2010). Thus, through the lens of feminist theory, the study identified cultural practices, gender imbalances, and gender expectations as the major factors limiting mother-learner participation in their education.

Fortunately, despite the identified hardship and numerous constraining factors, this study discovered that agency (cf. 3.5.2.8) played a positive role in the participants' behaviours. The 16 mothers-learners have asserted their autonomy. They refused to conform to cultural beliefs that kept them confined to the private sphere. They went public and decided to fight for their rights, as outlined in Article 20 of the Republic of Namibia's Constitution which states that “all persons shall have right to education” (p.10). Furthermore, the findings revealed that teenage mothers developed resilient skills (cf. 6.3.2), allowing them to overcome humiliations, discrimination, and gossip in order to stand firm and continue their education.

7.4 Recommendations drawn from the study

The findings of this study document the lived experiences of mother-learners. However, there are a number of recommendations arising from the findings that require the attention of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), education stakeholders, learners, parents, and community members. The recommendations made in this study are consistent with the research questions, literature review, and study findings. The recommendation's goal is to improve and address all gender disparities in education among our mother-learners. The recommendations are listed below:

7.4.1 Community Based Programs

The mother-learners in this study made recommendations to the Namibian policymakers which came out of the focus group discussions and one-on-one individual interviews. Some of the teenage mothers reported a lack of information on how to

overcome the challenges of motherhood and schooling. They advocated for the creation of information-sharing centres in schools and communities because available information is only disseminated in urban areas where people already have access to advanced technology. The mother-learners also recommend that lawmakers, teachers, parents, and community members collaborate to develop programmes that prepare and educate pregnant and mothers-learners about their responsibilities and expectations as both a mother and a learner.

Dulika from Etale Combined School, for example, she says,

> *"It is unfortunate that we, as teenage mothers in rural areas, are not well informed about how to balance teenage motherhood and schooling. In contrast to teenage mothers in towns, they are educated through television, and the majority of information sharing occurs only there (referring to towns)... Parents, teachers, community members, and legislators must work together to address this need"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

This was articulated by Lorence from Tango Combined School, she said,

> *"I do not believe our parents and teachers collaborate with legislators. I believe it is time for them to collaborate and develop a developmental program to educate us on our roles and responsibilities in schools and in the community"* (IIT, 26 September, 2018).

The above teenage mothers' recommendations, are in agreement with Ibrahim (2018) who asserts that there should be a Community Based Program in place within communities to counsel, provide materials, and guide mother-learners on the importance of education and the need to pursue their education. In addition, the Community Based Program should provide information on how mother-learners can overcome financial constraints and a lack of resources. This will help to motivate other mother-learners who are hesitant to return to school after having a baby.

7.4.2 Special educational institutions for teenage mothers

Mother-learners have proposed that the government separate or establish special educational institutions for mother-learners because they do not feel comfortable going to school while pregnant, which is embarrassing for them, and they are often mocked by their peers. As a result, they believe that establishing a separate school for adolescent mothers will protect them from being teased and stigmatized. The young mothers stressed that having a separate school for pregnant and mother-learners is not discriminatory, but that the system must recognize that pregnancy is a unique experience that requires special consideration. Trezzy from Tango Combined School contributed to this finding as she stated that,

> *"I think teenage pregnancy learners need a separate school because of the condition of pregnancy…but not as an isolation for hiding us…in that way we can be safe from harassment and mockery"* (IIT, 26 September 2018).

In contrast to this recommendation, and from a feminist perspective, I disagree with it because separate schools may promote sexism and increase gender stereotypes. One could argue that mother-learners should be educated in the same school as everyone else. Furthermore, as stated in Chapter 2 (2.9), Namibia agreed to a number of international gender equality commitments. Education for All, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa are a few examples (MoE, 2012). Separating schools may violate these laws and encourage one gender to feel superior or inferior to the other. I advocate for mother-learners to attend school alongside other learners in order to promote gender equality and to teach them how to communicate and understand one another.

7.4.3 Provision for social workers to visit schools

The teenage mothers further proposed that they require professional counselling from social workers to cope with the stress, fear, and stigma they face every day (cf. 5.4.6.3). The teenage mothers emphasise that the required social worker should not only counsel mother-learners, but also their parents and teachers, because they all need to accept the situation of mother-learners and learn how to professionally assist them. This recommendation is made because none of these services are available in this

community. Available social workers are only stationed at intermediate hospitals, which is far away from the Okalongo community. For example, they have to travel between 40 - 70 kms to reach these intermediate hospitals. The mother-learners explain that it is best if social workers are occasionally sent to schools to address the grievances, emotional and physical needs of the teenage mothers.

Thus, Kakuki, one of the Omwedi Combined School's mother-learners who received social worker assistance, recommends that schools be visited by social workers. She said,

> *"Thanks to the involvement of a social worker… I am now back to school… I recommend for every school to have such an important person… the available social workers are only stationed at the intermediate hospitals"* (Kakuki, IIO, 19 September, 2018).

Ndawanapo from Etale Combined School has the same recommendation. She said:

> *"I am recommending for each school to be provided with a social worker to deal with our emotional challenges"* (FGDE, 11 October 2018).

