



**BEING STUDENT AND A MOTHER: EXPLORING THE
EXPERIENCES OF MOTHERHOOD AMONG UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS**

By

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A research study submitted as the full thesis component in fulfilment of the requirement for the Masters of Education Degree in the Discipline of Gender Studies

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January 2019

Supervisor Acknowledgement

As the candidate's supervisor **I agree** to the submission of this thesis

Name: Professor: Shakila Singh

Signature 

Date..... 14 January 2019

Ethical clearance



13 December 2017

Ms Sithulile Bukhosini 213570394
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Dear Ms Bukhosini

Protocol reference number: HSS/2202/017M

Project title: Being student and mother: Exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 16 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Declaration

I, **Sithulile Bukhosini** hereby declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Abstract

In most African societies, care and nurturing of a child is the woman's responsibility. When young mothers are unemployed and attend university full-time, their experiences are different to those of other students. This study explores the experiences of motherhood among university students at a selected campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The sample comprised of 20 undergraduate student mothers between the ages of 20 and 24. This was a qualitative study that used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to generate data.

The theoretical framework used to bring meaning to the data was drawn from social constructivism and from theories of gender and power.

The main findings reveal that student mothers face various challenges when parenting their children while attending the university full-time. Furthermore, it was discovered that student mothers staying at home with their children spend more hours travelling, this mean they spend less time concentrating on their assignments, group work activities and other school work. The findings also revealed that financing the living expenses of their children was a major issue when student mothers come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The findings also revealed that student mothers' emotional attachment to their children was the greatest motivation to continue with their studies at university. Student mothers experienced various degrees of support. However it was discovered that there was a lack of support from the university and from the child's father, whereas support from friends at university was reliable. Beyond them, the student mother's family were the greatest supporters, financially and generally. Moreover, the study reveals that student mothers used various strategies to manage both roles, of being a student and a mother. Student mothers believed managing both roles is vital. This study concludes by highlighting the experiences of student mothers as both favourable and challenging. It highlights the support they receive from various parties to progress with their studies, and the strategies they use to cope with their studies and motherhood at university.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UKZNUniversity of Kwa-Zulu Natal

ResStudent Residents

SASSASouth African Security Agency

NSFAS.....National Student Financial Aid Scheme (SA)

FUNDZA.....Bursary Programme Promote Teaching in Public Schools

AMSAcademic Monitoring and Support Programme

SA.....South Africa

AIDS.....Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

NRF.....National Research foundation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Undoubtedly, student mothers in higher education institutions experience their parenting and academic lives in ways that are different to mothers who are not students and students who are not mothers. According to Berg and Mamhute (2013), they subordinate their needs and desires to those of their children and families. Chauke (2013) reports that young mothers in schooling streams face different challenges in trying to balance both roles. In the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Stephens (2017) reported that during the period January 2014 to April 2015, the Campus Health Services and the UKZN AIDS Programme reported 631 cases of pregnancies, and, during the same period, 143 consultations relating to student pregnancies. Furthermore, student pregnancy at UKZN has been cited as a reason for poor academic performance among female students, because of health, emotional, psychological, financial and social issues associated with pregnancy. Taukeni (2014) indicated that being a mother and student at the university can be quite difficult. He highlighted that the main common challenge among the student mothers is the lack of time to manage the studying and parenting roles (Tauken, 2014). In research in schools Clarke (2015) states that having children during their teenage years became the motivation for young mothers' efforts to improve their life opportunities, despite the challenges they faced.

This study explores the experiences of motherhood among university students at UKZN. This chapter presents the rationale for the study. Thereafter, a brief background will be provided, followed by the aim and objectives of the study, and critical research questions. After this will follow the university context, where the study was conducted, the research site, facilities, residences, and then the research methodology, sampling, techniques, data interpretation and chapter outline.

1.2 Rationale

As a student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood campus, I observed that there were several students who became pregnant and became mothers. In this research study, I wanted to explore their experiences of being a mother and a full-time student. I was curious to find out: How do they balance the roles of being a full-time student and a parent? What are the

challenges of being a student and a mother? What kinds of support do student mothers receive? How do student mothers negotiate the demands of academic work and parenting? Even though many studies have been done in schools about teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood, the experiences of young student mothers at the university level have not received much attention. Some university students are teenagers who are likely to share some experiences with other teenagers. However not all are teenagers, and university life and expectations are different from that of schools. This motivated me to conduct research among female students at a selected campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

1.3 Background of the study

According to UKZN at a glance (2017), in recent years female students have become dominant at UKZN and other universities in South Africa. There has been significant growth in the number of students pursuing their degrees in higher education. At UKZN, of 46 520 admitted into undergraduate studies in 2016, women made up 26 631. Of those students registered in bachelor degrees, 57% are female (UKZN AMS report, 2017). Among those figures, many become mothers while still finishing their degrees. Stephen (2017) reported that during the period January 2014 to April 2015, the Campus Health Services and the UKZN AIDS Programme reported 631 cases of pregnancies. During the same period, there were 143 consultations relating to student pregnancies. This study seeks to explore their experiences of attending university full time while parenting their children. According to Vyskocil (2018), the role of single mothers who are completing degrees while raising their children is very important in order to build their future, and to ensure that their children are not reliant on government support, enabling young mothers to be role models in their educational pursuits, and achievement of degrees.

Globally and locally many scholars such as Mbelle, Mabaso, Setswe & Sifunda (2018); Ebrahim (2017) and Funiba (2011), indicated that pregnancies among college/tertiary female students pose a serious public health concern in South Africa and are associated with adverse health and social outcomes that, impact negatively on educational progress and future career prospects.

Juggling university full time and being a mother requires an equal amount of attention, because both roles become important to student mothers. To complete their degree, an extent of support

from all parties is required. Being a mother while attending university full time can be both challenging and rewarding to young mothers. Ebrahim (2017) reported that university is demanding and that being a student and a mother at university is stressful enough with lectures, assignments, exams and generally finding oneself in challenging situations. The majority of student mothers care for their children while studying full time and both roles are considered by many researchers to be full-time jobs (Swingle, 2013).

Financial issues can be the biggest barrier to many students if they attend school full time. According to Adams, Meyers and Beidas (2016), financial strain is one of the most robust stressors for low-income and/or first-generation students. They further define this as perceived economic stress and lack of economic support Adams et al., (2016). Furthermore, they indicate that past research has identified a strong relationship between financial strain and the probability of graduation.

Burr's (2015) social constructivism theory highlights the dominant discourses of femininity that often construct women as nurturing, close to nature, emotional, negatively affected by their hormones, empathic and vulnerable. Burr (2015) further highlighted childcare is a women responsibility from this it is only a short step from this to a recommendation that, women are specifically able to care for young children, and that they should do so.

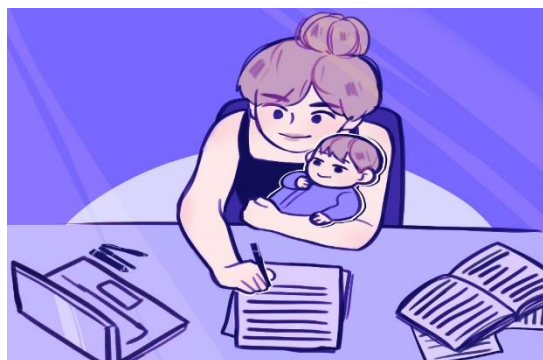


Figure 1: New mom and student: 9 September 2018 by Danielle Evangelista/Daily Titan

1.4 Significance of the study

The main focus in this area of study has been on young mothers in school and not many studies have been directed to address the issues facing young mothers at universities. While it is possible that they share some similar experiences, the experience of higher education and the greater maturity of the mothers are likely to produce different understandings. This study will contribute to understand their experiences of being both a mother and a student at university. It will contribute to understanding the common challenges they face when parenting their children while attending university full time. This study aims to be a significant channel for student mothers to share the strategies they use to balance both roles, motherhood and studentship. This study will assist student mothers to voice the kind of support they need to progress in their studies. Perhaps it could also help also other student mothers in other universities to cope with their circumstances.

1.5 The objectives of this study

1. To understand the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university
2. To explore the kinds of support that student mothers receive and
3. To explore how student mothers balance the demands of academic work and parenting at university.

1.6 This study will attempt to respond to the following critical questions

1. What are the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university?
2. What kinds of support do student mothers receive?
3. How do student mothers balance the demand of academic work and parenting at university?

1.7 The university context

UKZN Edgewood campus was formerly the Edgewood College of Education before incorporated into the university in 2001. The university caters for both male and female students. The Edgewood campus in Pinetown is the University's primary site for teacher education and the home of the University's School of Education. In line with the academic structure which the University of KwaZulu-Natal adopted in 2012, the School of Education is

made up of the following six clusters: Science and Technology Education, Mathematics and Computer Science Education, Social Sciences Education, Education Studies, Education, Development, Leadership and Management, Language, Arts and Media Education (Admin, 2017).

1.8 The research site

The Edgewood campus is situated in Pinetown with easy access to the N3 highway and approximately 20 minutes' drive from Durban. The campus offers sophisticated and attractive facilities to an increasing number of Education students and is close to all major amenities. The School provides initial and in-service teacher education and offers university higher degrees in a wide range of specialisms in education as well as carrying out research and consultancy. The School is enthusiastically engaged with education policy-making in South Africa, and contributes to the international profile of the university through contribution in international conferences, teaching international students, hosting international visitors and publishing in international books and journals (Admin, 2017). Students come from diverse backgrounds. The student population consists mainly of African students (Admin, 2017).

Residences provide self-catering accommodation; both single and double rooms are available, while women and men are housed separately (Admin, 2017). Postgraduates can choose from five accommodation building that house five students each, all residences are protected by access control doors, and the majority of students living in residences are African (Admin, 2017).

1.9 Research methodology

This research involves an in-depth examination of the experiences of motherhood among university students at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Corbin and Strauss (2008) explain that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to access the inner experience of participants, to determine how the meanings are formed through culture and to discover rather than to test variables. The study adopted the qualitative approach, which shares some of its theoretical views with the interpretive paradigm. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) describe an interpretive approach as the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings, in order to arrive at understanding. In this case, the study involves arriving at an understanding of the experiences of student mothers at the university.

1.9.1 Sampling

The study adopted two different sampling techniques, which are purposive and snowball sampling strategy. In this research, I purposefully chose 20 female students who are mothers studying full-time at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood campus. Creswell (2017) describes the concept of purposeful sampling, as used in a qualitative research, as the inquirer selecting individuals and sites for study, because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem. Snowball sampling was also adopted by Neuman (2008), who suggests that the researcher must begin with a one small case and then based on the information about interrelationships from that case identify other cases. Through snowball sampling, student mothers referred me to other student mothers who were willing to participate in the study.

1.9.2 Research methods

The interpretive paradigm depends on realistic approaches when collecting data. The study employed individual interviews and focus group discussions for data generation. Individual interviews consisted of 13 individual interviews and 7 participants for a focus group discussion and they were divided into two groups. Open ended questions were utilised during interviews. According to Cohen (2011), open ended questions may be more appropriate as they can capture the specificity of a particular situation. Yin (2011) indicated that open ended questions are exploratory in nature, and offer the researchers rich, qualitative data. In essence, they provide the researcher with an opportunity to gain insight on all the opinions on a topic (Yin, 2011)

1.9.3 Data interpretation

The generated data was analysed qualitatively (Maree, 2007) qualitative data analysis involves a range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from qualitative data collected from the people and the situation that they are investigating (Maree, 2007). The six phases of Braun and Clarke (2006) guided data analysis for this study. This includes thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2006) explain as a procedure of identifying common patterns of meaning, that arise within the qualitative data generated. Findings were organised according to the common themes that emerged.

1.9.4 Ethical issues

The ethical issues were taken into consideration in this study. It is vital to observe ethics when conducting research. Informed consent was acquired at the beginning of the research. The whole procedure of the study was clarified in clear and simple language. To protect the participants' rights, values and anonymity, confidentiality of their responses was ensured. Participants were informed that they have a right to withdraw from participating in this study at any time without any penalisation. Permission to audio record the interviews was acquired from participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants and the places from where they would be drawn.

1.10 Chapters outline

Chapter one: begins with presenting the background to the experiences of student mothers at the university. This is followed by the rationale of the study, aim and objectives, thereafter the critical research questions are highlighted. It then addresses the university context, research site, research methodology and lastly the outline of chapters.

Chapter two: presents the literature related to student mothers' experiences, mainly drawn from schooling context. Some university students are teenagers who are likely to share some experiences with other schooling teenagers. However not all are teenagers and university life and expectations are different from that of mothers in schools. The literature highlights both challenging and favourable experiences of student mothers, the support student mothers receive and how they manage both roles while attending the university full-time. This chapter also presented a theoretical framework drawn from Burr (2015), gender and power theory (Connell, 2013) and provider masculinity (Hunter, 2010).

Chapter 3: presents the research methodology approach adopted to investigate motherhood experiences among university students. It discusses the qualitative approach, the research context, the paradigm within which the study is located, the data sources, the sample and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, data analysis and interpretation, ethical consideration and lastly the limitation of the study.

Chapter 4: comprises a detailed analysis of the data collected, highlighting the experiences of student mothers attending university fulltime while parenting their children. Through the process of investigation the following themes were developed: restricted time and extra travel,

financial gain and strain, no special treatment, motivation to excel and inspiration for a greater future, the role of baby-daddy, feeling empowered and managing both roles.

Chapter 5: presents the summary of findings and conclusion, recommendation for further studies that will address the experiences of student mothers at university and lastly concludes by highlighting the issues facing student mothers at higher institutions.

1.11 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present an overview of the study. Firstly it provides an introduction to the study. It then presents the rationale that encouraged me to conduct the study, a brief background of the study, the significance of the study and its contributions. This was followed by its main objectives and critical research questions. It laid out the context where it was conducted, the research site, the highlights of the research methods utilised to collect data and the data interpretation, and finally the chapter outlines. The following chapter considers the literature review and theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the relevant literature for my study on student mothers' experiences. I begin with explaining the experiences of schooling mothers since they share similar experiences and most literature on this relates to schooling mothers. I proceed to the challenges facing the schooling mothers and then review the research on challenges experienced by young mothers in higher education institutions, the various kinds of support student mothers receive and the literature that addresses how student mothers balance both roles, being a mother and a student. Since much of the research on early pregnancy and motherhood has been carried out in schools, I have included reviews of those studies. I also include a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that this study utilises.

2.2 Pregnancy and motherhood at university

Many researchers find that the highest percentage of unplanned pregnancies is among the age group of 18-30 years (Bayessa, 2016; Spjeldnaes, Sam, Moland & Peitzer, 2007). My study is based on the same category of age since university students fall in this age range. Vyskocil (2018) states that the role of single mothers who are pursuing degrees while raising children is very important in building their future and that of their children, in taking responsibility for their children without being reliant on government and in enabling young mothers to be role models in their educational pursuits and achievement of degrees.

According to (Brown, 2007) child rearing consumes time and energy and, with few exceptions, women bear the primary burden of child care. (Brown, 2007) further explained that raising a child is a financial daunting task, it involves a great deal of financial, emotional, and practical planning. Kidwell (2004 and Brown (2007) suggests that it is necessary for student mothers to make sure that there are adequate child care resources available to raise their children and this may be very difficult to do if students are attending school full-time. Furthermore, Brown (2007) explains that parenting is very strenuous and some women cannot deal with all the tasks that are involved.

Ogunsiji and Wilkes (2014) present evidence that suggests that single parent families are more likely to be affected by the social problems associated with poor health and poverty. Single parent families are growing in number and are overwhelmingly headed by women. They further point out that despite their increasing number and their level of vulnerability, the lived experiences of single mothers have attracted little attention in the literature (Ogunsiji & Wilkes 2014).

2.3 Drawing from schooling mothers

Mkhwanazi and Bhana (2017) mention a significant number of teenagers become parents during their teenage years. In South Africa, as in many parts of the world, child bearing during teenage years is discouraged because of resulting adverse life outcomes for the majority of teenage parents and their children. In South Africa, having a children at a young age is discouraged due to the negative consequences of raising a child during teenage years.

Student mothers in higher education institutions and teenage mothers in schools may share similar experiences as they attend school fulltime. Whatever the differences, both are facing similar challenges. Bhana and Mcambi (2013) found that pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers are not supported as they should be at school. There is support for gender equality, which has been regulated by the legal framework under the South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996). This act provides a legal premise for the expansion of girls' freedoms and is designed to remove any obstacles to their educational success. Bhana and Mcambi (2013) further explain that discourses of sexual shame situate their experiences within the domain of negativity, which arises from the home, from peers and from teachers. Bhana and Mcambi (2013) also mention that this creates vulnerabilities, hurt and pain for young women at school.

Arai (2009) points out that teenage pregnancy was once tackled in the United Kingdom by attacking young single mothers. The New Labour government, through its teenage pregnancy strategy, linked early pregnancy to social exclusion rather than personal morality and aimed, instead, to reduce teenage pregnancy and increase young mothers' participation in education and employment. She further argues that, however, the problematisation of early pregnancy continued and it has been suggested that teenage mothers have been made scapegoats for a wide range of often unsettling, social and demographic changes (Arai, 2009).

2.3.1 Challenges facing young schooling mothers

Chigona and Chetty (2008) state that, though girls are allowed to return to school after becoming mothers, they face many challenges in trying to balance motherhood and the demands of schooling. According to Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana and Seutlwadi (2012), evidence from sub-Saharan Africa indicates that 35% of pregnancies among 15-19 year olds were unplanned, unwanted or untimed and that the teenagers' relationships were unstable. Adolescent pregnancy interferes with young women's educational attainment, resulting in fewer job opportunities for young women. In Matjitjileng village in Limpopo Province, Thobejane (2015) observe that teenage pregnancy can lead to school drop-out as the teenage mothers have to leave school to care for their babies. Thobejane (2015) further describes that teenage mothers add to the number of women who are illiterate, which might lead to poverty in their future

Ramulumo and Pitsoe (2013) found that, even though student mothers are allowed to resume to school after giving birth, the Department of Education has never established clear guidelines on how to manage learner's pregnancy at school. It has never trained SMT members and educators in this regard. Singh and Hamid (2016) found that most teenage mothers regret becoming pregnant while they were in school. The remorse was closely connected to overwhelming initial experiences of parental disapproval of early unplanned pregnancy. Teen mothers indicated that after the initial expression of shock and disappointment, most parents become more supportive Singh and Hamid (2016). Also state that all teenage mothers stressed that they experienced great difficulties managing their personal and schooling responsibilities.

