

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore teenage mothers' perceptions and experiences of support from an eco-systemic framework. According to Statistics South Africa (2012) about 4.5% of females in the age group 13-19 reported to being pregnant, in addition to this 19.2% of females were reported to having dropped out of school due to their pregnancy. Due to the increase in teenage pregnancy in recent years, it may be beneficial to evaluate the kind of support systems teenage mothers utilise in attempting to overcome the challenges and difficulties they may face. The rationale of the current study is to illuminate such support systems and how teenage mothers ultimately perceive and experience such support. This is contrary to previous research studies which have mainly focused on only one or two of these systems as support networks utilised by teenage mothers. The study was able to gain in-depth information into how a small group of teenage mothers view their support in relation to their pregnancy. This was achieved through the use of semi-structured interviews. The system that the teenage mothers seemed to rely on the most seemed to be their microsystem which consisted of their family and friends. Their mesosystem also seemed to give support to those teenage mothers who attended school at the time of their pregnancy. The study also revealed that most of the teenage mothers were not aware of the inclusive education policy and were dissatisfied with the sex education they received at school. This has implications for governmental policy on inclusive education and the sex education programmes offered at schools.

Keywords: teenage pregnancy, eco-systemic framework, inclusive education