Ndaudako also recommended for a social worker to be stationed at school. She said:

> "*I am recommending for the government to make provision for the social workers in every school, as I understand the social workers are experts when it comes to social issues and challenges that we face every day at school. They could give advice to us, our parents and teachers on how to deal with teenage motherhood and schooling"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Social workers are people who have been trained to assist people who are facing life challenges, need counselling and to guide them accordingly (Barker, 2003). This recommendation is valuable because school social workers play an important role in addressing the various needs of students in a learning environment. If schools have social workers, there will be an opportunity to work together to improve the lives of all school members, including teachers, learners, and parents. A school social worker can

assess learners for support systems, barriers to academic performance, peer issues, teenage pregnancy, and suicidal thoughts, among other things (Barker, 2003). They can also provide school-based training and workshops to teachers and parents. This should be the responsibility of the government to provide schools with social workers.

7.4.4 Intervention programs for teachers and community members

The mother-learners who took part in this study recommended that schools need intervention programmes for teachers and community members. They stressed that additional training, or a sensitization program on how to encourage and support mother-learners at school can benefit both parties. For example, mother-learners suggested that teachers be trained on how to deal with teenage mother situations, because some teachers contributed to the problem of stigma and humiliation. Trezzy asserts to this recommendation. She said,

> *"I was angry from the day I was harassed by the woman on my way to the clinic, but later I realized that perhaps the community people need to be educated rather than insulting us"* (IIT, 26 September, 2018).

Mweulenga has the same recommendation, she said,

> *"Most of the time, there's this teacher who enjoys making fun of me. This teacher enjoys humiliating me in front of the class. Teachers may also require education in order to comprehend our situation"* (IIE, 24 October 2018).

Chigona and Chetty's (2008) opinions are supported by the teenage mothers' recommendation that teachers be trained because some teachers are likely to make the lives of mother-learners miserable simply due to their own insensitivity. Teachers' training is essential because it prepares teachers and parents to deal with learner pregnancy issues. Matsyotyana (2010) agrees that schools must provide a supportive and empowering environment for all teachers, students, and community members, as well as respond to their educational and other needs, and build positive relationships with parents and other key stakeholders in education. Community members must also be educated on the rights of girls to education (Chigona & Chetty, 2008) and the benefits that educated mother-learners can bring to the community.

A literature review revealed that teachers lacked skills on how to manage pregnant learners at school and had no idea how to help pregnant learners cope with dual responsibilities (Haufiku, 2014). If a pregnant student experiences early labour pain while at school, the primary concern should be the safety of both mother and child. As a result, an awareness and training program should be implemented in the community school and at home so that mother-learners can receive full support.

7.4.5 Recreational facilities and vocational centres

According to one of the mother-learners, the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture should fund inclusive education and provide unrestricted access to recreational services. This recommendation is made in light that there are no recreational facilities at schools. Whilst the mother-learners recommends that the Ministry of Education should fund after-school activities such as art, music, and sports in order to invest in public education. Such recreational facilities can help teenage mothers who have given up hope and see no other way to succeed in life (Crossen, 2011).

One of the mother-learners who wants to study hospitality suggests that the government establish vocational centres in their constituencies so that mother-learners who are unable to continue their education can attend one of them. Ndumbokesa from Omwedi Combined School suggested, as she said,

> *"I am planning to study hospitality after my study, however there is a lack of vocational centre in the region… I think the government need to allocate such facility in every constituency"* (FGDO, 6 September 2018).

While I was analyzing this recommendation, I searched for the recommended facilities in the area and found only four recreational facilities, all of which are privately owned. Furthermore, the region has only one public and two private vocational centres, both of which are in towns rather than rural areas. Okalongo lacks all of these amenities. On the ontological level, this concern is that there is nothing in this community that keeps young people busy and off the streets. Other activities, such as drug and alcohol abuse, are introduced to young boys and girls, forcing them to engage in immoral behaviour. Because there are a lot of shebeens in this community, and the majority of the youth are in these facilities. As a result, I agree with the mother-learner recommendation that

the government expand these services to rural areas. The lack of recreational and vocational centres kills the dream, but if mother-learners are exposed to a variety of career options, they will not only improve their livelihood but will also contribute to the country's economy.

7.4.6 Childcare centres

Mother-learners recommended for childcare centres to be established at school. This was articulated by Kangobe and Kakuki from Omwedi Combined School. They said,

> *"The government should establish a day care/nursery room at our schools for our children so that we can attend to them whenever necessary; leaving a two-month-old baby at home is painful, and you won't be able to concentrate in class"* (FGDO, 06 September 2018).

Crossen (2011) concurs with the recommendation that the Ministry of Education invest in high-quality childcare and encourage mother-learners to attend business or culinary school. It may not be possible to have a nursery for mother-learners' children at school because it would send the wrong message to other learners who are not yet mothers. However, the Ministry of Education could advocate for low-cost community day centres where children can be safe, happy, healthy, and learning while their mothers attend school. These kind services are not available in this community. Affordable childcare centres, in my opinion, will enable mother-learners to attend school on a regular basis, knowing that their children are in good hands. Furthermore, in order to increase the number of mother-learners in school and provide them with the opportunity to complete their education, the barriers that prevent them from attending school must first be removed.

7.5 The researcher recommendations

As an insider, I was able to learn about some of the practices that undermine gender equality and deny girls access to inclusive education. My own observations led to the following recommendations.

7.5.1 Effective teenage pregnancy policy' evaluation and monitoring system

As stated (cf. 7.3), there is a gap between policy intentions and implementation. Namibia appears to have done everything required by international law, but failed to put in place an operational evaluation and monitoring system. I recommend that policy-makers stop attempting to impress international communities by enacting unmonitored policies for international recognition instead, there should be monitoring system in place and provide Life Skills teacher as it will be discussed below. As a result, vulnerable people, specifically mother-learners in this study, have been left to bear the consequences of the non-implementation of policies, compounding the burden of gender inequality and discrimination they face. This study then advocates for an effective, active, and useful evaluation and monitoring system for Namibian schools' Teenage Pregnancy Policy.