Hoffman and Maynard (2008) noted that the reasons young mothers become pregnant and give birth is correlated with multiple risk factors, these factors include growing up in a single parent family living in poverty or in a high poverty neighbourhood having a low attachment to performance in school and having parent with low educational attainment. Hoffman and Maynard (2008) further explains that more important each of these factors increase not only the risk of teen parenthood but also many other negative outcomes such as poor school performance, weak social skills and low earning potential.

Hoffman and Maynard (2008) also report that young mothers in particular have limited support either from the fathers of their children or from other adults. Among unwed teen parents, only

about 30 % of single teen parents live with adult relatives and less than one-third receive any financial support, including informal support, from the non-residential fathers of their children Hoffman and Maynard (2008). Chigona and Chetty (2008) found that the support teen mothers got from home and school was not enough to facilitate their schooling. They are not considered as learners with special needs, although they need special support to cope with their demanding life of being a mother and a learner (Chigona and Chetty, 2008). Bhana and Mcambi (2013) state that most young mothers cannot cope with being a mother and a learner at school. In addition to the school climate of hostility and shame, their participants found it difficult to cope with the dual demands. Nkabinde (2014) conducted a study on teen mothers which found that being a mother while at school can draw young mothers to the world of prostitution, because they need money to take care of their babies and money to return to school.

Singh and Hamid (2016) indicated that young mothers are facing the challenging situations at school and home, they further explained that the teenage mothers have to endure, provide an impetus for them to express themselves in powerful ways and to show the intention to take control of their future lives. Other evidence, from Chigona, and Chetty (2008), suggests that school's support is critical for both increasing the educational aspirations of young women and addressing gendered poverty and women's marginalized position in society. Vundule, Maforah, and Jewkes and Jordaan (2001) found that teenagers who become mothers are not only more likely to be poor, but are also more likely to perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Mcambi (2010) highlights that being a mother while schooling can have negative impacts on the educational outcome of young mothers at school. She further explains that being a mother and student is not easy as it compromises the educational opportunities for young women in South Africa. Mcambi (2010) also observes that these young mothers face difficulties when trying to cope with their roles as mothers, and the demands of being a student.

Estes (2011) argues that college students have extraordinary demands on their time, and their instructors do not generally expect them to be parents. Some students feel that in fact they are expected to be bad parents, bad students, or both (Estes, 2011). Student-parents often find themselves in a difficult position whereby they have to choose between being a bad parent or a good student, they spend less time with their children and make their schoolwork a priority (Estes, 2011). Quinlivan, Tan, Steele and Black (2004) mention that student mothers typically have lower level of educational occupational aspirations since many of them do not further their study to post graduate level, as they have pressure to get employment in order to support

their children. It becomes a problem to raise a child as a young mother and student, especially at university level, as there are no support systems in place to support student mothers (Quinlivan, et al, 2004). Manne (2005) also indicates that young women start their mothering careers without a strong view of how their lives will turn out.

Boulden (2016) notes that teenage mothers from already socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances are far more unlikely to continue their pregnancies than those from more privileged backgrounds. Boulden (2016) further explains that, in Australia, young mothers are likely to experience discrimination in completing school, and as a result have poor outcomes (Prasai, 2017) notes that teenage pregnancy is higher among those women who have a lower economic status and who have lower educational levels. Similarly, the use of contraceptive devices is lower among teenage mothers in comparison with non-teenage mothers. Prasai (2017) further explains that though there is no association between teenage pregnancy and preeclampsia, her study suggests that teenage women are more vulnerable to gestational hypertension than non-teenage mothers.

Grant and Hallman (2008) collected data on such issues in schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. They strongly believe that there is a high number of young women dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant and does not return to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. They further explain that young women who are the primary caregivers to their children, are also more likely to leave school than are those who have help with their childcare responsibilities Grant and Hallman (2008).

According to SmithBattle (2000), the beliefs that early childbearing leads to poverty permeates our collective understanding, however recent findings reveal that, in the past, teen mothering made sense to the limited life options that precede their pregnancies in the industrialised world. However now young mothers have a freedom to proceed with their studies although they have children (SmithBattle, 2000). Furthermore SmithBattle (2000) indicated that childrearing during teenage years was believed that it can interrupt a young woman's education and her route to adulthood. Thereby curbing success in the labour market. According to Willan (2013), many teenage mothers who return to school, battle to balance motherhood and schooling. However for teenage girls who receive support (childcare, emotional and financial), teenage pregnancy and motherhood can sometimes be balanced with continued schooling, showing that, with supportive interventions, unplanned teenage pregnancy does not necessarily disrupt a girl's future (Willan,

2013). Nkani and Bhana (2016) note that, globally, teenage mothers who become parents are viewed as a vulnerable group, with limited future educational opportunities, often leading to poverty and economic dependency. Nkani and Bhana (2016) further explain that teenage mothers located in the crucible of deep poverty face extreme challenges related to social and economic inequalities and the difficulties related to negotiating care-giving and the demands of school.

Vyskocil (2018) reveals that nearly all student mothers were forced on some occasions to choose between attendance at school and family events. It was difficult to be present at moments which would ensure optimal outcomes in both categories of competing identities (Vyskocil, 2018) further reveals that conflict was experienced by respondents when student mothers were forced to shift into and out of various roles and identities, which made it difficult for student parents to maximize performance in any central area of personal or professional achievement. Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana and Seutlwadi (2012) argue that adolescent pregnancy interferes with young women's educational attainment, resulting in fewer job opportunities for young women. Mchunu et al., (2012) further elaborate that young women got pregnant the first time because they did not understand the risks involved in what they were doing, or did not understand how pregnancy happens.

According to SmithBattle (2000), in the industrialised world, teenage childbearing is now believed to be jeopardising the trajectory to adulthood by interrupting education, thereby curbing success in labour market and beyond. Hoffman and Maynard (2008) find that women who become parents as teenagers are at greater risk of social and economic disadvantage through their lives than those who delay childrearing. They further explain that young women who become teen mothers often face many disadvantages arising from the families and communities in which they live (Hoffman and Maynard, 2008) their families often have a lower average income, their communities many have a fewer public amenities and support systems may be weaker.

Letourneau, Stewart and Barnfather (2004) note that adolescent mothers are prone to live in poor conditions, lack adequate financial resources, suffer high stress, encounter family instability, and have limited educational opportunities. These factors contribute to inadequate parent-child interactions and diminished infant development. Letourneau et al., (2004) suggest that social support is important and can promote successful adaptation for adolescent mothers

and their children. Polit and Kahn (1986) indicated that, in the USA, there is a range of negative consequences associated with teenage parenthood, including high rates of prematurity and other health risks to the infant, and high rates of divorce, educational deficits, and economic hardship for the mother.

According to Jamal (2014), teenage mothers endure many challenges and are at a greater risk of dropping out of school than their non-parenting peers. There are many well documented reasons for dropping out of school. However, there are some teen mothers who remain in school through graduation. Smith (2015), also points out that girls often drop out of school owing to their pregnancy, argues that, owing 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. According to Van Zyl, Van der Merwe and Chigeza (2015), teenage mothers experience factors such as poverty, stigma, loss, and lack of parenting skills during pregnancy and parenting (Van Zyl, Van der Merwe and Chigeza, 2015). They illuminate the complexity of being a child in the house of their parents while having their own child. Positive experiences include their children as a source of meaning and the aspirations they have for their children

Wall-Wieler, Roos, and Nickel (2016) noted that teenage mothers are less likely to complete high school and are more likely to live in poverty they usually have children who frequently experience health and developmental problems. They further explain that teenage mothers experience greater rates of post-partum depression Wall-Wieler et al., (2016)

Sriyasak, Almqvist, Sridawruang and Häggström-Nordin (2018) report that, in Thailand, teenage pregnancy can be seen as a social stigma, which in many cases has a negative impact on the rest of the student's life, as his or her schooling often remains inadequate. Feelings of shame and negative attitudes from teachers contribute to the stigma. Mangeli, Rayyani, Cheraghi and Tirgari (2017) report on Iranian adolescent mothers during the transition to motherhood. An increasing burden of responsibility, experiencing physical problems, receiving insufficient support, inefficiency in the maternal role, emotional and mental distress, and role conflict are the main challenges for Iranian adolescent mothers. It can be difficult for teen mothers to meet the multiple needs of the child, do housekeeping, go to school, and be present in community alongside friends.

As is evident in the discussion above, much of the research on teenage mothers has been carried out in schools. Although some university students fall under the same category, “teenage”, not much attention has been given to their experiences. Although in schools there is a support system in place to support young mothers, there are still more challenges facing student mothers at University. Their situation is even worse because there are no support systems in place to support these young mothers. Most of them are between the ages of 18 and 22 and they are facing same struggle as school girls becoming mothers (Bhana & Mncambi, 2013) stated having a child hinders educational progress, leads to dropping out and forecloses the possibility of educational and economic success.

2.4 Challenges experienced by young mothers in higher institutions

Taukeni (2014) mentions that being a mother and student at the university can be quite difficult. Taukeni (2014) highlights that the main common challenge among the student mothers is the lack of time to manage studying and parenting roles. Other challenges include being angry, lonely, drowsy, restless, skipping lectures, failing some modules and failing to write the first opportunity examination. Harrington (2013) points out that students who are mothers feel pressure to meet the social expectations placed on them as women and mothers whilst they are university students.

Ebrahim (2017) spoke to student moms about their experiences and to advise others who find themselves in a similar position. Ebrahim (2017) further reports that being a student is stressful enough with lectures, assignments, exams and generally finding yourself in a difficult situation. However some women play the role of both student and mother, balancing family and household responsibilities Ebrahim (2017) one student reported that she had her first child at age 19 in second year at university. She further explained, “It was hectic, I would go to varsity, get home, the house would be a mess and I would try and clean up, I’d have to cook supper, then I’d have to do readings for lectures, put the child to sleep.” “Sometimes she wouldn’t sleep through the night. If I had assignments, I’d have to wake up early to do them. During exam time, I would sit in the library all day to study or else at home I would be distracted” (Ebrahim, 2017).

Funiba (2011) observes that University of the Western Cape (UWC), students with children are prohibited from access to the residences, leaving them with no option but to seek alternative

accommodation, where they can remain with their babies or look for childcare support from their relatives. Funiba (2011) further explains that, while there is a growing body of work on the experiences of school-going pregnant and parenting learners, there is little work in the South African context of the experiences of women who are both parents and students at tertiary institutions.

According to Cruse, Gault, Suh and DeMario (2018), the single mothers enrolled in postsecondary education face substantial time demands that make persistence and graduation difficult. The combination of raising a family on their own, going to class, completing coursework, and serious constraints on single mothers' time can force them to make hard choices about their pursuit of higher education (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009). Student mothers experience awkward pauses brought about by pregnant bodies on campus, struggle to navigate strollers in classrooms, and search to find clean and discreet places to feed their babies. Although sometimes subtle, there are constant reminders in the social and physical environment of the university that graduate student parents and their children do not truly belong (Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009).

A study indicated the magnitude of risky sexual behavior, associated factors and parenting practices among unmarried youth in Kea Med University, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Bayessa, 2016). The study found that there are many challenges facing student mothers such as emotional, social and physical transformation that can expose young people to emotional and health vulnerabilities (Bayessa, 2016). In this period of development, young people begin to engage in risky sexual behaviour that put them at high risk of HIV/AIDS and another unwanted pregnancy, abortion, poor school performance, dropping out, conduct disorders and economic problems. According to Naidoo and Kasiram (2006), unplanned pregnancy poses a multiplicity of problems for students and academic institutions. Using an ecosystemic framework, they uncover the range of costs incurred when a student's academic life is disrupted as a result of an unplanned pregnancy (Naidoo and Kasiram, 2006). Naicker (2014) reports that while teenage mothers acknowledged that they have learnt their lesson, teenage mothers they are acquainted with continue to engage in sexual behaviours that are risky. Naicker (2014) further reports that her study revealed that the negative consequences associated with motherhood play a role in bringing change to their prior risky sexual behaviours.

Behboodi Moghadam, Ordibeheshti Khiaban, Esmaeili, and Salsali (2017) at an Iranian university, note that the management of maternal and family affairs by female students in universities in which the motherhood role is not supported is a challenge. They further emphasise that there is a need to emphasize the significance of the roles of mother and student and to provide support and education for gaining skills to play these roles. They further suggest that, policy makers should devise strategies for bringing change to the traditional perspective that motherhood and educational responsibilities cannot be met simultaneously by one person Behboodi et al., (2017). The structure of universities should be family friendly.

Watts, Liamputtong and McMichael (2015) in Australia argue that motherhood brings increased responsibilities, social recognition, and a sense of purpose for young mothers. Despite the positive aspects of motherhood, participants faced challenges that affected their lives. (Watts, et al, 2015) Most often, the challenges included coping with increased responsibilities following the birth of the baby, managing the competing demands of schooling and work and taking care of a baby. Watts et al., (2015) further explain that the young mothers indicated they received good support from their mothers, siblings and close friends, but rarely from the father of their baby and the wider community. Participants felt that teenage mothers are frowned upon by their wider ethnic communities, which left them with feelings of shame and embarrassment, despite the personal perceived benefits of achieving motherhood (Watts, et al, 2015). Haleman (2004) observes that single mothers often conjure images of poor, welfare-dependent, and frequently minority women who lack adequate education and employment skills as well as the motivation to acquire them. She further explains that while this image is largely derived from stereotypes, it continues to affect contemporary views of single motherhood (Haleman, 2004).

According to Swingle (2013), attending college is also often a full-time job that includes changes to ones' lifestyle, such as staying up late to finish papers or other assignments, and rearranging schedules in order to attend class or important out-of-class activities. Swingle (2013) further reports that, given the high levels of responsibility involved in each of these roles, there is no question that being a college student and a parent concurrently can be extremely stressful for college students who are parents. Ajandi (2011) found that many student mothers reported feeling exhausted and knew their time pressures negatively impacted on their relationships with their children and on their studies. Eshbaugh (2011) finds that at Mid-Western University in Iowa, students responded positively to some items regarding young

mothers. Eshbaugh (2011) further explains that other statements showed endorsements of stereotypes. Positivity toward teen mothers was positively related to empathy generally. In Venezuela, Pinilla and Munoz (2005) note that there is evidence that the academic performance of student mothers is lower than that of other groups of university students. In practice, student mothers participate as part-time students, although this category is not officially recognized by most Venezuelan public universities. Furthermore (Pinilla and Munoz, 2005) indicated that almost all the life circumstances of student mothers negatively affect their academic performance.

2.5 Financial issues

According to Adams, Meyers and Beidas (2016) financial issues can be the biggest barrier to many students if they are going to school fulltime. They further explain that, in the past, research has identified a strong relationship between financial strain and probability of graduation. (Adams et al, 2016) specifically, students reported that four out of the five top stressors in their lives involved personal finances, and that these stressors affected their academic progress and performance Adams et al., (2016). Lyonette, Atfield, Behle and Gambin (2015) conducted interviews with student parents, which highlighted the particular problems of the conflicting time demands of being a student and a parent, as well as, in some cases, undertaking paid work and caring for other dependents.

Financial difficulties were also important, especially when childcare costs were an issue. Yang and Bullecer (2016) in their investigations done in the USA with college student mothers, found that student mother respondents experienced financial hardships but this did not stop them from finishing their degree. Yang and Bullecer (2016) further explain that, the timing of their motherhood was related to the stress they experienced and the struggle to perform daily duties as mother and student as well. The respondents had to sacrifice their personal and social needs to prioritise their child and their studies.

2.6 Favourable experiences

Dlamini (2016) saw teenage motherhood as a positive thing, she noted that it taught them responsibility and care. Teenage mothers experienced teenage motherhood differently. Ricco, Sabet and Clough (2009) indicate that the motivations of student-parents for going to college and for completing specific academic tasks appear to be relevant to their parenting attitudes and to their children's student-role attitudes. For Clarke (2015), having children during their teenage years became the motivation for the young mothers' efforts to improve their life chances. All spoke about the importance of being role models for their children, which is indicative of an 'internal locus of control.' They further reported that their children were reported to be well-adjusted and progressing well in equal but different ways academically, vocationally, socially and emotionally. There was a palpable sense of pride and joy when they spoke about their excellent relationships with their children.

Seamark and Lings (2004) stated that, even though young mothers are often seen as agents that promote disorder in the society, not all teenage mothers regret becoming pregnant, Seamark and Lings (2004) find that having a children to provide for and look after seemed to give the women an added impetus in their lives. Most of the women had felt an immediate bonding relationship when the baby was born. They also reflected on the positive effect it had on them, although this was tempered with realism.

Buteau (2007) notes that each young mother, when speaking of the difficulties of balancing all their roles, spoke lovingly of their children and expressed concern for their children's future. Each mother hoped for a successful adult life for her children without all of the struggles she was enduring. Buteau (2007) further explains that however, each mother saw her struggles as an example for her children to learn from and to follow. Each mother intentionally shared her life as a student with her children, practising her class presentations in front of her children, sharing the difficulties in a course or with writing a paper, nervousness over an upcoming exam, happiness with a good grade, and positive comments written on their papers by lecturers. Student mothers felt that, by sharing this information, their children would understand the sacrifices being made, the benefits of hard work, the importance of education, and possibly be inspired to achieve as well. Manalang, Liongson and Bayubay (2016) explain that student mothers used coping strategies in order to surpass this stage, such as praying, seeing their babies as their motivation and inspiration, positive thoughts and ignoring negative things in life.

2.7 Various kinds of kinds of support student mothers receive

Kamara (2017) notes that pregnancy and motherhood continues to score highest among the social related barriers to education. She further emphasises that adequate guidance in parenting, family support, peers' inclusion and financial support may ensure both achievement and create education fulfilment. Stroble (2013) reports that, in the USA, teenage mothers face struggles, challenges and dilemmas, but receive a lot of support and ultimately overcome their struggles because of support from family, community and school. Educators interested in reducing the dropout rate among teen mothers can learn from these findings, which provide reasons for schools to give greater support to teen mothers.

2.7.1 Child fathers' support

Gee and Rhodes (2003) stated that attempts to understand the role of fathers in the lives of adolescent mothers are necessary. Mangino (2008) states that personal support includes the support from the father of the baby, parents, external programmes or services and personal obstacles faced by the teen parent. The author further emphasises the importance of having caring and compassionate leaders in teen parent programmes, as well as teacher-mentors, not only providing support to the teen parent but assisting them in navigating through parenthood, school, employment, and future goals. According to Richter, Chikovore and Makusha (2013), the majority of South Africa's children are not fortunate with regard to a positive father/child relationship. They further argue that it highlights several salient features of fatherhood in the country, particularly low rates of marriages and father absence from households. Mcambi (2010) highlights that the student mothers struggle to raise their children single-handedly without a support of the fathers of their children. Swartz and Bhana (2009) argue that, in view of this, a father's presence and involvement in the lives of children is a critical issue for social policy and programmes. At the same time, a detailed understanding of the nature and form of fatherhood in the local context is necessary

DeVito (2010) further reports that the mothers may also feel discouraged to discover that, instead of living "happily ever after" with the father of their child and sharing the responsibilities of infant care with him, their relationship with the father may become more distant, less reliable, and, in some cases, dissolve. Nevertheless, many adolescent mothers may continue to hope that their relationship with their infant's father continues, even if it only serves to allow their new born to have a father in his or her life.

Richter, Chikovore and Makusha (2013) noted that men may not wish or be prepared to take on the added responsibility for children and family and may thus prefer not to acknowledge paternity. According to Richter and Morrell (2008), men are good for children, and children are good for men. But many fathers abandon their children or fail to provide for their safety or their emotional and financial needs. They further explain that the efforts to improve the care, protection, and education of children need to acknowledge the many ways that fathers can be involved in their children's lives and the many men who can provide fatherly support and protection for children.

Steyn (2015) spoke with young expecting parents about fathers and the vital role they must play in a baby's wellbeing from the start. Furthermore Steyn (2015) states that it is no secret that fathers in South Africa are largely absent and, even if they are around, pregnancy may feel like a time that doesn't really involve them as they don't have a physical role to play. Steyn (2015) further reported that if mothers feel emotionally supported during pregnancy they are less likely to experience postpartum depression. Fathers who accept their partners' changing figures and bond with the pregnancy are more likely to bond with their new babies and mothers are more likely to have fewer body and self-esteem issues during pregnancy.

According to Chigona and Chetty (2008), in most cases the situation of the teen mothers is worsened because the fathers of their children play no role in the children's upbringing.

2.7.2 Institutional support

The report by Stephens (2017) indicated that the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal undertakes to support all pregnant students as best as possible to enable completion of the academic programme within the limits of available resources. Each case will be handled with sensitivity and on its own merits. The support offered by the University is limited to what is outlined in this guidelines document as access to information, psycho-educative programmes, life skills training, personal and career counselling, academic advice, and limited medical services via the Campus Clinics and State Clinics. Speaking to student mothers, despite the documented policy, I realised that the majority of student mothers are unaware about the policy in place to protect and guide them, further details indicated in the data analysis (Stephens, 2017).

In South Africa unfortunately we are very behind in terms of services, unlike Western countries where young mother are supported by institutions. These findings concur with Mareau (2012), who reports that some Western universities provide some specific provision, such as an on-site nursery or the services of a childcare coordinator. As well as providing some specific provision, others favour an integrated, mainstreamed approach to student parents (and sometimes to students with other types of caring responsibilities). It makes it easier for student mothers to focus on their studies if they are supported very well by the institution. She further reports that the emotional aspects of being a student parent are often foregrounded in their stories. Student mothers discuss their mixed feelings, talking of the benefits of gaining a degree for themselves and for their children, yet simultaneously fearing that they were not 'good enough' to do their best at both. Cruse et al. (2018) argue that expanded support for single mothers in institution would allow more women to consider and complete college degrees and enjoy economically more secure futures. Single student mothers have much greater time demands and distribute their time differently than other women in college. The authors further explain that single mothers in college spend much more time providing care and doing housework, and more time in paid employment, than women students without children.

Teenage mothers cannot deal with their situation alone and seek support from all sides to overcome their challenges. Stroble (2013) recommends various successful factors that can contribute to their success, such as young parenting programme classes that provide thorough childcare assistance and that extend through college, and supportive school personnel, especially teachers. White (2008) suggests that there is a significant need to provide a child-friendly space for student mothers to bring their children when they need to be at college after hours. White (2008) further states that the students (especially the sole parents) encounter extra pressure when they need to return to College in the weekends or in the late afternoons and evenings to visit the library or computer suites to find resources or to study and complete assignments.

In the USA, Karp, Osche and Smith (2016) provide useful information about support programmes for student parents. They further explain that despite myriad challenges, these parents are motivated to stay in school by their hopes for a better life for themselves and their children. They report that they know that a bachelor's degree will give them a better chance at a family-sustaining income, and a more secure pathway out of poverty for both generations.

Goldrick-Rab and Sorensen (2010) report a growing body of experimental evidence that providing social, financial, and academic supports to vulnerable community college students can improve achievement and attainment. Goldrick-Rab and Serensen (2010) state that opportunities for higher education can be both a preventative measure to promote family stability, by encouraging young people to have high hopes for the future and to avoid early family formation and a transformative one, by strengthening the assets of families once they have formed. The benefits of higher education also appear to be transmitted across generations, further increasing its returns.

2.7.3 Support student mothers receive at universities in the African context

According to Berg and Mamhute (2013), at the University of Zimbabwe there is a large numbers of pregnant students that have failed to write their examinations because they gave birth during the examination period. No arrangements were made to enable them to take their examination after giving birth. They further argue that, given that in most African cultures women are expected to subordinate their needs and desires to those of their children and families, students with infants have to grapple with the roles of motherhood and studentship. Their recommendations were formulated to assist student mothers and pregnant students with the necessary support which is essential to create a caring learning environment for these students. Maluli and Bali (2014) note that, in contrast to their discussions with teachers and other students, mothering and pregnant students always looked tired, restless and sleepy during class sessions.

Mwangi-Chemnjor (2012) states that in Kenyan public universities there is a lack of support to student parents. She note that there is a little effort from the university, but that the provision of housing, childcare and having a community association that looks out for the student parents were mentioned as a possibility of the role of the university in support services.

Despite the lack of support at university in many African countries, Maluli and Bali (2014) found that, in Cameroon, girls have the right to negotiate the duration of their maternity leave with their school management, and can arrange for extra classes so that they do not lag behind in their school work during the agreed period of absence from school.

2.7.4 Peer support

Tauken (2014) strongly recommends that there should be student mothers' group support within the university student support services on campus in order to alleviate some of the stress, isolation and loneliness expressed in the research. Meehan (2015) suggest that it very important to have a campus pro-life support group at colleges that can organise and arrange a baby shower for expectant student mothers. Besides providing practical gifts that ease the financial strain, a shower provides great psychological support. One student, who helped with Samantha's shower at "the busiest time of the semester," remarked that: "Seeing Sam's face and how happy she was surrounded by friends and family made it all worth it" (Meehan, 2015).

According to DeVito (2010), adolescent mothers also need support from peers who understand and can identify with their new role as a parent. Peer relationships and friendships are very important during adolescence, and being part of a group provides adolescents with a sense of acceptance, socialisation, and stability. The responsibilities of parenthood, however, are not what adolescent mothers expected, and they may feel more confused and overwhelmed as they begin to realize that becoming a parent is more than just "playing house."

2.7.5 Family support

Sriyasak, Almqvist, Sridawruang and Häggström-Nordin (2018) report that the mother of a teenage mother is the primary source of caregiving, and functions as a co-parent. Pinilla and Munoz (2005) indicate that the only circumstance that contributes positively to the performance of a student mother is the help provided by her extended family in taking care of her children. The fact that student mothers are able to participate in higher education is mainly due to the help they receive from their extended family.

2.7.6 Government support

The majority of young mothers in South Africa receive social grants from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Hodes, Toska and Gittings (2016) state that adolescent mothers map out how they spend their child support grant. Food was the biggest expenditure, followed by nappies, transport to fetch medicines at the clinic, and airtime to communicate with babies' fathers.

2.8 Managing both roles of being a mother and student

Bailey (2011) indicates that the dual roles of being a mother and a student presents challenges and rewards for each teenage mother. The women often experience overlap or collision between the two roles and the navigation of the role collision prompts the women to develop strategies to address these challenges. Klein, Richardson, Grayson, Fox, Kramarae, Pollard and Dwyer (2014) report that student-parents have many unique responsibilities that they must balance and it is important to provide a resource that will help them to navigate both roles. Manalang et al. (2016) voice concerns over student mothers' complex schedules that mean that sometimes their child was left for the relatives to care for. Manalang et al. (2016) further state that most of the student mothers had shared that they felt disconnected from their child because they're not always with their child. Swingle (2013) suggests that it is important for institutions to help student parents to navigate their multiple roles in a way that will allow them to complete their education. Buteau (2007) also notes the patience that all young mother express, the idea being that any stress they feel trying to balance their many roles is temporary and tolerable because the rewards will be great. The ability to see the "bigger picture" or "the other side" and be patient while working towards that goal is an inner strength each participant drew upon to continue to balance her many roles. Moreau and Kerner (2012) report that student parents face a number of major difficulties due to their dual status as students and parents, including in terms of retention, attainment, finances and in relation to juggling the conflicting demands of parenthood with studying.

Chauke (2013) reports the difficulties faced by teenage mothers in balancing schooling and motherhood, the negative attitude by educators towards teenage mothers, the negative attitude of peers, the lack of extra lessons or catch up programmes for teenage mothers, the lack of optional tasks or tests for teenage mothers, the lack of counselling and support for teenage mothers, and the lack of structures for teenage mothers. As in the evidence above, the young mothers in schooling face different challenges in trying to balance both roles, of being a mothers and a student (Chauke, 2013). Evidence from many research studies thus shows the lack of support from lecturers and from university.

The study by Williams (2007) argues that institutional discourses and practices place graduate students who are mothers in untenable and irreconcilable positions between "mom" and "student," between "family" and "the academy," between "self" and "success." The findings by Lynch (2008) show that respondents, by and large, embrace the ideals of culturally

appropriate motherhood and strive to be ‘good mothers’, often taking time away from their studies to have and/or care for children. Lynch (2008) mentions that students’ mothers who lack economic and/or emotional support are known to be at a higher risk for attrition

2.9 Theoretical framework

In this section the theoretical framework for the study exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students is discussed. The theoretical framework that is utilised in this study draws on Burr’s (2015) social constructivism theory and Connell’s theory (2013) on gender and power. This framework is useful to explore the overall experiences of being a mother and a student at university, both favourable and challenging, the kinds of support student mothers receive to progress with their studies, and how student mothers balance the academic demands and parenting whilst at university. The theories functioned towards interpreting the collected data.

2.9.1 Social constructivism

Drawing from social constructivism, Burr (2015) states that the prevailing discourses of femininity often construct women as nurturing, close to nature, emotional, negatively affected by their hormones, empathic and vulnerable. Burr further explains that from this is it is only short step to the recommendation that women are particularly able to care for young children, and that they should do so. In most African communities, care for a child or childrearing is a women responsibility. In South Africa we have a growing number of single parents, meaning that young women are left with the burden to raise their children (Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides, 2009). They state that it is largely girls who bear the consequences of having children and, when unmarried, they and their families shoulder the financial burden. This theory seek to understand how these young women juggle this role of motherhood and studentship. Lupton and Fenwick (2001) note that there is a substantial sociological literature exploring the experiences of mothers and the transition to motherhood of new mothers and the ways in which ‘good mothers’ are defined, both by women themselves and by experts and texts on parenting.

2.9.2 Gender and power

Connell (2013) pointed out that hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal social order works. There is no femininity that is hegemonic, in the sense that the dominant form of masculinity is hegemonic among men. Evidence from (participants) student mothers shows that most men feel superior to the women. Most student mothers felt being controlled by their child's fathers. Jewkes et al. (2009) indicated that mostly women are still in a subordinate positions. Men find it acceptable for women to beg them for help even if it is their responsibility to care for their children. Jewkes et al. (2009) further stated that young women's subordinate position in the gender and social hierarchy constrains their ability to make real choices around pregnancy. Furthermore, being a mother is perceived to be a problem that limits the life opportunities of young women and, in so doing, contributes to gender inequality and perpetuates the subordinate position of women.

2.9.3 The provider masculinity

Hunter (2010) argues out that the inability today of many men to achieve unnumzana "men" status, through work, marriage and to fulfil a "provider" role is the context in which expressions of masculinity that celebrate numerous sexual conquests must be understood. This "tradition" in the early 20th Century of provider love is enmeshed in a set of profoundly important gender expectations that came to hinge on men's rapidly growing dependence on wage labour at a time of racial rule. Hunter (2010) pointed out that a man fostered provider love by paying ilobolo and subsequently supporting a wife (or wives); in turn a woman contributed love by maintaining the marital home. It is crucial not to ignore the importance of the father and their role to support their children and student mothers. While student mothers focus on their studies they need financial and emotional support from the father.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the relevant literature for my study on the experiences of motherhood amongst university students. Much of the research on young mothers have been carried out in schools, hence the review draws heavily on research on teenage mothers in schools. I have also discussed the theoretical framework used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the research design and methodology that was used to generate data for the study that explores the experiences of being a student and mother at university. It also provides description of the research site in which the study was located and conducted, at University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood campus. The sampling technique that was used is also discussed. A discussion on individual and groups interviewing procedures is then presented, as this technique was used to generate data for the study. The data analysis process and ethical considerations are addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study.

The critical questions that guide this study are as follows

1. What are the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university?
2. What kinds of support do student mothers receive?
3. How do student mothers balance the demand of academic work and parenting at university?

In the next section of this chapter I elaborate further on the qualitative approach and relevance in this study.

3.2 Qualitative research approach

In this study I adopted a qualitative approach because it is most appropriate for this study. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), a qualitative approach allows one as a researcher to get the inner experience of their participants. I intended to get in-depth experiences of motherhood among university students. Since my research came about as a result of my observation of the growing number of students who were becoming mothers at university of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood campus, I therefore become curious and desired to explore how these young mothers balance between studying full-time and motherhood. As Corbin and

Strauss (2008) explain, qualitative researchers have a natural curiosity that leads them to study the world that interest them. My curiosity led me to be interested to investigate how student mothers balance academic demands and parenting at university. This choice, of a qualitative approach, meant that I had to ensure it met the relevant standards. I carefully collected the data from the participants through the use of recordings and studying them to explore their experiences. As mentioned by Neuman (2014), work with qualitative data must involve documenting real events, recording what people say with words, gestures and tone, observing specific behaviours, studying written documents. These are all concrete aspects of the world. My work as a researcher was to mediate and get them to share their experience of motherhood at university.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that qualitative researchers do not want general discussion between themselves and participants, but rather the opportunity to connect with them at a human level. This allowed me to understand my participants and connect with them to understand their everyday experience. According to Maree (2012), the qualitative researcher often approaches reality from a constructionist position, which allows for multiple meanings of individual experience. This is collected from people immersed in the setting of the everyday life in which the study is framed (Maree, 2012).

3.3 Research paradigm

This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm which is closely linked to qualitative research design. Neuman (2014) suggests that the interpretivist researcher must often use participant observation and field research. These techniques require that researcher spend many hours in direct personal contact with those being studied to acquire an in-depth understanding of how they create meaning in everyday life. This technique of spending time and in direct contact with them assisted me as a researcher to understand the real life experiences of student mothers

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), an interpretive researcher is concerned with how people interact and get along with each other in general. They further explain that the interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings, in order to arrive at understanding and interpretation of how people create and maintain their lives. This paradigm helped me to

understand in depth both the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university.

According to Neuman (2014), for interpretive researchers the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. An interpretive researcher wants to learn what is meaning or relevant to people being studied, or how individuals experience daily life. The researcher does this by getting to know a particular social setting and seeing it from the point of view of those in it (Neuman, 2014). The researcher shares the feeling and interpretation of the people he or she studies and sees things through their eyes.

Cohen et al. (2011) further explain that the interpretive researcher begins with individuals and sets out to understand their interpretation of the world around them. Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations. Investigators work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them. The data thus yielded will include the meaning and purpose of those people who are their sources. I engaged myself, fully aware of the fact that findings of this study are only a reflection of what happened in this particular research site and at the particular moment of the study, and could not be generalised to the experience of other student mothers in other universities.

3.4 Research site

“The Edgewood campus is situated in Pinetown with easy access to the N3 highway and approximately 20 minutes’ drive from Durban. The campus offers sophisticated and attractive facilities to a growing number of Education students and is close to all major amenities. The School provides initial and in-service teacher education and offers university higher degrees in a wide range of specialisms in education as well as carrying out research and consultancy. The School is actively engaged with policy-making in education in South Africa and contributes to the international profile of the university through participation in international conferences, teaching international students, hosting international visitors and publishing in international books and journals”. (Admin, 2017).

While there were three other campuses at University of Kwa-Zulu Natal surround Durban in the vicinity of this research site, I purposefully adopted to conduct my study at the current site because of the following reasons:

Firstly, this site which is a university where I study and it is where I noticed the growing number of students' pregnancies, which triggered my curiosity and interest in wanting to explore how these female students who are mothers manage both being a full-time student at university and being mothers.

Secondly, the research site where conducted the study, at Edgewood campus it where I study it meant that I would be able to have constant contact with my participants and also be able to set up individual and group interviews with the participants.