7.5.2 Life Skills programs and sex education

Because there are no Life Skills teachers in any of the three schools I visited, I recommend that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture create teaching positions for Life Skills teachers in all Namibian schools, with only teachers who have been trained to teach Life Skills recommended for those positions. This is my recommendation because in many Namibian schools, the Life Skills subject is assigned to any teacher. Some teachers are untrained to teach Life Skills, and because it is not a promotional subject, they dismiss it as unimportant. As a result, the Life Skills lessons are frequently replaced by promotional subject lessons from the assigned teachers.

Furthermore, I recommend 'Sex Education' as an additional topic to the already existing cross-curricular topics in all subject syllabi. Environmental learning, HIV/AIDS, ICT, Human Rights and Democracy, Population education, and road safety are examples of cross-curricular topics that are already available on all subject syllabi (MoE, 2010). This recommendation is based on the fact that some discrimination and stigmatization of mother-learners occurs as a result of a lack of sexual behaviour education in schools, which is exacerbated by the concept of silence and secrecy (Bhana, et al., 2010).

The issue of a lack of sex education is not only limited to Namibian schools; other African countries face the same issue. In support of this claim, Dlamni (2016) in a study

conducted in a peri-urban area in Kwazulu-Natal recommends sex education in schools, which can be integrated through Life Orientation classes as well as regular classes.

7.6 The ethnographic perspective of the study

As an insider in this community, this study on the lived experiences of mothers-learners has added to my personal and professional knowledge of cultural understanding and meaning-making. By conducting this study in my personal capacity and using an emic approach (insider), I not only discovered why mother-learners are marginalized, discriminated against, and stigmatized in Namibian schools, but I also gained a better understanding of the power of patriarchy in determining gender roles not only in school, home, or community, but in society as a whole. As a result, I agree with Chiponda (2014) that the situation of mother-learners in society can improve if those in power, both men and women, change their patriarchal mindset. Based on the findings of this study, I believe that this is one of the most significant constraints that mother-learners face when balancing motherhood and schooling.

This study, in addition to previous research experiences, has broadened my research knowledge in my professional capacity, particularly as a school principal. This study taught me how to analyse and evaluate the management and implementation of my own educational policies. Furthermore, the study exposed me to the knowledge and importance of closely monitoring the mother-learners' situation at school in accordance with the Namibian Policy and the rights of mother-learners to a quality education, which I had never taken seriously before.

7.7 Contribution of this study to literature

I contend that this study has added to the existing body of literature on the lived experiences of mother-learners in Namibian schools, specifically the Okalongo circuit. The participants' contributions confirm existing literature findings such as gender inequality in education, discrimination, and stigmatization. This study, however, discovered a slew of new intersecting identities that predispose mother-learners to discrimination and stigma. This included the mother-learners' age, economic status, the cultural context of the study, and violations of child rights imposed on cultural beliefs and practices that overlap and expose mother-learners to multiple forms of oppression. To this claim, I may not have produced completely new knowledge on the lived

experiences of teenage mothers in general, but new insights were revealed, especially given that this study was conducted in a rural, previously disadvantaged[13] areas of the Ovambadja community.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a rich body of data on teenage mothers in other African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia, but no research on the lived experiences of teenage mothers in education is available in Namibia, let alone in the Okalongo circuit, where the research was conducted. As a result, this study adds new knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers from the Ovambadja contextual position, which has not previously been researched.

7.8 Limitations of the study

First, I believe that the integrity of the research may have been jeopardized in some cases because participants may have said what they thought the researcher wanted to hear and thus may not have given true answers to the questions. Polit and Beck (2004, p. 180) refer to this as the "Hawthorne effect," which is a psychological response in which participants change their behaviour simply because they are subjects in a study, rather than because of the research instrument. Polit and Beck (2004) go on to say that it is difficult to manage this effect. Because the participants were aware that they were being watched, they may have answered questions in a way that they thought the researcher would want to hear rather than how they felt or experienced them (Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1994). Regardless of the possibility that this is the case, I am confident that I collected and captured sufficient data to inform my study using a variety of data collection methods. The second limitation is that the study was conducted in Oshiwambo before being translated into English. Because of structural differences (Amina, 2010) between Oshiwambo and the target language, English, the quality and core meaning of the experiences may have been lost during translation. The third limitation is that the study was limited to three schools from a single circuit, so I cannot

[13]The Okalongo, the study's context, fall under Ombadja traditional authority, which was previously under the jurisdiction of Oukwanyama Traditional Authority. It was only in 2009 that it was granted jurisdiction over its people. Other traditional authorities oppressed and disadvantaged the ovambadja in matters concerning developments in their area all along (government gazette no. 4262, May 20, 2009).

generalize these findings to Namibia. The fourth limitation is time and personnel constraints. If I had more time, I could have covered more than three schools, and if I had an assistant, I would have done mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative), but this was not possible.

Finally, my role as researcher, school principal and a parent may create a bias that limits the scope of this study. Nonetheless, despite the study's limitations, I am confident that the findings presented are based on the lived experiences of the 16 mother-learners from Okalongo circuit, Omusati region, Namibia.

7.9 Recommendation for further Research

The following recommendations emerge as a result of an analysis of study's findings and as a reason to fill a gap in the literature.