Thirdly, I chose this site because it is most convenient and enabled me to find appropriate people for my investigation to answer my research questions, my participants are more mature and I did not need permission from their parent to interview them.

3.5 Research venues

According to Horrocks and King (2010), it is important that, having secured a venue, the room must be arranged comfortably, seating participants in a way that ensures everyone has eye contact with the researcher and, ideally, with all other participants. I then choose the research commons conference room at Edgewood campus to conduct interviews. It was a most appropriate and convenient quiet space. The venue had a good atmosphere for student mothers to feel free to speak and share their experiences with me and it was good for audio recording. Some participants agreed to be interviewed at their residences where they stay and where they feel comfortable to speak. Our conversation was able to be finished in one scheduled appointment. I spent up to an hour with most student mothers at the venues getting to know each other, encouraging, creating friendly environment and trust.

3.6 Data source

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), one of the virtues of qualitative research is that there are many alternative sources of data. The researcher can use interviews, observation, videos, documents, drawings, diaries, newspapers, biographies, and other sources. In this study, I purposefully selected 20 female student mothers who were the main sources of the data in this

chapter and they were suitable to explore experiences of being student and a mother at university. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that, in any study, the researcher can use one or several of these sources alone or in combination, depending upon the problem to be investigated.

3.7 Sample and sampling method

Sampling is a major aspect in a qualitative approach. According to Neuman (2008), for the researcher who use the qualitative approach, their primary goal is to get representative samples, or a small collection of units from a much larger collection or population, such that the researcher can study the smaller group and produce accurate data. At the beginning, the study was not intended to use a focus group but, when the opportunity came, it was adopted. Furthermore Neuman (2008) indicates that researchers should focus on the specific techniques that will yield highly representative samples. In a qualitative approach, a small sample may work well in getting the in-depth critical information I needed for my study.

3.7.1 Purposive sampling

According to Creswell (2017), a sampling strategy is the decision as to whom to select as a participant (or site) for the study, the specific type of sampling strategy and the size of the sample to be studied. A decision need to be made about who or what should be sampled. The samples for this study consisted of 20 female student who are mothers and studying fulltime at UKZN (further details is provided in a below section). I chose a purposeful sampling strategy. Creswell (2017) further describes that type of sampling strategy as meaning that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.

3.7.2 Samples

The sample for this study consisted of 20 participants who are all student mothers and fully registered at University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood campus (School of Education) using snowball sampling. All 20 participants are Black. The reason for using these 20 participants in this study is that they were willing to be part of this study and share their experiences of juggling being a student and motherhood. Each participant was scheduled according to their availability. The study adopted a qualitative approach, in which a small sample size is a typical characteristic. According to Davies and Hughes (2014), a small sample has many advantages, but warns that there is a seductive appeal about being able to get involved in face to face encounters as quickly as possible. Davies and Hughes (2014) further explain that allowing the interviewee to talk at length with the researcher rather than merely responding to a series of pre-planned questions suggests that the material obtained will be in some way closer to the reality of the interviewee's life.

Table 1: Summary of participants

No	Pseudonym	Ages	Year of study	No of children	Residence	Marriage status
1.	Dane	23	4 th year	1	Off campus	Single
2.	Andile	23	4 th year	1	Off campus	Single
3.	Andiswa	23	3 rd year	1	Off campus	Single
4.	Nonhla	22	4 th year	2	Off campus	Single
5.	Sbusi	22	4 th year	1	Off campus	Single
6.	Shezi	22	2 nd year	1	Off campus	Single
7.	Dee	21	4 th year	1	Off campus	Single
8.	Syathokoza	22	4 th year	1	Student residence	Single
9.	Zine	22	4 th year	2	Student residence	Single
10.	Phili	23	4 th year	1	Student residence	Single
11.	Thobile	22	4 th year	1	Student residence	Single
12.	Thando	21	4 th year	2	Student residence	Single
13.	Nosipho	22	2 nd year	2	Student residence	Single
14.	Daluxolo	22	2 nd year	1	Student residence	Single
15.	Zameka	20	2 nd year	1	Student residence	Single
16.	Nokuzola	23	2 nd year	1	Student residence	Single
17.	Sinethemba	20	3 rd year	1	Student residence	Single
18.	Xolisile	24	4 th year	2	Student residence	Single
19.	Nomsa	23	2 nd year	1	Student residence	Single
20.	Mathombi	23	3 rd year	1	Student residence	Single

3.7.3 Sampling techniques

The excellence of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the suitable methodology, but in appropriate sampling techniques which assist researcher to gather sample. According to Yin (2011), the primary purpose of sampling is the selection of suitable populations (or ‘elements’) so that the focus of the study can be appropriately researched. First, the participants in this research were approached individually. After I had accessed a few participants, they referred me to their peers. I discovered that student mothers had formed their own social group. Then the study ended up adopted snowball sampling method to access relevant participants.

3.7.4 Snowball sampling

This study adopted a snowball sampling technique. Neuman (2008) proposes that the researcher must begin with a one small case and then, based on the information about interrelationships from that case, identify other cases. Neuman (2008) further explains that it is based on an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it rolls on wet snow and picks up additional snow. Snowball sampling is a multistage technique. It begins with one or a few people or cases and then spreads out on the basis of links to the initial case. I approached a few student mothers and got their contact details; they were all willing to be a part of the study. They ended up referring me to their friends who are student mothers and who were willing to participate in the study. I got more sample through referrals as they know each other as peers. It was more convenient for me to get a sample for my study through referral samples, to answer my research question. Creswell (2017) suggests that a researcher identifies cases of interest from people who are known to be information rich. Since I had no database for any student mother, snowball sampling was very useful to recruit the suitable participants for this study.

3.8 Methods of data collection

For this study, I had to make careful deliberations as to which data collection approaches to employ that would produce richer data without at the same time triggering harm to the research process as a whole. It was for that reason that I decided to use two methods, individual interviews and focus groups discussions, for data collection. Although I did not intend to collect my data through the use of focus groups interview from the beginning, my assumption being that being a mother and a student was a private matter, when I embarked on the field I found

the student mothers were in social groups and willingly to be interviewed in groups. Thus the study ended up adopting these two types of data collection methods. When I got the opportunity to interview them as a group, I grabbed that opportunity to collect rich data. In using qualitative research methodologies, individual and focus groups interviews can be integrated.

Open ended questions were utilised during interviews. According to Cohen (2011), open ended questionnaires may be more appropriate in a qualitative approach, where rich and personal data is sought, as they can capture the specificity of a particular situation. According to Cohen (2011), open ended questions are useful if the possible answers are unknown, if the questionnaire is exploratory or if there so many possible categories that a closed question would contain an extremely long list of options. They also enable respondents to answer as they wish and are particularly suitable for investigating complex issues, to which simple answers cannot be provided. This allowed my participants to be free and answer questions freely without being restricted by closed questions, but were guided by semi structured questions.

Semi-structured interviews were utilised during interviews as this approach best suited the research question. According to Maree (2007), a semi structured interview is commonly used in research projects to gain data from the selected participants. It seldom spans a long time period and usually requires the participants to answer a set of predetermined questions.

Fox, Hunn and Mathers (2002) explain that semi-structured interviews are very useful for collecting a qualitative study. These involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover. They further described that the open-ended nature of the question defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail without being restricted by closed questions. That gave me a great opportunity to obtain rich information during the interviews with student mothers. The authors propose that, if the interviewee has difficulty answering a question or provides only a brief response, the interviewer can use cues or prompts to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further. In this case I encouraged student mothers to give me details of their experiences. During our interview sessions I used to probe to seek clarification in case student mothers gave me incomplete answers. Fox, Hunn and Mathers (2002) further suggest that in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer also has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response, to clarify answers or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee.

As an interpretive researcher I was attentive to the responses of my participants so that I could identify and explore new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied. According to Punch (2013), in semi-structured interviews the respondent is asked a series of pre-established questions. In this study, these which worked very well to explore their experiences of being a mother and a fulltime student.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions were utilised in this study. The target was 20 female full-time students. The study used two focus groups; four participants were selected as members of the first focus group discussion, three participants were the members of the second focus group discussion, and the total participants interviewed in focus groups were seven. Thirteen participants were interviewed during individual interviews. All together the total number of participants were 20, this includes individual interviews and focus groups discussions. The intention from the beginning was to use individual interviews. However, participants insisted to be interviewed together with their friend, I then used that opportunity to conduct focus group discussions and it worked very well.

3.8.1 Individual interviews

Cohen (2011) defines individual interviews as an inter-view, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. After I had carefully selected participants to explore the experiences of being a student and a mother at university, I then proceeded with face to face interviews. Walliman (2011) suggests that face to face interviews can be carried out in a variety of situations. After student mothers had agreed to take part on the study, I therefore scheduled individual interviews so that we had a one-on-one session to ensure they felt as comfortable to speak as possible. As King and Horrocks (2010) state, in qualitative research interviews there is often a face to face verbal interchange where one person (the interviewer) attempts to obtain information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons. They further suggest that it would therefore be important to know as much as possible about the context of a particular encounter in order to produce knowledge that acknowledges and understands perspectives. This strategy was very good, the reason to choose individual interviews was to get student mothers very comfortable and speak freely without being listened to by their peers. They were free to express their feeling and their experience and the most important thing was to gain trust.

After I approached my participants, I took the cell phone numbers they are using for Whatsapp; we communicated through Whatsapp and scheduled our interviews through social media. To create a friendly tone with them, I used to call them 'gals' during our communication. Before we started I ensured that I created a good atmosphere with my participants. During our interview I got more than what I had expected, as student mothers felt free to share their experience of being a mom and a student at university. Most of the highlights were positive experiences, as all of them were more encouraged in life and grown and looking forwards towards the future. Being a student and a mother never held them back but instead it motivated them in a positive manner. We had what felt like 'girl talk'; some opened up about the situation they are facing when it comes to the relationships with their child's father and their situations at homes. They shared with me their strategies to overcome challenges in life and they left me feeling motivated and looking forward to seeing them in future and the kind of women they will be. Some of the fourth year students promised to invite me to their graduation.

3.8.2 Focus group discussions

According to Cohen (2011), the use of focus groups is growing in educational research. Horrocks and King (2010) agree that the focus group is widely utilised as a qualitative data gathering technique. In this case, it suited the study to use this as a way of collecting valuable data from student mothers. Dilshad and Latif (2013) confirm this by stating that the focus group interview is one of the most valuable tools for collecting qualitative data. According to Hennink (2013), focus groups aim to gain a broad range of views on the research topic over a 60-90 minute period and to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to express their views. Hennink (2013) further suggests that focus groups must provide a comfortable non-threatening environment. It is important to provide participants with a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs and attitude in the company of people from similar socio-economic, ethnic and gender backgrounds.

Although I was not initially intending to generate data through the use of focus group interviews, when the opportunity came I used it. Student mothers were already grouping themselves and they socialised together, according to their level of study. They choose a venue where they felt comfortable to speak and share their experiences as they invited me to their residence where we conducted interviews. I still ensured that the venues were arranged accordingly, our sitting arrangement were in order and the recording facility was working

properly to capture all their voices at same time, ensuring that all student mothers were free to express their views. I probed during our discussion to encourage active engagement during each session and to keep the conversation going, at the same time ensuring that the purpose of the study was fulfilled and critical questions were answered. They were friends, doing the same level of study, with similar social backgrounds and all single mothers sharing experiences.

Cohen (2011) suggest that, in a focus group, participants must interact with each other rather than with the interviewer, such that the views of the participants can emerge – the participants' rather than the researcher's. It was the best strategy because it allowed student mother to share their experience and views with each another vice versa. During our interviews I noticed that student mothers shared similar experiences and challenges, for example Syathokoza will start to make a point and Zama will finish off the sentence, enabling me as researcher to facilitate the group and to let the data emerge during our discussion. Horrocks and King (2010) state that the aim of focus groups is interactive discussion and the sharing of understanding and views, while at the same time ensuring that the data generation is able to meet the aim of the research. During our discussion, I guided student mothers through the use of semi-structured interviews to ensure all of them are in a same page. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002), the focus group interview strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information. This strategy helped the student mothers to open up and share experiences and challenges they are facing, and strategies to overcome them.

The focus group interviews allowed me to have a better understanding of the participants' feelings and points of view about issues of being a mother and a fulltime student, how they balance a motherhood role and being a full-time student. Focus group interviews also create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants. However, there were different experiences between those who stay in university residences and those staying at home.

This strategy worked and the majority of the student mothers began to speak openly about issues of motherhood. As the interview progressed, it appeared the participants became more relaxed and comfortable in my presence. They then began to talk about their life experiences and they expressed their thoughts and reflections with more ease. During the interview, they sometimes often laughed at each other's comments and agreed each other. In an attempt to create a relaxed atmosphere in the group, I urged participants to respect and tolerate each

other's opinions and comments to provide in-depth information. Luckily they were all friends and knew each other very well in both groups.

3.8.3 During interviews

It was observed that during our discussion student mothers express their psychological and emotional feelings. I noted some were emotionally affected about the situation they were facing as a full-time student and a mother. In some case they were talking non-stop. Owing to the lack of support structures for student mothers, some admitted they felt their needs were ignored. During our discussions they mentioned that they found someone whom they can talk to and understand their situation. Their participation came with hope that their voices can be heard and perhaps in future their condition could be understood.

The table below shows the merits of using both individual and focus group interviews (Neuman, 2008; Horrocks & King, 2010)

Table 2: Merit of individual interviews and its benefits

Numbers	Merit	Merit explained
1.	Privacy	Participants can able to express their feelings in private
2.	Comfort	Participants often feel comfortable when they are alone
3.	Trust	The atmosphere when it very good developed trust between participant and a researcher r
4.	Distractions	Research interviews between the two people can eliminate the number of distractions
5.	Attention	Face to face interviews have the highest response rate and permit the longest questionnaire and interviewer also observe the surroundings and non-verbal communication and visual aid. Interviewer can ask complex questions and use extensive probes Neuman (2008)

Table 3: Merits of focus group interviews and its benefits

Suggested by Horrocks and King (2010)

Numbers	Merit	Merit explained
1.	Explore	Difference between the group participants is situ with them and because of participants reflect upon each other ideas ensure that data is organic /interconnected Horrocks and King (2010)
2.	Encourages	Focus group open conversation about embarrassing subject and facilitate the expression of ideas and experiences that might be left underdeveloped in an individual interviews
3.	Highlight	The respondents attitude priorities, language and framework of understanding
4.	Attitude	The use of focus group interviews can open up an opportunity to obtain opinions or attitude at another level. The data produced in group interviews can reveal the social and cultural context of people's understandings and beliefs. Horrocks and King (2010)
5.	Snowballing	When member of the group nurtures a comment, the comment often generate a chain responses from other participants in the group
6.	Motivation	Participants are motivated to share their experiences

Phenomenological

When applied with a purpose in mind, group interviews are not used either to generate provisional data or provides additional data, rather the data collected maybe only source of information potentially providing detailed insight about specific phenomena and experiences Horrocks and King (2010)

3.9 Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis was completed qualitatively. According to Maree (2007), qualitative data analysis involves a range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected from the people and situations that they are investigating. The day after I collected individual interviews, I proceeded with the data transcription. When I was analysing the transcription from interviews and before I completed the whole interviews with participants, I made a note of any issues that emerged during analysis. Cohen (2011) argues that early transcription of data allows a progressive understanding of the emerging themes. Cohen (2011) further states that qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. This is a crucial stage, to identify themes emerge from the data.

According to Cohen (2011), there are various ways to analyse and present the data. Either way one does it, it should be suitable for the purpose of the study. With this in mind, the study adopted a thematic analysis of data, an extensively used method in qualitative research. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis is very useful as it provides a flexible and useful research tool which can potentially provide a richly detailed and intricate amount of data. In this study, data was organised to identify common themes, patterns, differences and similarities, which I used to present the findings Davies and Hughes (2014)

Braun and Clarke (2006) set out six phases to guide data analysis, as used for this study. They argue that thematic analysis can produce sophisticated, interpretative analyses that go beyond the obvious content. This helped me to structure accordingly the data analysis for this study. Each phase was related to my research question and directly responded to the critical research questions and assisted me to make sense of the data collected.

I then proceeded with the six thematic analysis stages. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it should not be viewed as a linear model, where one cannot proceed to the next phase without completing the prior phase (correctly); rather analysis is a recursive process. Each phase was carefully analysed as it required to meet the standard for a qualitative data analysis.

The first phase is familiarisation with data. Braun and Clarke (2006) mention that it common to all forms of qualitative analysis that researchers must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with, their data reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytical observations. Since I collected data myself, it was very helpful to me because I gained familiarity with the data, as I was collecting data through individual interviews and focus group discussions. Transcription of the data enabled me to further familiarise myself with data although it was time consuming. Nevertheless, the time spend on the data transcription was worth it as it informed the first stage of analysis and assisted me to articulate a clear understanding of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In addition, in transcribing data I paid close attention to details and this enhanced my interpretive and reading skills, which are required when analysing data. Transcription of data is determined to be an important phase of data analysis in a qualitative study, since it allows for construction of meaning.

The second phase involves coding, according to Braun and Clarke (2006). It a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis for through comparison. This involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the broad research questions guiding the analysis. The authors further explain that coding is not simply a method of data reduction but is also an analytic process. So codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), when I completed transcription. I studied my transcriptions to familiarise myself with data. After reading and familiarising myself with data, I programmed some ideas about the contents of the data and some interesting features of the data. I began the process of coding which involved arranging data into meaningful groups. When coding data, one has to systematically work through the whole data set, paying appropriate attention to each data item and identifying important features within the data that may form the basis for recruiting patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I coded by hand and highlighted as many potential patterns as possible. Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011) stress that it is important to identify the key themes in the text,

and that themes need to be transformed into codes and aggregated in a code book. I used these techniques in addition to theme identification, including word searches and data reduction techniques.