- The researcher recommends using a quantitative method of investigation to determine whether the issues raised above such as discrimination, patriarchy, cultural beliefs and practices can be generalized across Namibia.
- Considering the focus of this study on feminist theory and intersectionality the voice of the teenage fathers could also add to the discourse in this field and that this would be an important avenue to explore in further research.
- Research on how one overcomes cultural beliefs pertaining to patriarchy.
- Intervention programmes and practices that allow mothers-learners to continue their education freely should be investigated.
- To investigate best practices in proper policy implementation from other countries in order to assist the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture in developing proper evaluation and implementation strategies for the Teenage Pregnancy Policy in the future.

7.10 Conclusion

The study concludes that though the policy provides for the re-entry of teenage mothers socio-cultural practices create many challenges for teenagers at the personal, family, and school community level. As a result, mother-learners did not receive the adequate educational support that the Teenage Pregnancy Policy intended, because patriarchy which is the main factors towards women's subordination in this region has influenced

their perspective against teenage mothers and education. In addition, all schools in Namibia need to have designated Life Skills teacher or teacher counsellors to assume the responsibility assigned in the Teenage Pregnant Policy of giving information on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and mutual respect in relationships, self-esteem and empowerment (MoE, 2012).

Furthermore, as a recommended solution to the problem, the underlying causes of the 16 mother-learners' current constraints must be addressed and resolved through appropriate intervention strategies. For example, by implementing the mother-learners recommendations articulated in Chapter 7 (cf. 7.7), because those recommendations came from people who had first-hand experience being both a mother and a learner at school, as well as the challenges that come with these dual roles. Ignoring their lived experiences may exacerbate the oppression that already exists among teenage mothers. In addition, policymakers should provide a platform for mother-learners to speak out against inequity in their education without involving those who have not experienced the problem.

Consequently, it is critical to note that in this study, all research questions arising from the research problem have been addressed, and tentative assumptions have been confirmed. However, based on the findings of this study, it is clear that, despite the fact that the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture implemented the Teenage Pregnancy Policy, I conclude that it has failed because no proper enabling strategies and support facilities are in place to ensure that the policy achieves its intended purposes. Similarly, I am strongly emphasising that schools, parents, and community leaders must act in an honest and lawful manner against men who impregnate minor girls in order to bring them to justice. Men who flee their responsibilities should be condemned and held responsible by the law, because they are violating the rights of the children. Otherwise, teenage pregnancy will continue to rise as society continues to support power dynamics that empower the male-dominant community at the expense of teenage mothers whose voices are already silenced (Fine, 1993).

Lawmakers should begin developing policies that replace power relations with substantive agendas of empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality, and representation for oppressed people, in this case mother-learners (Cohen et al., 2011).

These are the gaps that must be filled in order to ensure that teenage mothers are not oppressed, discriminated against, or stigmatised due to pregnancy which involved two people. Boys responsible must also be held accountable to face the consequences of parental support. Furthermore, these gaps must be filled in order for the pregnancy policy to achieve its goals.

This study can also conclude that, despite the fact that the teenage mothers faced numerous challenges, they emerged victorious because they demonstrated resilience by deciding to continue their education despite the constraints they are still facing. In addition, the 16 mother-learners' times and efforts to participate and share their private life in this study is highly commendable. They took the opportunity for their voices to be heard and documented.

I am urging the government, school administrators, parents, and community members to work together to understand the needs and situation of mothers-learners. Furthermore, the Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) are encouraged to set up supporting intervention programs to ensure that mother-learners, children's fathers, their parents are all have access to professional counselling and work together to assist both the teenage mothers and fathers in accepting responsibility for their new role. It is recommended that if the teenage mothers are given the support they deserve, and increase the number of teenage mothers in schools, Namibia will then be among the countries with a high number of mother-learners graduating from high schools.

Finally, the challenges faced by mother-learners in schools remains unresolved due to a misalignment between progressive policy, cultural norms, and societal behaviours. Equality and non-discrimination at the level of these young women's and others' lives in Namibia appear unresolved. The issue is concerning and ongoing. What should we do to address this problem? Who is going to do it? How should it be done? I believe, and hope, that my study has contributed in some ways to begin to answer these questions.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Application for Ethics Clearance-Protocol number

Wits School of Education

WITS UNIVERSITY

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

24 July 2018

Student Number: 1599560

Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D

Dear Rauha Haipinge

Application for Ethics Clearance: Doctor of Philosophy

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

The lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers when returning to school. A Phenomenological study of the Okalongo circuit, Omusati Region-Namibia.

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**. However, there were a few small issues which the committee would appreciate you attending to before embarking on your research.

The following comments were made:

- Minor spelling errors in section 5.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

M Mabetha

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

Cc Supervisor: Dr Misheck Ndebele and Dr Rene Ferguson

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APPENDIX B1

Information letter for the Director of Education

The Director of Education
Omusati Education Directorate
Outapi
Namibia

20 June 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THREE SCHOOLS IN THE OKALONGO CIRCUIT**

My name is Rauha Haipinge and I am a PhD student at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa conducting a research on the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in returning to school in the Okalongo circuit.

I write to request permission to conduct research in 3 selected school in the Okalongo Circuit. My study targets teenage school-going mothers who are in school either pregnant or have a child. My research is titled: **The lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers: A phenomenological study of the Okalongo circuit, Omusati Region- Namibia.** The study aims to investigate the enabling and constraining factors that inhibit teenage school-going mothers to manage their dual responsibilities successfully. This is a qualitative case study and data will be collected through individual semi structured in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions which will take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted with 15 teenage school-going mothers.

In addition to interviews I intend also to audio-record the interviews and conduct document analysis such as reflective journal which will be kept for six months. The participants will also be given a questionnaires which meant to help me locate their demographic profile. It is envisaged that my research activities will not interfere with the teenage school-going mothers' teaching and learning activities. The study posits that findings from this study will give additional guidance to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, and the school management authorities specifically in the Omusati region where Okalongo is situated, in the formulation and strengthening of policies which will guard learners' pregnancies in schools and possible re-admission of the affected girls back to school. Furthermore the outcome of this study would help the schools and community members in working towards the narrowing down of the gender disparities, vulnerability and constraints within our schools, homes and our communities in Okalongo which prevent teenage mothers from remaining in school.

All the ethics issues will be taken into consideration. For example, letters of request and consent forms will be sent to respective participants inviting them to engage in the research process. The consent documentation will contain brief information about the

research project and the research expectations. Effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of the data and to protect the privacy and anonymity of all participants and schools. Names of participants will be substituted with pseudonyms. All participants will be accorded the right to withdraw from the research project at any time if they feel so inclined.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project. Participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Their participation is voluntary. If they choose to participate they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and participants will not be paid for participating in this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. If you think you might need more details about this research project and therefore would like to know more details about it, you can contact my supervisor, Dr Misheck Ndebele on **Misheck.Ndebele@wits.ac.za** and Dr Rene Ferguson on **Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za** you can contact me, Rauha Haipinge, on rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com or 264812632330.

Your consideration in this study project will be very much appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,



NAME: Rauha Haipinge
Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D
EMAIL: rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 264812632330

APPENDIX B2

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Team Work and Dedication for Quality Education

Tel: +264 65 251700
Fax: +264 65 251722

Private Bag 529
OUTAPI

Enq: Apollonia Hango
Ref: 12/3/10/1

08 August 2018

To: Ms. Rauha Haipinge
University of Witwatersrand
South Africa

Subject: Request for authorization to conduct research in Omusati Region

1. This letter serves to notify you (**Ms. Rauha Haipinge**) that permission has been granted to conduct a research in Omusati Region on **"The lived experiences of teenage school-going mother",** at three (3) selected schools in Okalongo Circuit-Omusati Region**.**

2. Please be informed that the research to be conducted at school should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

3. We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the Region.

Yours faithfully

OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

.....
Lars J Shali Kankondi
Acting Director of Education Arts and Culture

Teamwork and dedication for quality education

Cc: Inspector of Education for Okalongo Circuit

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer.

APPENDIX C

Information letter for a school principal

Date: 20 June 2018

Dear School Principal

My name is Rauha Haipinge and I am a part-time PhD student at the University of Witwatersrand- South Africa conducting a research study on the lived experiences of school-going mothers in returning to school in the Okalongo circuit.

I am looking for 5 teenage school-going mothers in your school who would like to participate voluntary in my study, which is part of my doctoral dissertation research. I want to explore the kinds of issues (challenges, difficulties, advantages or disadvantages) teenage school-going mothers experienced when returning to school. Participation in this study, which is voluntary, involves an individual interviews and focus-group discussions which will last for approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will be tape- recorded. The participants' experiences in this study will help in the improvement of teenage school-going mother education in future. The participants will also be given a questionnaire and will keep a reflective journal for period of six months. I want to ensure you that this exercise will not interrupt with the learners' school activities as it will be conducted after school or during the weekends at a time which is convenient to the participants.

This letter serves to inform you that participation in this research is voluntary. The selected participants can refuse to participate in this research at any time if they wish and there will be no negative consequences. Their names and the school anonymity in relation to my PhD study and in any publications arising from this study will be protected. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the raw data that I will collect.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.
They will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. If they choose to participate they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty.
In participating in this research there are no foreseeable risks and no payment involved.

They who think they might be interested in participating in this research project and therefore would like to know more details about it, can contact my supervisors, Dr Misheck Ndebele at **Misheck.Ndebele@wits.ac.za** **and** Dr Rene Ferguson at **Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za** you can contact me, Rauha Haipinge, on rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com or 264812632330
Their participation in this study project will be very much appreciated.
Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,



NAME: Rauha Haipinge
Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D
EMAIL: rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 264812632330

APPENDIX D

Letter to the Parent DATE: 20 June 2018

Dear Parent

My name is Rauha Haipinge. I am a part-time PhD student at the Wits School of Education. I am requesting you permission to allow your daughter to participate in a research study that will be investigating the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in Okalongo Circuit when returning to school and managing their dual responsibilities as learners and as mothers. Your daughter participation in the study would be valued.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to investigate the supporting and limitation factors experienced by teenage school-going mothers in three selected schools in the Okalongo circuit.

PROCEDURES

Once you grant her permission she will be asked to do the following: She will participate in one individual interview and one focus-group discussions. The individual interview will be based on her experiences prior to her pregnancy and during her pregnancy in connection with her study. The focus-group discussion will be based on her experiences after she gave birth and her returning to school. These interviews will take place in the second and third term. The interviews will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted in her vernacular language at a time and place that suits her and will focus on her experiences of being a mother and being a learner at the same time. The interview will be audio-taped and the tape recording will be transcribed for the purposes of my study.

Your daughter will also be requested to complete a questionnaire. The reason for asking her to complete the questionnaire is so that I can learn something about her. In addition to the above, she would also be requested to write a journal. A journal is like a diary. I will ask her to record her daily experiences at school on the challenges and educational support in the journal. The guideline of the journal will be provided to her. At regular period (to be negotiated) the contents of the journal will be photocopied and the original journals will be returned to her.