The third phase involves searching for themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. Searching for the themes is a bit like setting up your codes to identify similarities in the data. They further describe this searching as an active process; the theme is not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes. The researcher ends this phase by collating all coded data relevant data extracts. After all the data had been coded and organised, phase three starts. In this stage I had to organise all the numerous codes into perspective themes and arrange all the appropriate data excerpts within the articulated themes. I had to analyse the codes and see how numerous codes could be assembled to make a theme. As a result, I managed to form some themes and sub-themes. I created various themes for some codes which did not appear to fit in my major themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The fourth phase is reviewing the themes, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), and checking that the themes work in relation to both the coded extract and full data set. They suggest that the researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) further state that it may be necessary to collapse two themes together, to split a theme into two or more themes or to discard the candidate theme altogether and begin again the process of the theme development. As they suggested, I had to refine the themes. This was done through studying all collated extracts for each theme and considering if they formed a sound and consistent pattern. For those that appeared to be incoherent I had to rework them and articulate new themes. I had to go back to my whole data set to establish whether the themes worked in relation to the data set and code any extra data within themes that had been overlooked before the coding phases.

The fifth phase involves defining and naming the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that, in this phase, it requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme. The researcher should ask, what story does this theme tell? And how does this theme fit into the overall story about the data? The authors (*ibid.*) further suggest that the researcher should identifying the essence of each theme and construct a concise, punchy and informative name

for each theme. After obtaining the proper thematic map of data. I had to further define and enhance the themes that I had to present for the analysis and further analyse the data within them. In doing this I had to categorize the essence of what each theme was about and describe the aspect of data that each theme captured. This was done by persistently looking at organised data extracts for each theme and organizing them into an account which was consistent.

The following were identified as themes:

- Restricted time and extra travel
- Financial strain and gain
- No special treatment
- Motivation to excel and inspiration for a greater future
- The role of “baby-daddy”
- Feeling empowered
- Managing both roles

A detailed analysis was particular for each theme in relation to the research questions.

The sixth phase is, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), writing-up. This is an integral element of the analytic process in thematic analysis. Most qualitative research writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and vivid data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualising it in relation to existing literature. After classifying and naming the themes, I had to analyse and write up the research findings. The crucial thing was to present the complex story of data in such a way as to motivate a reader that my research is reliable. It is vital that the analysis provides a clear, consistent, credible, non-repetitive and interesting storyline of the story which the data is telling.

3.10 Ethical issues

Ethics refers to principled sensitivity to the rights of others. While truth is good, it is also essential that respect for human dignity is restored (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Consequently, various institutions of higher learning have to ensure that the manner in which their affiliates conduct research complies with their codes of ethics. The University of

KwaZulu-Natal stipulates that all researchers linked to it have to apply for ethical clearance before they can conduct research. For ethical purposes, I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee in UKZN (Appendix A). Then I applied for gate keeper permission to conduct the study at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal from the registrar (Appendix B). Thereafter, the informed consent letter was given to the research participants (Appendix C). In the letter the purpose of the study was explained, an assurance given that the participants' identities would be protected by using pseudonyms and that confidentiality would be guaranteed. Also included in the letter was the fact that the findings would be reported in a complete and truthful manner. Included in the letter was the consent form where the participants had to sign their willingness to participate. I emphasised that they had a right to withdraw at any stage if they felt they don't want to be part of the study. As suggested by Horrocks and King (2010), the researcher should ensure that participants feel free to withdraw from participation in the study without fear of being penalised. The participants were reminded not to discuss any details of the research interviews with their friends or anyone other than me. After I sent the audio recording of the interviews, I always reminded them to delete it soon after they listened to it.

3.11 Informed consent

According to Horrocks and King (2010), informed consent is a crucial aspect of ethical research practice. Ethical practice emphasises the importance of gaining the informed consent of participants prior to taking part in the research. Informed consent was an important part of the data collection processes. Before conducting any interviews, I communicated with student mothers who were my potential participants. I gave participants a brief background of the study, the breakdown of the study, what the study is about, the benefits of the study, the duration of interviews and the venue where interviews will take place. This was done before they could decide to be a part of the study. As suggested by Horrocks and King (2010), participants should provide consent without any duress or inducement. They further explained that participants should be fully aware of what they are consenting to, when they agree to participate in qualitative interviews (Horrocks & King, 2010). This was done in order to ensure that participants were aware of the numerous aspects that the study was focusing on, before signing any documentation regarding their agreement to become participants. All the informed consent processes done was to ensure that the qualitative interview is a productive and enjoyable experience that holds no unwelcome surprises for student mothers. Consent forms were given to student mothers three days prior to the interview appointments.

3.12 Credibility and trustworthiness of research

An important consideration in the processes and products of any study is to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the research. In this study, audio recording was one of the ways utilised ensure the creditability of this study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), an audio record is an important resources as it quotes the exact words of participants from the original source, to eliminate misinterpretation. Cohen et al. (2002) further state that accuracy in qualitative research is vital, so as far as is possible a check is made that all questions are answered accurately. It is important to allow the participants to check the transcripts and confirm that their voices have been accurately represented. After conducting interviews I immediately listened to the audio record tape to double check whether the critical questions were being answered. Cohen et al. (2002) further explain that catching the meaning and intention are essential, seeing and reporting the situation through the eyes of participants from the narrators' point of view. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2002) emphasise that a qualitative approach requires the researcher to be as honest as possible to the self-reporting of the researched. To maintain the credibility in the study, during transcription I quoted the direct words from participants, not what I thought the answers should be. I also conducted oral presentations of my research in progress to my supervisor and my research colleagues and this has served as a further attempt at credibility and reliability

3.13 Limitations

The challenge I encountered during the data gathering was commitment from my participants, I approached more than 65 student mothers including the referrals. They all agreed to participate in the study without any hesitations, but most of them kept cancelling our appointment. Many were very busy attending classes during the day and in afternoon they were rushing to go back in their homes or catching the bus and going back in their residences, sometimes forgetting our appointments. If not, maybe they had an appointment with their peers to do group work. I had to come up with other plans to get them and it was quite difficult to schedule all of them. I managed finally to interview 20 out of 65 student mothers.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and methodology adopted for this study. There was a discussion of the specific design and methodological choices utilised in this study. The researcher was the main data gathering tool. The data gathering techniques were also elaborated on in this chapter. Data was generated using individual interviews and focus group. Use of these techniques helped to ensure data saturation and triangulation, which are significant tools for rigorous research. Both design and methodology were informed by the critical research questions. It deliberated the different processes used to address the research questions. Ethical principles were upheld throughout the data generation procedure, which ensured that all participants were protected. The next chapter presents a detailed analysis of the data generated and the study's findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse the data of the study. The data in the presentation is obtained from individual and focus group interviews with student mothers at university. Ezzy (2002) argues that the aim of qualitative research is to allow the voice ‘others’ of people being researched. As I allowed the participants’ voices and experiences to be heard, I included direct quotes in order to display the different and similar views and understandings of being a full time student and a mother at university. In qualitative data analysis, the goal of the research is to summarize what is heard or seen using common words, phrase, themes or patterns that enable the understanding and interpretation of emerging themes ,without having to assume what need to be said Maree (2007). Ezzy (2002) further explains that the aim of a good in-depth interview is to obtain the story or interpretation of the person being interviewed. From this perspective, it is important not to try to suggest to a person how you as the interviewer might expect them to respond, but rather for ensuring that the interviewer genuinely listens to the voice of interviewee. This was also important because it allowed the voices of the respondents to be included. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity and to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the 20 study participants.

Detailed analysis of data was generated through individual interviews and focus group discussion. The analysis for this study draws on Burr’s social constructionism theory and Connell’s Gender and Power theory (Burr, 2015; Connell, 2005). Before I embarked on the data analysis I ensured that I relooked at the study research questions and objectives. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2011) state that, before embarking on analysis, the researcher should review the study research questions and objectives to refresh their focus and make sure the analysis is framed to inform these.

The three critical research questions are as follows:

1. What are the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university?
2. What kinds of support do student mothers receive?
3. How do student mothers balance the demands of academic work and parenting at university?

The thematic analysis was utilised to analyse generated data and following themes were formulated:

- Restricted time and extra travel
- Financial strain and gain
- No special treatment
- Motivation to excel and inspiration for a greater future
- The role of “baby-daddy”
- Feeling empowered
- Managing both roles

The three research questions are directly answered in the themes, although there is some degree of overlap. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2011) state that thematic analysis can directly inform one or more of your research questions. I have presented them individually in a particular order for clarity of organisation. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) argue that every researcher should be able to provide a clear, logical rationale for the procedure used to arrange and organize the data.

4.2 Restricted time and extra travel

At the outset of individual and focus group interviews participants were asked the question: What are the challenges of being a student and a mother? I noted that they had different experiences with respect to time and travel. The experiences of student mothers who stayed on campus were very different from those that stayed off campus (including their family homes); each had their own challenges.

The majority of the participants living off-campus felt that they had less time to concentrate on their studies and their baby because they had to do additional travel to ensure that their babies are cared for. Dane expressed some difficulties she experienced

“I am living with her at home and I travel every day as I am not living at res. Yoh my child one week she lives with my sister in Umlazi and one week she is living with my mother. So every week I am travelling 1 week I am going to Umlazi to drop her off and the other I am coming back to Chatsworth it is very difficult.”

Sometimes student mothers expressed feeling stress about being a mother and a student. The extra time needed for travel impacted on their studies. For example, Andile mentioned that she got close to giving up on her studies:

Andile

“The challenges of being a mother and a student is that, hmm, firstly sometimes can make you like you want to quit, sometimes I have to leave campus at around 6pm in the evening that mean I have to arrange someone to take care of my child as he is in grade R, when she comes back from crèche”

As shown above, many student mothers experiences being a full time student and mother to be quite challenging. Similarly, the participants in a study by Taukeni (2014) stressed that being a mother and student at the university can be quite difficult and highlighted that the main challenge among the student mothers is the lack of time to manage studying and parenting roles.

Drawing from Connell’s (2013) theory, Curthoys (1976) has argued that childcare is the basis of the sexual division of labour and that the issue of childcare is the structural basis of feminism. Curthoys (1976) further explains that this overstate the cases but the general important of the issue is undeniable. Curthoys (1976) observes that childcare is not just an issue for women but an issue about men; the notion that caring for young children is not a fit occupation for men is extraordinarily deep seated. Since men have greater control over the division of labour than women, their collective choice is not to do childcare. The student mothers’ responses indicated that the majority of them care for their children and mostly in South Africa we find that women are allocated the responsibility to care for and raise a child.

These challenges often affect the academic performances of student mothers. Pinilla and Munoz (2005) noted that there is evidence shows that the academic performance of student mothers is lower than that of other groups of university students in practice. According to Funiba (2011), at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), students with children are prohibited from access to the residences, leaving them with no option but to seek alternative accommodation, where they can remain with their babies or look for childcare support from their relatives, which might lead them to be often behind with their school work, while still trying to accommodate their children.

As Dane explained, there are more demands on her travelling. Since she gave birth, so, every day after lectures, she had to rush back home and take care of her daughter. She also has to travel from one place to another in trying to get a baby-sitter for her daughter while she is studying. In further discussion with another participant, Andile, she spoke of a similar experience. When she leaves late on campus she has to rush back home and care for her child. When she finishes lectures very late she has to arrange a nanny to care for her child. Andiswa stays at home with her child and parents, she takes public transport every day to campus and she also felt the same way.

Andiswa:

“After school I had to look after him, sometimes I come home around 7pm, my parents sometimes work night shift that means I have to arrange someone to look after him that a problem. As well as university, sometimes I don’t have time to look after him, sometimes I have group work. I have to come over weekends on campus “nakhona.” I have to arrange someone to look after him.”

These findings concur with a report in the Mail and Guardian (Ebrahim, 2017) where the author spoke to student moms about their experiences and to advise others who find themselves in a similar position. Ebrahim (2017), who also interviewed student mothers at university, reported that student mothers mentioned that being a student is stressful enough with lectures, assignments, exams and generally finding yourself in a difficult situation. This report also mentioned that some women manage to play the role of both student and mother, balancing family and household. Lucia one of the participants had explained , ‘It was hectic I would go to varsity, get home, the house would be a mess and I would try and clean up, I’d have to cook supper, then I’d have to do readings for lectures, put the child to sleep.’ Lucia further explained that sometimes she wouldn’t sleep through the night. “If I had assignments, I’d have to wake up early to do them. During exam time, I would sit in the library all day to study or else at home I would be distracted.”

Many student mothers staying at home pointed out that they spend more time travelling from homes to campus after attending lectures they reach home late and tired, they end up not doing their assignment and not submitting their work on time. Even if they have a test they don’t have enough time to prepare because they spend most time on the road travelling from home to

campus and from campus to home. When they reach home, they still have to care for their children or relieve people who have been helping them during the day.

Sbusi:

“I travel every day to campus I took a bus around 4pm, sometimes I get home around 7pm and I still have to do everything, sometimes I planned to study around 10pm at night. Sometimes my child is not sleeping by that time, as he is still young and his sleeping time is a bit awkward he sleeps from that short period and wakes maybe he fall asleep around 12am and I will find myself sleeping during that time, I will be tired and fall asleep and not do my school work, sometimes I fall asleep together with my child.”

Other participants complained that, after a long day at school and long hours of travelling, when she reaches home, she still has to prepare something for children such as lunch. Nonhla mentioned that at the end of the day she feels exhausted and not doing her school work.

Nonhla:

“Usually every day at the end of the day I feel exhausted because even if I come back home I can’t just sit and relax and think about school work but I must start by cooking and make sure that when they come back from school they have something to eat, so really it is very demanding actually its draining most of the times.”

Shezi:

“That happened a lot like if I have been given an assignment normally a test I forget about a test to study for a test because I had to look after the baby and do all kinds of stuff and also if there is an assignment I focus more on assignment and end up forgetting that I have test in a week or may be in three days’ times and I have to study in the morning to catch up.”

Balancing both after an exhausting day is a nightmare to Shezi. She ends up forgetting some of her school work, and, if she remembers to do her assignments, she will forget to prepare for test on time. Which might lead to her not performing very well in her studies at the end of the semester or not achieving a good mark. Brown (2007) Assert that caring for a child is considered as a full-time job and may be very stressful on female college

students, whether or not the pregnancy was unplanned. Child rearing consumes time and energy and, with few exceptions, women bear the primary burden of child care.

Cruse et al., (2018) also indicate that single mothers enrolled in postsecondary education face substantial time demands that make persistence and graduation difficult.

Time was not just a problem with student mothers who stay at home, but also affects those who stay at student residences, because they often do not see their children. They have to visit their children on weekends or rush home when they receive urgent calls, if their children are not well. Even though family members are there to play a parental role to their children while they are busy studying, they still feel that they must also play their part of being a parent to their children.

During a group discussion, Phili and Thobile mentioned that when they are away from their child it is hard to focus on their studies if their children are sick.

Phili:

“Umm sometimes, maybe you at school and a child at home is sick, so you get a call from home telling you that a child is sick at home and you can’t focus on your studies, you feel hate when you are away from home and child is not feeling well.”

Thobile:

“The other day I bunk the class and disappear, I went to check my child, I was thinking maybe they were not taking care of him enough, sometimes you wish you are there with your child and you caring for your child.”

Balancing both can be very challenging for student mothers, especially if they feel overloaded with work.

Sbusi:

“I remember in 2016 when I actually gave birth I had to come back and do TP 120, it was very hard. It was very hard I must say I think it was three months back then I had to make time for him and time for my studies and doing all this kids of stuff there is so much work for TP 120 and we were still trained how to do chart and teaching resources all those things like. I had to do all that staff during my spare

time at home and still look after my child at same time, it was very hard I must say, sometimes I will cry and wonder what must I do and I felt like quitting you know.”

As evidence shown above many student mothers highlighted that even though taking care of a baby impacts on time for study, they also found it hard to focus on their studies when they away from their children. They felt distracted and they had to choose whether to prioritise their studies or their children. Despite being a student mother at university, they are expected to attend classes and submit work as any other students. As mentioned by Estes (2011), college students have extraordinary demands on their time and their instructors do not generally expect them to be parents. Some students feel that in fact they are expected to be both bad parents and bad students. They spend less time with their children and make their schoolwork a priority some of the time. During discussion with Nosipho, she made it clear that, being far from her children affects her emotionally, because every day she has to imagine how her children are doing at home.

Nosipho:

“For me is that like at times in class I always wonder what are my kids doing have they eaten maybe they haven’t eaten, you know it stressful, maybe you got calls from home, maybe the child is sick, need nappies or stuff like that so that like a biggest challenge. You can’t concentrate fully at school knowing that might be problems at home with kids.”

According to Nosipho, being a student and a mother can be quite challenging because every day she has to imagine how her children are doing, while she has studies to concentrate on. Bhana and Mcambi (2013), who researched schooling mothers, state that most young mothers cannot cope with being a mother and a learner at school. In addition to the school climate of hostility and shame, they also found that it difficult to cope with the demands of both schooling and being a young mother. Evidence from Bhana and Mncambi (2013) shows that young mothers find it very difficult to balance the two roles regardless of whether they have support from families to look after their children. The data in this study demonstrates that it seems to be worse for student mothers at university, because they stay far from their children, as they use student residence as their homes while studying. Every day they have to imagine how their children are doing at homes.

4.3 Financial strain and gain

Student mothers had different views regarding financial strain and gains. They were all clear that raising a child requires enough resources to cover daily living expenses for the children, which can be quite challenging if a mother is a fulltime student and not employed. The majority of student mothers are not financially stable and they receive their income from the university to finance their studies and from government social grants. Owing to the high living costs for their children, they end using that income to finance the living expenses for their children. This was especially true for those who did not receive finance from their families or the child's fathers. According to Adansi and Amankwaa (2007), raising a child is a financial daunting task that involves a great deal of financial, emotional, and practical planning.