I want to ensure you that your daughter's participation in this research is voluntary and no payment involved in participating in this study. If you allow her to participate you can withdraw her permission at any time during this project without any penalty.

In participating in this research she will not be disadvantaged in any way. Your daughter's identity and that of the school will remain anonymous in relation to my PhD study and in any publications arising from this study will be protected. Only my supervisors and I will have the right to the raw data (interviews; journals) that I will collect. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

For any details you can contact my supervisor, Dr Misheck Ndebele at **Misheck.Ndebele@wits.ac.za** and Dr Rene Ferguson at **Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za** you can contact me, Rauha Haipinge, on rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com or 264812632330

I therefore kindly invite you to give consent for your daughter to participate in my research. If you give your consent kindly sign on the space provided below.

Thank you for taking time to read my letter. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



NAME: Rauha Haipinge
Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D
EMAIL: rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 264812632330

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE _____

APPENDIX E

Letter to teenage school-going mothers DATE: 20 June 2018

Dear learner

My name is Rauha Haipinge. I am a part-time PhD student at the Wits School of Education. I am inviting you to participate in a research study in which I will be investigating the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers when returning to school. Your participation in the study would be valued.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to investigate the challenges and educational supports experienced by teenage school-going mothers in returning to school in three selected schools in the Okalongo circuit.

PROCEDURES

In order for me to achieve the purpose of the study as I indicated above, you will do the following: You will participate in two separate different interviews. The first interview will be between me and you only. The second, interview will be between you, me and other girls which is called focus-group discussion. The interviews between me and you will be based on your experiences at school and with your studies before, during and after your pregnancy. Focus-group discussions are discussions that you will have with other girls at school who have similar experience to you after you gave birth and when you returned to school. These interviews will take place in the, second and third term. The interviews will last approximately 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted in your vernacular language at a time and place that suits you and will focus on your experiences of being a mother and being a learner at the same time. The interview will be audio-taped so that I can listen to the interview again afterwards for the purpose of my study.

I would also like you to complete a questionnaire. The reason for asking you to complete the questionnaire is so that I can learn something about you. In addition to the above, would you be willing to write in a journal about your daily experiences at school? A journal is like a diary. You can write about experiences that help you or prevent you from pursuing your education successfully. At regular period (to be negotiated) the contents of the journal will be photocopied and the original journals will be returned to you.

I would like also to inform you that your participation in this research is voluntary and no payment involved in participating in this study. You have the right to refuse not to participate and if you did, you can withdraw your permission at any time without negative consequences.

In participating in this research you will not be disadvantages in any way. Your identity and that of the school's will remain anonymous in relation to my PhD study and in any publications arising from this study will be protected. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the raw data (interviews; journals) that I collect. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

For any details you can contact my supervisor, Dr Misheck Ndebele at **Misheck.Ndebele@wits.ac.za** **and** Dr Rene Ferguson at **Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za** you can contact me, Rauha Haipinge, on rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com or 264812632330

I therefore kindly invite you to participate in this research. If you agree to participate in this research you can sign on the space provided below.

I look forward to hearing your response

Yours sincerely,



NAME: Rauha Haipinge
Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D
EMAIL: rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 264812632330

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE _____

APPENDIX F1

Parent's Assent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your daughter to participate in my voluntary research project called: **The lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers: A phenomenological study of the Okalongo circuit, Omusati region - Namibia**

My name is: _____ (pseudonym)

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	**Circle one**
I agree that (a reflective journal) can be used for this study only.	YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed (individual interview and focus-group discussion)

I would like to allow my daughter to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that my daughter can withdraw from the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree my daughter to be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

Permission to be fill in a questionnaire

I am allowing my daughter to fill in a questionnaire YES/NO

I know that the questionnaire is to locate her demographic profile only. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- Her name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that her name and the name of her school will not be revealed.
- She do not have to answer every question and she can withdraw from the study at any time.
- She has the right to ask not to be audiotaped
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX F2

Participant's Consent form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research study called: **The lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers: A phenomenological study of the Okalongo circuit, Omusati region – Namibia.**
My name is: _____ (pseudonym)

Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts	**Circle one**
I agree that (a reflective journal) can be used for this study only.	YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed (individual interview)

I agree to participate in individual interview for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Permission to take part in focus-group discussion)

I would like to take part in focus discussion with other girls	YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the individual interview and during the focus group discussion YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission to be fill in a questionnaire

I agree to be fill in a questionnaire	YES/NO

Informed Consent/Assent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I have the right to ask not to be audiotaped
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of this project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX G

Demographic Profile questionnaire

Thank you very much for granting me this opportunity. My name is Rauha Haipinge and I am a student at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am completing my study and my topic is the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. I am very grateful that you agree to fill in this questionnaire for me. I would like to reaffirm as I indicated in my letter that whatever we are going to fill in this questionnaire will be confidential firstly and secondly, it is going to be used only for the purposes of this study. The individual names will not be used at all in this study. I will not even be using your real names in documents I will sent to my supervisor at the University. So now please answer the following questions as outlined below and first fill in your pseudonym, (a name that you prefer to be used in this study) in the space provided.

Pseudonym: _____
Date: _____
Venue: _____ (pseudonym)
Which age category do you fit in? Circle the letter of the option that suits you best?

1. Age
   a) 15-16
   b) 17-18
   c) 19-20
   d) 21
   e) 0ther please specify _____
2. In which grade are you?
   a) 5
   b) 6
   c) 7
   d) 8
   e) 9-10
3. What is your Religion?
   a) Christian
   b) Muslim
   c) African Religion
   d) Other: Please specify _____
4. How old were you when you (first) fell pregnant?
   a) 10-11
   b) 12-13
   c) 14-15
   d) 16-17
   e) 18-19
5. In which grade were you when you (first) fell pregnant?
   a) Grade 5
   b) Grade 6
   c) Grade 7
   d) Grade 8
   e) Grade 9
6. How many children do you have?
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3

d) 4
e) 5

7. If you have more than 1child, do your children have the same father?
   a) Yes
   b) No
8. How old is the father of your child (ren)?
   a) 15-17
   b) 18-19
   c) 20-21
   d) 22-23
   e) Older: Please specify:_____
9. Who stays with your child (ren) when you go to school?
   a) Mother
   b) Father
   c) Grandmother
   d) Relative
   e) Other: please specify_____
10. What type of family do you belong to? Family type will be explained
    a) Nuclear
    b) Single-parent
    c) Extended
    d) Blended
11. Are you an orphan?
    a) Yes
    b) No
12. If not, are all your parents still alive
    a) Yes
    b) No
13. If no, who has passed on?
    a) Mother
    b) Father
14. When you fell pregnant for the first time were your parents still alive?
    a) Yes
    b) No
15. With whom are you staying now?
    a) Aunt
    b) Uncle
    c) Brother
    d) Sister
    e) Unrelated family
    f) Other, please specify _____
16. Are you still in a relationship now?
    a) Yes
    b) No
17. If yes, is it the father of your child?
    a) Yes
    b) No
18. If not please give reasons why not

_____

_____

19. How old is/are your child/ren?

_____

Thank you for answering these questions

APPENDIX H

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GUIDELINES

Dear learner
I would like you to study the following journal guidelines. As part of this research you are kindly requested to write a reflective journal (diary). A reflective journal is a research diary (record) of ***your lived experiences***. This record will reflect ***the challenges and success in your journey of being a mother and a learner at the same time.*** The reflective journal will require you to think deeply. You have to evaluate your environment (school, home and community) carefully and write your experiences that affect you as a ***mother and as a learner***. The reflective journal writing will take place throughout the period of six months counting from the date you received it. You will be kindly requested to write your reflections, at least every day before you go to sleep and only when you have time and free from your school activities (make sure that the writing of journal did not disrupt you from your school work).

Your reflection should indicate the following:

- The challenges and support you have experienced at school
- Effect of motherhood on your school performance
- Cultural factors within home, school and in the community which enhance (allow) or obstruct (restrict) your school attendance, performance and parenting. In the journal feel free to
- Record your daily best moments, serious communication incidents, feelings (joys/excitements or problems), fears, emotions and frustrations.
- You can draw images (pictures) to illustrate your thoughts and ideas.

At the end of the six months period the contents of the journal will be photocopied and the original journal will be returned to you as I indicated earlier in your letter. The photocopied material in the journal entries will be kept confidential, furthermore, pseudonyms will be used to protect you and for any unanticipated consequences that might arise.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research and in writing the reflective journal.

Yours sincerely,



NAME: Rauha Haipinge
Protocol Number: 2018ECE0016D
EMAIL: rauha.haipinge99@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 264812632330

Reflective journal

Can you please record your daily experiences in the space provided?

1. Date:-_____
2. Place: (school, home, community) _____
3. Anything said today, you are not happy with (Oshike sha popiwa she ku udifa nayi nena)

   _____

   _____
4. Who said it? Fellow learner a boy or a girl, teacher, parent, community member (Oshapopiwa kulye, tonga kutya omukainhu ile omusamane, omumat ile okakadona)

   _____

   _____
5. How did it happen? (Osha tamekela peni?)

   _____

   _____
6. What is your reaction? (Owa nyamukula ko shike, nonga ino nyamukula kosha oshe ku udifa nayi ngaali)?

   _____

   _____
7. Motivation of the day(Etwomukumo lilipi wa mona nena)

   _____

   _____
8. Who motivated you, Please specify if it is a male/female teacher, learner, mother, father or community member? (Olye e shininga?) yoololoa kutya omukainhu/omulumenhu omulongi, omunafikola, nyoko, xo ile omunhu womomundingonoko ino longifa omadina avo.

   _____

   _____
9. What support have you received today and by whom? (owa mona eyambidido lashike nena na okulye?)

   _____

   _____
10. What are your encouragement words for yourself today? (oitya ilipi po we i twa omukumo nayo nena?).

    _____

    _____
11. Anything else you have experienced during the course of the day? (Mbela opuna sha wa pumbwa okushi didilika sha ningwa momukokomoko wefiku nena?)

    _____

    _____

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS

Protocol

1. My name is Rauha Haipinge and I am a PhD student at the University Of Witwatersrand School Of Education and I thank you so much for agreeing to the interview.
    2. The reason for coming is to do interviews and the purpose of my study is to investigate the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers in managing their dual responsibilities (being a mother and a learner) when returned to school.
    3. I want to assure you that what we are going to discuss during the interview is not going to cause any harm to your part or the research. I am not going to share the information with anyone else except my supervisor. You name will not be mentioned in this research, instead pseudonyms or coding systems will be used and confidentiality will be maintained at all costs. You have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research without any penalty should you feel like doing so.
    4. I am hoping that this interview is not going to take more than 45 minutes of your valuable time.
    5. I would like to ask for your permission to record the interviews.
    6. May you please sign this consent form before we begin?