Adams, Meyers and Beidas (2016) state that financial issues can be the largest barrier to many students if they are going to school fulltime. They further emphasise that, in the past, research has identified a strong relationship between financial strains and the probability of graduation. In this report, specifically, students reported that four out of the five top stressors in their lives involved personal finances, and that these stressors affected their academic progress and performance. Luckily, the majoring of student mothers at University of KwaZulu-Natal at Edgewood receive financial aid from the university. However, student mothers complain that, owing to the demands of living expenses of their children, they end up using their financial aid to support their children to buy cloths, nappies or milk for their children, instead of spending on studies. During discussion with Andile, she admitted that she has a Fundza Lushaka bursary and she stated that she can just spend her bursary like any other student, but she has to spend her money very wisely as she is not using that money for herself only, but also to take care of the daily living expenses of her son.

Andile:

"I have Fundza Lushaka bursary, financially my son taught me to plan I can't just spend that money at anyhow, I have to think about my son and his needs really I can't just spend that money on useless things."

Daluxolo also agreed that the financial aid she receives from the university to cover her studies she also has to spend it on her child.

Daluxolo:

“The university sponsored me with a Fundza Lushaka bursary. That money is helping a lot, with that money I am able to buy food for myself, I send some for my child and I am able to go and lay-buy or buy some cloths for my child, if it going to be summer, I lay-buy some cloths using that money I get from university. It also happened last year when I was doing my first year I won that R10 000 reward that you get if you passed your subject with 70% and above with that money I was able to fix half of it and other half I used to buy things for my child and fixed R1000 for my child to my bank under her name.”

Conforming to traditional norms of woman as nurturers, student mothers saw it as their duty to put their children's needs first. When young women come from a low income background this can be quite a challenge. Drawing from Burr's (2015) social constructivism, we can see the prevailing discourses of femininity as typically constructing women as nurturing, with childcare seen as women's responsibility, women being particularly able to care for young children, and the requirement being that they should do so. Jewkes et al. (2009) affirm that it is largely girls who bear the consequences of having children and, when unmarried, they and their families shoulder the financial burden. In most African communities, care for a child or childrearing is a women's responsibility. In South Africa we have a growing number of single parents, young women with the burden of raising their children. Hoffman and Maynard (2008) argue that young women who become teen mothers face many disadvantages arising from the families and communities in which they live. They further explain that their families often have a lower average income, their communities many have fewer public amenities and support systems maybe weaker. Similarly Yang and Bullecer (2016) in their investigations done in USA with college student mothers, indicate that student mother respondents experienced financial hardships but this did not stop them from finishing their degree. They further explain that, the timing of their motherhood was related to the stress they experienced. They struggled to perform their daily duties as mother and student as well, so the respondents had to sacrifice their personal and social needs to prioritize their child and their studies.

Sbusi:

“Everything and like money wise I can’t spend money on unnecessary things and I didn’t need, I know that I have to budget for myself and for my child.”

Phili:

“I got NSFAS from the university and it is so supporting to my kid and me more than ever you know, I am able to send that money to my parents and kids to buy nappies and clothes for my child.”

Nokuzola:

“After I received my NSFAS book allowance, I saved it for the birthday of my child, we went out I bought her some clothes, even NSFAS amount is very helping to support our kids.”

Nokuzola responded that she shares with her child the financial aid received from the university. She finds herself spending her book allowance for her daughter’s birthday. Hodes et al. (2016) report that adolescent mothers map out how they spend her child support grants. Food was the biggest expenditure, followed by nappies, transport to fetch medicines at the clinic, and airtime to communicate with the babies’ fathers.

For student mothers who are not staying with their children, there seem to be added expenses. They mentioned having to spend extra money on airtime, as they had to call home to check up on their children on how they doing every day.

Nokuzola:

“I am in Durban studying, I have to make calls every day to check up on my child, I am stressed every day thinking about my child, whether she has eaten or wears something.”

Nosipho also mentioned that she had a routine to call her children daily just to hear their voices and how they are doing. Understanding that as the expectations as mothers, they felt that they have to make sure that every day they have money to buy airtime and check how their children are doing every day. In the excerpt below, Nosipho shared that, even though it was financially draining, she experienced positive feelings from hearing her children’s voices daily.

Nosipho:

“When I woke up in the morning, I called my kids, I take a bath and then I go study, when I come back to res I called them again it so nice just to hear their voice even if they not speaking properly.”

Few student mothers felt that they benefitted from giving birth if they got financial support from homes and ‘baby daddies’, as well as the basic money received from government social grants (SASSA grant). They do not use it to finance the living expenses of their children. They confirm that they used their child support grant to buy their own things.

Thobile:

“My parent are very supportive and child’s father is very supportive financially, the child’s father side they do everything. SASSA the social grant money I received I used it to myself, sometimes it only can be me when I felt like doing something for my child, then I would buy maybe a shoes this month or buy lunch box snacks for the crèche in a certain month and so on.”

Thobile pointed out that she is very privileged and got support from home and child father, the money she received from social grant, she used it to her herself not caring for her child every month.

Dee:

“The child father is very supportive, he takes care for his child, he loves his child, although we not staying together but financially he is very supportive, he pays for crèche, buy food and nappies for a child. I never spend anything towards my child her father is doing everything, the social grant I am receiving I spend it on other things.”

Dee also confirms that she is very privileged to receive support from her child’s father, the funding she received from SASSA, she spends it to buy other things either than care for her child. And she doesn’t have to spend her financial aid from university to maintain her child. Hodes et al. (2016) accuse young mothers of having children just to access grants. They further assert that some of them get pregnant on purpose to get the grant money from the government. Hodes et al. (2016) further indicate that now they use the money that was meant to feed their babies to have fun go to braai places and buy alcohol. The authors claim that they say, “success

is all about making profit”, so, by having babies, they are making a profit. Although student mothers at university did not intend to get pregnant to access social grants, if they are privileged to receive financial support from families or child fathers, they tend to use that money anyhow and not maintaining their children, as Thando indicated:

Thando:

“I don’t remember receiving a call from home telling me there is shortage of milk for a child, the money I am receiving from Social Grant I used for my shortage at school.”

4.4 No special treatment

During interviews with student mothers, they felt lecturers were not sensitive to their special circumstances as mothers. The majority of them felt that they had unique situations and that lecturers should understand and not expect the same from them as from other students. In addition to the UKZN principles and guidelines for support of pregnant students’ pregnancies, Stephens (2017) points out that, in all cases, it will be the student’s responsibility to catch up with work (written, practical, laboratory) work that may have been missed. This is a challenge not only facing student mothers at South African universities but also other universities as well across Africa. Evidence from Berg and Mamhute (2013) is that at the University of Zimbabwe there is a large number of pregnant students who have failed to write their examinations because they gave birth during the examination period and had to miss their examinations. They further explained that there no arrangements were made to enable student mothers to take their examination after giving birth. They further argue that, given that in most African cultures women are expected to subordinate their needs and desires to those of their children and families, students with infants have to grapple with the roles of motherhood and studentship and this hits some student mothers very hard. Regardless of the documented policy in place, in which UKZN undertakes to support all pregnant students as best as possible to enable completion of the academic programme within the limits of available resources (Stephens, 2017), mothers report a lack of support.

Dane:

“University don’t give any support at all, truly I haven’t had about any support because if you pregnant and writing exams and you need to go to clinic or to your doctor, you don’t get special treatment, no support at all. I can go and give birth and they still want their assignment, they want their work to be done and there is no policy in place that said its gives you such time because you went to deliver or to give birth or you pregnant or you this, they don’t care if in or not.”

Dane mentioned that student mothers at the university do not get any special treatment from the university or lectures. They are not regarded as special students with special needs. They expect them to multitask. She further mentioned that at university there is no policy in place to protect student mothers in case they go to give birth, and when their school work or assignment are due. Chigona and Chetty (2008) state that the support teen mothers get from home and school is not enough to facilitate their schooling; they are not considered as learners with special needs, though they need special support to cope with their demanding life of being a mother and a learner. It is even worse for student mothers at universities as there are no support systems in place. Student they are left out to figure out them how to cover up on the time lost when they were caring for their child or their child is sick, even if they went to give birth. The university has no special arrangement for student mothers if they facing any challenges of motherhood and studentship.

Sbusi:

“Yes I felt like I cannot handle being a student and a mother at same time and I remember I missed the presentation because I had no one to baby sit my child for me, hmm I tried emailing a lecturer, hoping she will understand because obviously she is a mother herself, but she said no if you missed a presentation so you going to lose marks. Imagine the presentation was on a Saturday, it wasn’t a normal day for a lecture but she insisted that I must come on a Saturday, because there was a strike or so, she just said if you want to finish up your work you should prioritise your work and come to school on Saturday, although I reported that I cannot come because I have to look after my child; she didn’t understand.”

If it happened that student mothers are going to give birth or their child is sick during exams and when assignments are due, the university is not responsible for any missed exams.

Zine:

“No, not at all I don’t get any support because sometimes I come here around 8 a.m. and leave at around 6 p.m., the workload is too much. Sometimes there are test and exams on weekends nobody asked you have a child and so on.”

Participants complained that, at the university, nobody care about student mothers, although they are swamped with academic work and they still have to care for their children at the same time. Chauke (2013) reports that there is a lack of support from lecturers, and from the university there are no extra lessons or catch-up programmes to support student mothers. When student mothers are not well supported it has a negative impact on their studies because they find themselves having to choose between their studies and their children. Speaking to the young mothers I could confirm that. When it time to deliver their unborn children or their children are sick, they normal find themselves in a difficult situation, where they have to choose between attending to their children or to their studies.

Smith (2015) states that, owing 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. Although student mother sare in social groups and receiving support from friends, they do need further support from the university. The support they receiving from their friends might not be enough to facilitate their academic demands.

Mathombi:

“I never got any support from the university when I was pregnant and after I gave birth to my child, my friends only supported me, but the university nothing at all.”

Nomsa:

“My friends from the university are very supportive, I don’t want to lie, if I have a shortage for my child, friends are the first people I call, and I will ask for at least R200 to buy nappies, they will borrow me immediately I asked. Then I can buy all shortage and pay them back later. Our friends not only assisting with money also for encouraging each other to finish our degree and start working for our children because we suffering at this university, nobody care about the challenges we facing as mother’s.”

These responses illustrate how important it is for student mothers to associate themselves with people who are in similar situations. They find themselves socializing among themselves, giving each other moral support, financial support whenever they need, parental assistance or emotional support. In contrast, they felt they are not well supported by the institution. Normally they find themselves turning to their friends for any assistance. Speaking to Mathombi and Nomsa made it clear to me that the university does not give them any support at all, they get support from their friends only. Even though student mothers socialise in groups, there are no formal groups formed by the university that aim to assist student mothers. Taukeni (2014) strongly recommends that there should be a student mothers’ group supported by the university Student Support Services on campus, in order to alleviate some of the stress, isolation and loneliness.

Looking at so many studies done, I noted that South Africa, unfortunately, is far behind in terms of services for student mothers at university, unlike western countries, where young mothers are supported by institutions. These findings concur with a report in the Mail and Guardian, in which Mareau (2012) reports that some Western universities provide some specific provision, such as an on-site nursery or the services of a childcare coordinator. As well as providing some specific provision, others favour an integrated, mainstreamed approach to student parents (and sometimes to students with other types of caring responsibilities). This make life easier for student mothers to focus on their studies if they are well sported by the institution. Stroble (2013) further emphasises that teenage mothers face struggles, challenges and dilemmas, but when they receive a lot of support they ultimately overcome their struggles because of the support from family, community and school.

4.5 Motivation to excel and inspiration for a greater future

The student mothers all agreed that their children motivated them to improve themselves. They suggested that having someone whom they want to look up to them, encourages them to do better things. Having a child while a student not only requires them to be a good mothers. Student mothers suggest that they have to think positively and they are motivated to achieve their goals and prepare a better future for their children, which is contrary to what other researchers have written about young mothers in school (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Thobejane 2015; Prasai, 2017). These authors argue that teenage mothers' discourses of sexual shame situate their experiences within the domain of negativity, which arises from the home, from peers and from teachers. They further explained that this creates vulnerabilities, hurt and pain for young women at school. Thobejane (2015) notes that teenage pregnancy can leads to dropping out from school as the teenage mothers have to leave school to care for their babies. Prasai (2017) also points out that teenage mothers are more vulnerable to gestational hypertension than non-teenage mothers. However, it seems that student mothers at university do not experience the same level of shame and stigma as schooling mothers because the university gives them adult status.

Sinethemba:

“My child is giving me courage, motivate me to finish my degree on time that all I have.”

Nokuzola:

“It encouraging because even if I lose hope and felt like giving up but the moment I think about my child that I have to raise it force me to focus on my studies, so that I can prepare her better future, I don't want my child to grow in same situation as mine as my parent was not educated, the life was hard for me and I don't want my child to felt in a same way, I want the best for my child and she must get good/best education that I never had. I want my child to go to multi-racial school not in township school and have a good English, so that she can perform better in school.”

Sinethemba and Nokuza expressed that their children encourage them to pursue their careers, finish their degree and work for their children, Nokuzola further explained that she want to

prepare a better future for her child, she wants her child to get a better education and have a brighter futures than hers, which she can only achieve through finishing her degree and starting to work for her child. Vyskoul (2018) expresses the view that the role of single mothers who are pursuing degrees while raising children assumes crucial importance in helping to forge means of support that are not government dependent, as well as enabling single parent student mothers to become role models with regard to educational pursuits and the achievement of degrees. According to Ricco, Sabet and Clough (2009), the motivations of student-parents for going to college and for completing specific academic tasks appear to be relevant to their parenting attitudes and to their children's student-role attitudes

Syathokoza:

“Me too, even if I felt like I don't want to type that assignment, but the moment I think about my child, I will felt like I must do it for my child, now I have someone I am living for and I have to finish my studies at varsity and go work for him.”

Syathokoza responded that having a child encouraged her to focus on her studies, she further explained that even when she felt lazy about doing her assignment, the moment she thinks about her child, she gets the courage to get up and do her school work. She felt pressure to finish her degree and go to work for her child. In many cases, young mothers are associated with failure, but student mothers at university are encouraged to work hard towards their studies. Thus being a mother while studying may have a positive impact, a finding that differs that those of Mcambi (2010), who found that being a mother while schooling can have a negative impact on the educational outcome of young mothers at school.

Sbusi:

“I have a great time to cuddle with my child. When I am stressed or have depression my child take it away, my child is the only person when I am sad, angry or frustrated, when I am around him, and he makes me laugh. He bring me joy, so it is very nice to be a mother, although it is challenging but we are women we are strong we can handle the two being a mother and student.”

Sbusi spoke about the joy her child brought to her, she further explained that although it might sound challenging being a mother while they are at university, the love she has for her child

pushes her to handle both roles. Clarke (2015) states that having children during their teenage years becomes the motivation for the young mothers' efforts to improve their life chances. Clarke (2015) further describes the importance of being role models for their children and the significance an "internal locus of control." Clarke (2015) also reports the palpable sense of pride and joy when the mothers spoke about their excellent relationships with their children. Similarly Watts et al. (2015) in Australia note that motherhood brings increased responsibilities, social recognition, and a sense of purpose for young mothers. Despite the positive aspects of motherhood, participants faced challenges that affected their lives. Most often, the challenges included coping with increased responsibilities following the birth of the baby, managing the competing demands of schooling and work, and taking care of a baby.

Thando:

My child pushes me to go to university and I used to have friends before I had a child, because they didn't have a purpose in their lives they remain behind, never achieved anything in their lives. They were busy with useless things and never pursued their careers, but myself my child put me in right direction. I saw that there is a need for my child to be proud about his mom, one day he must say my mom is a teacher and he give me a reason to live because there are sometimes you felt like I don't want to live any more but the moment I think about my child I immediately put him first."

Thando mentioned that her child encouraged her to further her studies to university and to make right choices in choosing the type of friends. Her child gives her a direction in life and wanting to succeed in and her child to be proud about her in future. Thando's child gives her a reason to live even if there are some times she feels like giving up in life, but the moment she thinks about her child she gets courage to look forwards towards a bright future. Correspondingly, findings in an American study by Karp, Osche and Smith (2016) were that student parents, despite myriad challenges, are motivated to stay in school by their hopes for a better life for themselves and their children.

Daluxolo:

“My child encouraged me choose early childhood development (ECD) phase and become ECD teacher, my child develops love of children. Although I knew that I love children but mine gave me more love and encourage me as a young mother that I should love other children and start to take care for other people’s children because as a ECD teacher you must love children first in order to work with them and with a love I have for my child I knew I can teach them and be able to tolerate with them, on whatever they doing because they are like my children. Assist them to grow, I can say my child gave me a light in my life and to pursue my career.”

Daluxolo becoming a mother really motivated her. Although she already had love of children, her child developed more love not only for her child but for other people’s children. She further claimed that her child encourages her to choose the ECD phase as her career. She felt that the love she has for children she can share with other children through teaching them at foundation phase. As we know, the foundation phase is a fragile phase that needs passion for children.

Xolisile:

“My children encourage me to push my degree and I have sense of purpose in my life and I am not doing this for myself but I am doing for my children as much they have working fathers, but we never signed anywhere to ensure that, they always supporting my children but myself as a mother. I will always be there for my children for the rest of their lives.”

Xolisile responded that having her children encourages her to push for her degree; her children have developed a sense of purpose in her life and give her a sense of direction. One day she wants to be an independent woman and not begging any support from her children’s fathers. She believed that in order to secure future for her children, she must finish her studies and get a job and support her children. She further mentioned that the future for her children relies on her as their mother.

4.6 The role of “baby-daddy”

“Baby daddy” is a noun commonly used by the participants. Heslam and Herald (2010) define “baby daddy” as the biological father of a woman’s child. They further explain that this is especially one who is not married to or in a long-term, intimate relationship with the child’s mother. Gee and Rhodes (2003) state that the attempts to understand the role of fathers in the lives of adolescent mothers are necessary. Hunter (2010) points to the way in which men are expected in this context to take on the role of being a provider. It is crucial not to ignore the importance of the father and their potential role to support their children and student mothers while student mothers focus on their studies. Student mothers need financial and emotional support. Some student mothers suggest that they are not supported very well by baby daddies. However some baby daddies support student mothers and this support plays a crucial role to eliminate the burden on student mothers. DeVito (2010) states that young mothers, instead of living “happily ever after” with the father of their child and sharing the responsibilities of infant care with him, are likely to find that their relationship with the father becomes more distant, less reliable, and, in some cases, dissolves. Lynch (2008) mentioned that students mothers who lack economic and/or emotional support are known to be at a higher risk for attrition.

Nonhla:

“Child’s father only takes care of my child only if he likes, I don’t force him, even though we broke up but I don’t use my child to punish him, he only helps on weekends but that doesn’t help me much because I am not attending lecturers on weekends, I am also free most weekends.”

Nonhla indicates that she is not in a relationship with her baby’s father and he has a choice about whether he wants to care for the baby on weekends.

According to Richter and Morrell (2008), men are good for children, and children are good for men. But many fathers abandon their children or fail to provide for their safety or their emotional and financial needs. Xolisile shows that this support does not come easily:

Xolisile:

“Yeah both baby daddies, when my children were sick is my problem as mother, they want me to call and beg them, you find that he got paid on the 15th and he knows a child have some shortage and they know I am not working, but they want me to call and beg them for some help and for me it even worse because we not in a relationship. Every month I have to make calls before, they gave me the money for the children, I think they want to felt that power that I am begging them.”

Xolisile’s story provides evidence that most of these men feel superior to women. They find it acceptable for a women to beg them for help, even if it their responsibility to care for their children. Xolisile is a full-time student at university and she mentioned that both baby daddies are aware that she is not working. As suggested by Kidwell (2004), it is necessary for student mothers to make sure that there are adequate child care resources available to raise their children. Kidwell (2004) further explains that, this may be very difficult to do if students are going to school full-time. It is though clear that support from both baby daddies can play a crucial role to Xolisile, enabling her not to stress about the financial shortages every month.

Siyathokoza:

“Even though our baby daddy is not there in the life of our children but we are very strong mothers we will succeed and they will regret one day.”

During the group discussion Syathokoza and Zine both agreed that their baby daddies are not in their lives, but they claim that they have become strong and they will succeed. They distanced themselves from the notion that women are dependent on men for support. According to Chigona and Chetty (2008), in most cases the situation of the teen mothers is worsened because the fathers of their children play no role in the children’s upbringing.

Dane:

“The child father is not there as I am a single parent, he is not there in my life or child’s life. My family are very supportive, they are assisting me to raise her, without assistance from them I would be nothing.”

In my discussion with Dane, she mentioned that she does not get any support from the baby daddy. She is raising her child as a single parent, however she appreciated the support she gets

from her family that assists her to raise her child. Hoffman and Maynard (2008) mention that young mothers in particular have limited support usually from the fathers of their children. Hoffman and Maynard (2008) further report that, among unwed teen parents, only about 30 % of single teen parents live with adult relatives and less than one-third receive any financial support, including informal support, from the non-residential fathers of their children.

Nomsa:

“My baby daddy was never supportive about anything from the beginning, during my pregnancy he was very abusive. He used to smack me while I was pregnant, hit me very bad, bouncing on my stomach, I was never sure whether he likes my child, he was beating me for useless thing like not pick up calls, he was suspecting me for cheating and stuff like that. After I gave birth to my child, he never support me financially.”

Nomsa shared her heart breaking story, where her baby daddy was very abusive to her during and after pregnancy. She further explained that her baby daddy was never supportive about anything. Physical and emotional abuse by a partner can lead to stress to young mothers because during that period student mothers need support from their partners to progress with their education.

Support from the baby daddy is crucial when student mothers are going to varsity full-time. If they are not supported very well by their baby daddies, they can find their role in child-rearing under pressure. The provision of social, financial support and academic support to student mothers is crucial for improving their achievements, as stated by Goldrick-Rab and Serensen (2010). A growing body of experimental evidence shows that providing social, financial, and academic support to vulnerable community college students can improve achievement and attainment.

Zameka:

“My child’s father denied a child and disappeared when I was pregnant till I gave birth to my child.”

Zameka shared her sadness where her baby daddy denied her child and disappeared while she was pregnant, however that circumstances never stopped her from pursuing her dreams and continuing with her studies at university. Richter et al. (2010) note that men may not wish or be prepared to take on the added responsibility for children and his family may prefer not to acknowledge paternity.

Speaking with student mothers shows how important the support for student mothers is from all sides, such as baby daddies, university social agencies, families and friends. Most student mother shy away from the issue of support from baby daddies; they treat as normal the support from families and friends, although it is crucial to get support from the child’s father. Mcambi (2010) reports how young mothers struggle to raise their children single-handedly without the support of the fathers of their children. Similarly Watts et al. (2015) in Australia found that the young mothers indicated they received good support from their mothers, siblings and close friends, but rarely from the father of their baby and the wider community.

According to Richter et al. (2013), the majority of South Africa’s children are not fortunate with regard to a positive father/child relationship. They further argue that it highlights several salient features of fatherhood in the country, particularly low rates of marriages and father absence from households.

Although the majority of student mothers complained about not getting support from child’s fathers, some student mothers were in committed relationships and did get support from the children’s fathers.

Nokuzola:

“Child’s father is playing a huge role in supporting a child and also supporting me emotionally and checking how I am doing with my studies, he is giving all the support I need.”

Nokuzola mentioned that the father of her child is very supportive to her and his child, she further explained that she got the emotional support she need and it plays a huge role while she

continue with her studies. Steyn (2015) reported that, if mothers feel emotionally supported by child's father during pregnancy and after, they are less likely to experience postpartum depression.

Dee:

“The child father is very supportive, he takes care for his child and he loves his child, although we not staying with us, but financially he is very supportive, he pays for crèche, buy food and nappies for a child.”

Speaking to Dee, she explained that the father of her child is very supportive and that he does everything for his child.

Daluxolo:

“I wouldn't have done this without baby daddy's support, he is the one, who is sending money most of the time. He always calling at home every day to check up on his child, we want to know everything and how a child is doing, umm can say he want to be updated about his child”

The evidence below shows that the support from child's father is very important, as mentioned by Daluxolo. Without the support she got from the child's father, and she should not to cope

Thobile:

“Child's father is very supportive financially.”

Thobile also agree that her child's father is very supportive financially.

4.7 Feeling empowered

Student mothers in this study indicated that by of virtue of becoming parents, they have grown in maturity beyond their peers who do not have children. All the mothers claim to think very differently after they have had their children. They mentioned that female students who have children have to multi-task the responsibilities of being a fulltime student and a mother at same time.

In the excerpt below, Dee proudly talked about the many things she is successful in doing. Similarly, Dlamini (2016) saw teenage motherhood as a positive thing, as she noted that it

taught them responsibility and care. She further explained that teenage mothers experienced teenage motherhood differently from other mothers who are not teenagers.

Dee:

“In the morning I wake up very early and I have to prepare for myself and a child and take my child to a day care centre before coming to campus, sometimes maybe we write some test late if most of us we doing the same module they can make a test at 4 p.m. maybe by 6 p.m. you are done and I still have to go back home to my child.”

Zameka talked about how she had to ensure that she to change her behaviour and ensure that she is always responsible since she has responsibilities that other women (without children) have.

Zameka:

“Umm, I don’t know what I am going to say whether it is right, you know when you have a child, you knew whatever you going to do, it is not about you but you doing it for your child, you know even people got drunk and forgetting themselves, going to clubs. For me, going to the club I won’t be submitting my work on time, if you have a child you have that pressure that you are here for your child. I don’t want my child to go multi-racial school but I want him to be a good child, have a better life, get whatever he needs you know if you are a student mom you know that you are not living for yourself. You are not like other people with no one, you know what you doing, plan your time unlike other females with no kids they own their lives”

Connell (2013) pointed out the issue of the gender role which I have discovered applied to many students mothers. They felt it is their duty to care for their children. Connell (2013) describes that most child care and household work is assigned to the wife and mother, as femininity is constructed in a way that define the work of carrying for the family members as womanly.

Seamark and Lings (2004) stated that even though teenage mothers are often viewed in a negative manner, not all of them regret becoming pregnant. During discussion with participants, the majority of student mothers mentioned that their children provided them with a sense of courage to do better with their lives. Seamark and Lings (2004) further explain that having a child to provide for and look after, seems to give women an added impetus in their lives, and most of the women have an immediate bond when the baby is born. They also reflect on the positive effect it had on them. With further discussion with participants I noted student mothers at university turn their situation into a positive way.

Thobile:

“If you have a child you grow, you have things that you have to avoid as a mother like not going to club,s the only things you focus at is your books to make sure you secure the future for your children not be the same as you, they must get anything you wish for them, the child is driving you to do good.”

Nonhla:

“Hmm I have grown and I would like to say I am independent because I had to take responsibility from...I had a baby when I was 18 years and then I was forced to take depo because I didn't know what to do and I had no direction but it also make me realize I have someone that I have to work for. So I had to get back to my feet and applied to school so when I started at varsity I know that this is for them, so I really grown.”

Student mothers at university are motivated by their children to pursue a great future, their careers finish their degree and go and work for their children. Anything they do they put their children first and they want to secure a bright future for their children.

Syathokoza:

“Myself I am not going to lie, the child change my character. I was a naughty gal as I am even today, after I got my child my behaviour changed completely I stopped going with bad friends. If I didn’t have a child I suppose maybe I couldn’t finish school we were in same grade I remember I was in grade 9 when I felt pregnant all my friends failed”

Syathokoza suggested that her child changed her life and changed her bad character. She confirms that she grew up as a bad girl and hanging around with the wrong friends, but, since the birth of her child she has changed and become a responsible women, focusing on her studies and her dreams to get a job so she can take care of her child. She emphasises that being a mother inspired her to finish school and have a better future.

Thando:

“It that myself I was still in high school and used to be associated with friends. To have a child it opened my mind when I got pregnant I changed and after gave birth I decided not to associate myself with friends and I decided to spend time with my child.”

Xolisile:

“My children grown me, I have grown being a mother at early age, it groomed me spiritually and emotionally, physically, they make me see things in a different ways, because to have a child is not easy when you are a single mother.”

The majority of participants claimed that their children have matured them and that being student mothers have groomed them to be better young women than those who are non-mothers. Xolisile mentioned that her children have grown her spiritually and physically, so she sees things very differently. She further explained that it is not easy to be a single mother.

4.8 Managing both roles

It is obvious that student mothers have two major roles: that of being mothers and that of being university students. Klein et al. (2014) indicate that student-parents have many unique responsibilities that they must balance and it is important to provide a resource that will help student-parents navigate both roles. I was interested in exploring how they managed these two roles. During discussion with participants they mentioned that managing to balance both roles, of being a mother and a fulltime student, is crucial. They all mentioned that this is challenging but that if they want to remain students and complete their studies they have to balance both. In addition they all mentioned that this is challenging, but that if they want to remain students and complete their studies, student mothers have to come up with strategies on how they balance these two, depending whether they live with their children or not. Bailey (2011) indicate that the dual roles of being a mother and a student present challenges and rewards for each teenage mother. Bailey further explains that the women often experience overlap or collision between the two roles and the navigation of the role collision prompts the women to develop strategies to address these challenges. Student mothers commonly use four strategies to balance their two roles being a full-time student and a mother. This include: keeping both roles separate, better time management, having people to lean on and prioritising both roles. Their strategies are further explained below.

4.8.1 Keeping both roles separate

The student mothers in this study found being a mother as important as being a student and found ways to dedicate time to both roles.

Andiswa talked about how keeping both responsibilities separate by living on campus during the week is a useful strategy for her. Manalang et al. (2016) explain that student mothers use coping strategies in order to surpass the obstacles, such as praying, seeing their babies as their motivation and inspiration, positive thinking and ignoring negative things in life.

Andiswa:

“It actually hard hey to balance this two roles but then they both important, I think the only way I balance it was to go back to res, because Monday to Friday I am at res and Friday to Sunday I am at home and became full time mom that a way I balance it.”

Andiswa mentioned that from Monday to Friday she focuses on her studies and at the weekend she becomes a fulltime mother. That mean on a weekend she must forget about her studies and focus on her child. If student mothers have support systems in place they are luckily to succeed in their studies. Kamara (2017) indicated that pregnancy and motherhood continue to score highest among the social related barriers to education. She further emphasises that adequate guidance in parenting, family support, peers' inclusion and financial support may ensure both achievement and fulfilment in education.

Zameka;

“When I am here on campus I will be like a horse when he is racing focusing on one thing, on my studies, I put aside all thought, although I miss my child, thinking about whether she he has eaten or wear something but when I came for holiday I make sure I care for my child, play with him and have fun.”

Although it might sound difficult for student mothers to manage both roles of being a mother and student at same time, it is important to focus on one thing at time, Zameka further explained that when she is at university she focuses on being a student and during holiday she will be mother to their children. The challenges of managing roles was also illustrated in findings by Singh and Hamid (2016), who stressed that schooling mothers experience great difficulties in managing their personal and schooling responsibility. However, participants suggested that if young mothers planned well about how they balance this two roles, it might not be stressful to juggle between two roles

Other student mothers felt that it was more convenient to stay at home and travel daily to campus.

Nonhla:

“When I am in school I focus only in school but keep my phone on just in case if something happened they can reach me. When I am in school I focus only on being a student only, there is no time to think about them, I can only think about them on my way back home, because I have to look after children after school. That the only way I manage it, when I come home I know that I am a mother I am no more a student and I have taken care of my children.”

Although Nonhla travels every day from home to campus, she explained that she is managing both roles of being a mother and full-time student. She further stated that she uses certain strategies to ensure her motherhood does not interfere with her studies by making sure that when she is at university she focuses only on her studies. When she comes home, she becomes a mother to her children and provides care for the children.

4.8.2 Better time management

Student mothers recognised the important of good management of time so that they could manage both their roles. Sbusi stressed the importance of planning ahead and keeping herself on track by creating her own time table that she kept visible to remind her of her due dates.

Sbusi:

“Well umm what I decided is that during the week I do all my school work, I drafted a timetable to remind me what to do every day, I pasted my time table on the wall in my bedroom every day after lectures I come back I remind myself what to do. I know what to study, I do all my assignment during the week. And a weekends it just for me and my child, I make all the time on weekends to be with him and have all fun.”

During the discussion with Sbusi, she share the strategies she uses to balance the two roles of being a mother and a fulltime student. She gives attention to both her child and studies. She further mentioned that she drafted the timetable that she uses every day for studying and ensure she finishes all her assignments during the week, so that on the weekend she makes time for her child, cares and play swith her son. It is very important for student mother to use strategies and planning for both roles because these two becomes important in their lives. Willan (2013) states that many of the teenage mothers who return to school battle to balance motherhood and schooling. And yet for teenage girls who receive support (childcare, emotional and financial) and who are lucky to balance and further their studies, Willan (2013) further reports how teenage pregnancy and motherhood can sometimes be balanced with continued schooling, showing that with supportive interventions an unplanned teenage pregnancy does not necessarily disrupt a girl’s future.

4.8.3 Having people to lean on

Support from family and the baby's father was mentioned as crucial to student mothers' successful management of being a student mother.

Sinethemba:

"I am not staying at home, I stay at res, my family my mother and my sister are assisting me to take care of my child while I am studying."

Zine:

"My mother is helping me a lot to balance this two roles being a mother and student, my children are staying with her at the village and myself I am at the Res most of the time. My mother do not worry me about the children even if I leave them over the weekend and they having flue, if I called to check up on them, she will say my children are fine, just to calm me down and she want me to focus on my studies. My mother she is really supportive to me."

In the evidence above, Zine and Sinethemba mentioned that their mothers play a huge role in helping them to parent their children, while they are focusing in their studies and empower them to balance this two roles. Sriyasak et al. (2018) found that the mother of a teenage mother was the primary source of caregiving, and functioned as a co-parent.

It was interesting to note that support was not just from mothers and female family member, as was found in the study by Naicker & Singh (2017). The students' fathers and the fathers of their babies played a significant supportive role, especially in terms of financial support.

Daluxolo:

"I wouldn't have done this without my father support and baby daddy. My father is the one who always with my child at home and the baby daddy is the one who is sending money most of the time, he send it through me and I will send it home. So if there were there I was not going to be able to balance it being a mother and a student because maybe I suppose to go look for some work so that I will be able send money for my child."

The support they received from homes and from baby daddies assists student mothers to balance these two roles. While they are away and focusing on her studies, the family can assist to play a parenting part to their children. Manalang et al. (2016) voice the concern over the complex schedules of student mothers, which means that sometimes their child was mostly left for the relatives to care for. Manalang et al. (2016) further explain that most of these student mothers had shared that they felt disconnected with their child because they're not always with their child. The majority of student mothers spend time at university residence while studying and currently university policy does not allow them to stay or be visited by their children. Student mothers at university may feel disconnected from their children while studying but are left with no choice but to leave their children with families to care for their children.

4.8.4 Prioritising both roles

The student mothers complained that they received little support from the university and that they were expected to prioritise their student responsibilities. However, the participants stressed that they were not willing to privilege one role over the other.

Dee:

“I think it comes naturally, you have to learn to compromise, once you are a mother you have to compromise because you can't neglect your child because of the school and you can't neglect your studies because of the child both becomes important you have to balance's.”

Dee seems to conform to traditional notions of mothers as being naturally nurturing. She made it clear that, once you become a mother, you must manage both roles of mother and full-time student. She further explained that both becomes important in their lives and gave as an example that she cannot give up on her studies because she became mothers and also she cannot neglect her child because of the studies. Both have become important for her future success. Drawing on school research, Thobejane (2015) observes that teenage pregnancy can lead to school drop-out as the teenage mothers have to leave school to care for their babies. Thobejane further described that teenage mothers add to the number of women who are illiterate

Despite the negativity about teenage mothers, the majority of student mothers at university manage both roles of being a fulltime student and being a mother. The majority recognise the

importance of a bright future for their children. Chauke (2013) voices the difficulty faced by teenage mothers in balancing schooling and motherhood, the negative attitude by educators towards teenage mothers, negative attitude of peers, lack of extra lessons or catch up programmes for teenage mothers, lack of optional tasks or tests for teenage mothers, lack of counselling and support for teenage mothers, and lack of structures for teenage mothers. As the evidence above shows, young mothers in schooling streams facing different challenges in trying to balance both roles, of being a mothers and a student.