Appendix J

Focus groups' discussion schedule

Thank you very much for granting me this second opportunity. I am very grateful that you have agreed to share your ideas and experiences with me again. I would like to reaffirm as I indicated in our first interviews that whatever we are going to talk will be confidential and will remain in this place firstly and secondly, it is going to be used only for the purposes of this study. The individual names will not be used at all in this study. I will not even be using your real names in documents I will sent to my supervisor at the University. I would like also to confirm as I stated in my letter that once I have transcribed the interview I am going to read it back to you in order to verify if what I have captured it is what we have discussed. I will be willing to remove any aspect of the interview/discussion that you would like to retract and are not comfortable maintaining. So now we are going to start our interview and for confidentiality purposes I am not going to mention your name but rather use your pseudonyms which are written on the sheet in front of you.

Scenarios

I would like us to go through the following scenarios, which are just imagined stories. After these, there are also some questions that I would like you to answer.

A) **I was embarrassed; I was embarrassed with everyone [at school]. My mother was angry with me, because I could not go to school. She felt bad, because I am pregnant and unmarried. It is a big problem in our community.**

B) **My parents were very upset with me because they thought with the pregnancy I would not go back to school.**

Do any of these scenario related to your situation? Can you tell me more about it?

4. I understand you go to school and at the same time you are a mother, why did you decide to come back to school? Who told/supported you to return to school?
5. Did you happen to drop out of school after you became a mother? When and why? (Probe - If no who encouraged her to stay in school).
6. Did anyone discourage you from coming to school? (Probe, Why?)
7. How did you feel when you were discouraged?

8. Do you think you have experienced challenges (at home, school or in the community) upon your return to school? What are those challenges?
9. How do you cope with those challenges?
10. How did the teachers and fellow learners treat you when you returned to school?
11. Have you noticed by any chance the teacher treated you differently in class between you and other learners who are not mothers?
12. Do you think teachers/learners treat you (teenage mother) the way they treat teenage fathers? State your case.
13. Have you ever been absent from school since you returned? Why?
14. Do you get extra lessons to catch up for the time loss while you were absent/ In case you miss a test or task, do the teachers allow to write a test to cover up the missed work?
15. How do you divide yourself between the two responsibilities (being a learner and a mother) at home and school then?
16. Do you think being a mother and a learner can affect your school performances? How?
17. What do you do at home after school?
18. Do you get counselling from teacher counsellor in case you have problems/ grievances at school, home or within you community? Do teachers sometimes refer you (teenage mother) to institutions outside the school to get assistance in case of they cannot solve your problems/ grievances?
19. Any source of income? From where?
20. What are your future plans?
21. What do you think the school can do to help teenage mothers in future?
22. Is there anything else you think I need to know?

Thank you very much

APPENDIX K

One-on-one interviews schedule

Thank you very much for granting me this opportunity. My name is Rauha Haipinge and I am a student at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am completing my study and my topic is the lived experiences of teenage school-going mothers. I am very grateful that you agree to share your ideas and experiences with me and I would like to reaffirm that this interview will be tape recorded and whatever we are going to discuss will be confidential and will remain in this place firstly and secondly, it is going to be used only for the purposes of this study. The individual names will not be used at all in this study. I will not even be using your real names in documents I will sent to my supervisor at the University. I would like also to confirm as I stated in my letter in which I indicated that once I have transcribed the interview I am going to read it back to you in order to verify if what I have captured it is what we have discussed. I am willing to remove any aspect of the interview/discussion that you would like to retract and are not comfortable maintaining. Thank you for agreeing to be tape recorded. So now we are going to start our interview and for confidentiality purposes I am going to address you by mention only your pseudonyms. I am going to begin this discussion by giving you scenarios that I would like you to respond to.

Scenarios

Listen to the following scenarios. They are just examples not true stories.

c) ***It was not easy to have a baby. It's very hard. It is better to go to school and get a job first. Once the baby comes, it is very hard, you can't do anything, especially when you do not have someone to help you to take care of the baby while going to school. It is very hard.***

d) ***It is not a good to be pregnant while still at school. My uncle's wife was not good to me when I got pregnant. She kicked me out of the house. Now she does not talk to me, even if she finds me in the street she does not say hallo to me. It is not good. So it is better to have your mum. Even if your mum is angry with you it is not going to be like this. She is going to calm down a little.***

Life story

1. Do any of these scenarios related to your experience? Can you tell me more about your situation? (Probing questions)

2. How did you feel when you found out that you are pregnant? Can you describe those feelings to me? Can you please tell me why you felt the way you are describing now?

3. Whom did you inform first?

Lived experiences

5 How did your parents react when they found out that you are/were pregnant?

6 Was your child's father expected to pay the damage price? If not why not? If yes how much and who managed the price?

7 What support do you get from your child's father's family?

8 Did you regret becoming a mother? Why? Why not?

9 Can you describe the way you see yourself as a mother? (How can you describe yourself?) Do you see yourself different from others?

10 Who played a big role in supporting you during your pregnancy?

11 If you are given an opportunity to address other girls about early pregnancy what will you tell them?

Thank you very much for your time

a0049728:Rauha_edited_Thesis_2022_(00000002).docx

by Dominic Griffiths

Submission date: 25-Mar-2022 07:45AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 1792478912
File name: -4ec7-9074-13db2bf1fbf4_Rauha_edited_Thesis_2022__00000002.docx (1.71M)
Word count: 114536
Character count: 626155

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