Evidence from many research studies is of the lack of support from lecturers and from university. Although not much has been done for student mothers at university, student mothers manage to succeed against the odds. The majority of student mothers have strategies to focus on both, being simultaneously a fulltime student and a parent. Furthermore, Cruse et al. (2018) reported that single mothers enrolled in postsecondary education face substantial time demands that make persistence and graduation difficult. The combination of raising a family on their own, going to class, completing coursework, and holding a job can place serious constraints on single mothers' time, forcing them to make hard choices about their pursuit of higher education.

William's (2007) study argues that institutional discourses and practices place graduate students who are mothers in untenable and irreconcilable positions between "mom" and "student," between "family" and "the academy," and between "self" and "success."

These findings concur with a report in the Guardian. Mareau (2012) reports that the emotional aspects of being a student parent were often foregrounded in their stories. Mareau further explains that student mothers discussed their mixed feelings, talking of the benefits of gaining a degree for themselves and for their children and yet simultaneously fearing that they are not 'good enough' to do their best at both. During discussion with student mothers, they confirmed that they manage their time very well and allocate each responsibility at a certain time. This assists them to manage their both roles, ensuring that caring for their children does not contradict with their studies.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of data generated from individual interviews and group discussions. Data was presented and analysed within the seven themes that emerged from the study. The first theme that emerged, restricted time and extra travel, revealed that student mothers staying on campus have different experience from those who stay at home. Student mothers staying at home have restricted time and extra time to travel which mean they have less time concentrated on their studies. In contrast, students mothers staying in student residences do not see their children every day, so they had to imagine how their children are doing at home. The second theme that emerged is financial strain and gain. They were all clear that raising a child requires enough resources. To cover daily living expenses for the children can be quite challenging if a mother is a fulltime student and not employed. However some student mothers felt they benefited from having a child, if they are privileged to receive financial support from child's father, family and government social grants.

The third theme that emerged was that there is no special treatment. In this theme, most student mothers stated that they feel lecturers are not sensitive to their special circumstances as mothers. The majority of them felt that they have unique situations and that lecturers should understand and not expect the same from them. The fourth theme concerned the motivation to excel and be an inspiration for a greater future. The student mothers all agree that their children motivate them to improve themselves. The fifth theme concerns the role of the baby daddies. Student mothers suggest that they are not supported well by baby daddies, who in some cases deny being responsible for the pregnancy, though some baby daddies support student mothers and this support plays a crucial role in reducing the burden on student mothers. The sixth theme is about student mothers feeling empowered. In this theme, the participants indicated that by virtue of becoming a parent they have grown in maturity beyond their peers, who do not have children. The final theme is about the managing of both roles; student mothers stated that balancing both roles of being a mother and a fulltime student is crucial.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore experiences of motherhood among university students. This chapter discusses findings of the study and linking them with the theoretical perspective and literature review in previous chapters. I then offer some recommendations for further research and conclusions that have been reached through the process of the investigation.

The responses of participants (student mothers) are captured to address the three critical research questions that edged this study, namely:

- What are the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university?
- What kinds of support do student mothers receive?
- How do student mothers balance the demands of academic work and parenting at university?

I have analysed the data in order while attempting to answer these three critical questions. However there are some overlaps in each question, although it is arranged in an orderly manner to express the experiences of student mothers at university.

5.2 Highlight of the main findings

5.2.1 What are the favourable and challenging experiences of being a student and a mother at university?

The summary of the findings on question one are divided into two categories that define the experiences of student mothers at university. I started with the dominant one, which is the challenging experiences and follow it with the favourable experiences.

5.2.2 Challenges experienced by student mothers at university

In response to question one, student mothers complained about having restricted time, and those that live off-campus complained about extra travel. The study found that student mothers staying at home and student mothers staying at student residence have different experiences, each situation with its own challenges. It was discovered that student mothers staying at home with their children spend more hours travelling and this means spending less time concentrating on their assignment, group work and other school work. As indicated in the previous chapter, the university is very demanding, as student mothers spend hours at university attending lectures and after lectures they still spend more time caring for their children.

Many researchers (such as Grant & Hallman, 2008; SmithBattle, 2000; Jewkes, Morrell and Christofides 2009) record that it is largely girls who bear the consequences of having children. When unmarried, they and their families shoulder the financial burden. They further report that young women who are the primary caregivers to their children are also significantly more likely to leave school than are those who have help with their childcare responsibilities. In most African societies, care for a child or nurturing is a women's responsibility.

In South Africa we have rising figures for single parents. These situations leave young women with the burden of nurturing their children. Cruse et al. (2018) indicate that single mothers enrolled in postsecondary education face substantial time demands that make persistence and graduation difficult, arising from the combination of raising a family on their own, going to class and completing coursework. Cruse et al. (2018) further explain that the situation of student mothers can place serious constraints on their time, forcing them to make hard choices about their pursuit of higher education. Similarly it was found that student mother's face many challenge when parenting their children while they going to university full-time.

A further finding of this study is that student mothers' time is not just a problem for student mothers who stay at home, but also affects those who stay at student residence because they frequently do not see their children. They have to visit their children on weekends or rush home when they receive urgent calls, if their children are not well.

Finances are other challenges facing student mothers at the university. In South Africa we have high living cost, which raises the question of how these young mothers who are unemployed and attending the university full-time manage the cost of living for their children. This research revealed that the majority are getting funding from the university. The university funding and

the child support grant are their only source of income. Due to the high cost of living, although their funding was for covering their study cost, the majority of student mothers ended up using it to finance the living expenses for their children. Student mothers also indicated that in some cases they found themselves in a situation where they had to pay baby sitters, while they are busy with their academic work.

Student mothers revealed that they are all getting funding from the university. Some are getting Fundza Lushaka bursaries and some are getting NSFAS funding. However, student mothers complain that, owing to the demand of living expenses of their children, they end up using their financial aid to support their children buy cloths, nappies or milk for their children, instead of spending it on studies. Yang and Bullecer (2016) indicate that student mothers often experienced financial hardship, stress and struggle to trying to balance both roles, but these challenges do not discourage them from completing their degrees. According to Adams et al. (2016), financial issues can be the biggest barrier to many students if they are going to school fulltime.

Furthermore, conforming to traditional norms of woman as nurturers, student mothers saw it as their duty to put their children's needs first. When young women come from low income backgrounds, this can be quite a challenge. According to Kidwell (2004) and Brown (2007), raising a child is a financial daunting task as it involves great deal of financial, emotional, and practical planning. Although some student mothers at university did not intend to get pregnant to access social grant, if they are privileged to received financial support from the families or the children's fathers, they tend to use the government grant for any purpose, not only maintaining their children as the majority does.

5.3.3 Favourable experiences

This study determined that student mothers' emotional attachment to their children is the greatest motivation to continue with their studies at university. It was found that their children motivate student mothers to improve themselves. The majority of student mothers spoke about the joy their children brought to them and further indicated that, although it might sound challenging to be a mother while they are studying full-time at university, the love they have for their child pushes them to manage their situations as best they can. Student mothers suggest that having someone who will look up to them and inspired them to do better things. The study

further discovered that being a mother while also being a student not only requires them to be a good mothers but also to be a good student. Being a student mother motivates them to improve themselves. Moreover, student mothers suggest that they have to think positively and are motivated to achieve their goals and prepare a better future for their children. Drawing from research in schools, Clarke (2015) states that having children during their teenage years became the motivation for young mothers' efforts to improve their life chances. Clarke (2015) further describes the importance of being role models for their children. Ricco, Sabet and Clough (2009) indicate that the motivations of student-parents for going to college and for completing specific academic tasks appear to be relevant to their parenting attitudes and to their children's student-role attitudes.

In the United States of America, Karp, Osche and Smith (2016) found that, despite myriad challenges, student parents are motivated to stay in school by their hopes for a better life for themselves and their children. Similarly, the findings in this study are that student mothers report that having children encouraged them to pursue their careers, finish their degrees and work for their children. This is in sharp contrast with the findings of research by other researchers on young mothers in school (Bhana & Mcambi, 2013; Thobejane 2015 & Prasai, 2017) who report that teenage mothers' discourses of sexual shame situate their experiences within the domain of negativity, which arises from the home, from peers and from teachers. They further explain that this creates vulnerability, hurt and pain for young women at school.

This study further discovered that the majority of student mothers proudly claim that being a mother while a student changed their negative attitudes into positive ones. Their children matured them and have groomed them to be better young women than those who are non-mothers. According to Seamark and Lings (2004), even though young mothers are often seen as agents that promote disorder in the society, not all teenage mothers regret becoming pregnant but they reflect on the positive effects it has had on them.

5.4 What kinds of support do student mothers receive?

It was found that student mothers in this study experienced various degree of support, from the university, child fathers, friend and family and government support. There were huge complaints about the lack of support from the university and lack of support from child fathers, but there is reliable support from friends at university. However, family were the greatest support, financially and in other ways.

5.4.1 Institutional (university) support

The finding from this study is the lack of support from the university; student mothers felt that lecturers were not sensitive to their special conditions as mothers. The majority of them felt that they had distinctive circumstances and that lecturers should understand and not expect the same from them as from other students. This study also revealed that student mothers at the university do not get any special treatment from the university or lecturers. They are not regarded as special students with special needs. This is regardless of the documented policy in place that, as indicated by Stephens (2017), states “The University of UKZN undertakes to support all pregnant students as best as possible to enable completion of the academic programme within the limits of available resources.” A similar situation in Zimbabwe, revealed by Berg and Mamhute (2013) applies, in that no arrangements are made to enable student mothers to take their examinations after giving birth. Student mothers at UKZN also indicated that they are expected to multitask and they further mentioned that at university there is no policy in place to protect student mothers if they go to give birth or if their children are sick. When their school work or assignments are due they are expected to catch up regardless of conditions they are facing.

This means that the majority of student mothers are unaware of the policy protecting student mothers at the university. In addition to the UKZN principles and guidelines for support of pregnant student’s pregnancy, Stephens (2017) points out that, in all cases, it will be the student’s responsibility to catch up with work (written, practical, laboratory) that may have been missed. Chauke (2013) finds that there is a lack of support from lecturers and from university; there are no extra lessons or catch up programmes to support student mothers. It was found that when student mothers are not well supported it can led to negative impact in their studies, because they find themselves in a difficult position when they have to choose between their studies and their children.

5.4.2 Support from children’s fathers (“baby daddies”)

This study discovered that some student mothers are not well supported by baby daddies. However some baby daddies do support student mothers and this help does play a vital role to lessen the burden on student mothers. Hunter (2010) reports the view of masculinity in which being a man is framed as a “provider” role. Gee and Rhodes (2003) argue that attempts to understand the role of fathers in the lives of adolescent mothers are necessary. It is essential

not to overlook the importance of the father and their role in support of their children and of the student mothers, while student mothers focus on their studies. Student mothers need financial and emotional support. The majority of student mothers complained about not being supported by baby daddies.

Mangino (2008) indicates that personal support includes the support from the father of the baby, parents, external programmes or services faced by the teen parent. The author further emphasises the importance of having caring and compassionate leaders in teen parent programmes. According to Richter et al. (2013), the majority of South Africa's children are not fortunate with regard to a positive father/child relationship. They further explain that it highlights several salient features of fatherhood in the country, particularly low rates of marriages and fathers' absence from households. The findings are that there are some "baby daddies" who deny being responsible for the pregnancy. Richter et al. (2010) state that men may not wish or be prepared to take on the added responsibility for children, and their family may prefer not acknowledge paternity.

Furthermore, student mothers indicated that the support from their children's fathers does not come easily. They beg support from the child's fathers, and in some cases the father has a choice, regarding whether he wants to give support to the child's mother or not. Findings from the student mothers also revealed that most of the men in their lives regard themselves as superior to women. . They view it as acceptable for a women to beg them for help, even if it is their responsibility to care for their children. It was also discovered in this study that some student mothers do receive financial and emotional support from the father of their child, and this has assisted them to cope with their studies. According to Steyn (2015) if mothers feel emotionally supported by their child's father, during pregnancy and after, they are less likely to experience postpartum depression

5.4.3 Peer support

It was found that student mothers often turn to their peers for any support they need, owing to the lack of support from the university. Friends were the only strong structure offering support. Student mothers associate themselves with people who are in similar circumstances. Student mothers find themselves socializing among themselves, they give each other moral support, financial support, parental assistance and emotional support. Since they are not well supported by the institution, usually they find themselves turning to their friends for any assistance. The

support they getting from their friends might not, though, be enough to simplify their academic demands. Taukeni (2014) strongly recommends that there should be student mothers' group support within the university Student Support Services on campus in order to alleviate some of the stress, isolation and loneliness.

5.4.4 Family support

The study indicated that the family were the greatest support for student mothers, both financially and by parenting their children while student mothers are focusing in their studies. Family support plays a huge role in enabling student mothers to progress with their studies.

5.4.5 Government support

Student mothers were all getting social grants from the government via SASSA. It was revealed that little basic money is receive from the government social grant. When young women come from deprived backgrounds it can be quite a challenge, they had to use it to finance the expenses of their children. On the other hand a few student mothers felt that they benefitted from giving birth if they got financial support from homes and baby daddies. They do not use their child grants to finance the living expenses of their children, but they spend it to buy their own things.

5.5 How do student mothers balance the demands of academic work and parenting at university?

The finding in this study of student mothers highlight the fact that managing to balance both roles of being a mother and a fulltime student is vital (Klein et al., 2014). Student-parents have many unique responsibilities that they must balance and it is important to provide a resource that will help them navigate both roles. In addition, they all mentioned that this was challenging but that they wanted to remain students and complete their studies. Furthermore, student mothers have come up with four fundamental strategies to balance their two roles, depending on whether they live with their children or not: namely, keeping both roles separate, better time management, having people to lean on and prioritising both roles. Singh and Hamid (2016) state that all teenage mothers stress that they experience great difficulties managing their personal and schooling responsibility. However if young mothers are able to plan well how they balance these two roles, it might not be stressful to juggle between them.

5.6 Recommendations for further study

There are recommendations for further studies, as follows: there is a huge failing in the policy to support student mothers. Student mothers were all unaware that is a policy in place that support student mothers. Further investigation can focus on the visibility of policies to support student mothers at university. Other possible areas include documenting the strategies that support student mothers in balancing both roles, being a mother and a student, currently there is no documented strategies that could assist student mother to cope with their studies. Documenting the journey of a pregnant student at university, or of being an expectant mother while attending university fulltime, mainly the researcher do not focus on the journey on their pregnant while attending the university fulltime, this can have significant impact to understand their journey. Documenting student “baby daddies” or the experiences of fatherhood among university students. Currently researcher don’t talk much about student father, this could be significant to understand their experiences too of being a father while attending the university fulltime.

5.7 Conclusion

This study explored experiences of student mothers at the university. Much of the research on young mothers has been conducted with schooling mothers, while university mothers do not receive much research attention. The experiences of the schooling mothers and university mothers are similar in many ways. However, the participants’ responses indicate that the university does not offer the institutional support that schools do. The findings show that, although managing the roles of being a student and being a mother was challenging, student mothers also mentioned some favourable experiences. They emphasised that support was crucial to their success in managing these roles and that they receive varied degrees of support from the fathers of their children, their peers and their families.

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Appendix A: Ethical clearance



13 December 2017

Ms Sithuliwe Bukhosini 213570394
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Bukhosini

Protocol reference number: HSS/2202/017M

Project title: Being student and mother: Exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 16 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Prof S Singh & Dr C Eke
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc. School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: ximbag@ukzn.ac.za / snymam@ukzn.ac.za / mohung@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses

Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Westville

Appendix B: Gatekeeper Letter



16 October 2017

Ms Sithulile Bukhosini
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN

Email: shukhosini@gmail.com singhs7@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Bukosini

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Being student and a mother: Exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students".

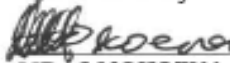
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with and female student mothers on the Edgewood campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR S S MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medunsa School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix C: Consent form



Dear Student

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Sithulile Bukhosini. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am currently undertaking for my Masters Dissertation.

A brief description of the study follows:

Title –The experiences of being a mother and a full time student at university

Being a full time student while being a mother is likely to be challenging and/or rewarding for young mothers studying at the university. Much of the research on teenage mothers have been carried out in schools. Although some university students fall under the same category “teenage”, but not much attention has been given to their experiences. The study can be significant by contributing knowledge that will help understand students’ experiences of being a mother and full time student.

Please be aware of the following:

- Confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld at all times.
- The interviews will be 45 minutes to 60 minutes long. These times can be altered to suit your timetable.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research at any time that you feel you no longer want to continue. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- An audio recorder will be used (of which permission will be requested from you first) for both the focus group discussions and interview sessions. An audio recorder is useful to capture your exact words, strengthening the trustworthiness of the study.
- After collection of data recordings and transcriptions will be validated with you by sending through both the transcripts and recordings of both the sessions.

- The final study will be sent to you by email.
- The study is not designed in to create any stress or anxiety but if your participation gives rise to any anxiety or stress then you may contact the psychologist who is based at the Edgewood campus: Ms Lindi Ngubane. Her telephone number is 031 2603653 and email address is ngubanel@ukzn.ac.za.
- You may contact the HSSREC Research Office for any complaints and/or concerns through:

Prem Mohun: Tel: 031 260 4557, E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Mariette Snyman: Tel: 031 260 8350, E-mail: Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Phumelele Ximba: Tel: 031 260 3587, E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

- I can be contacted at:
Sithulile Bukhosini: Cell: 078 125 40 88, E-mail: sbukhosini@gmail.com
- You may also contact my supervisor:
Prof S. Singh
Tel: 031 260 7326 E-mail: Singhs7@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you in advance for your agreement and participation in this study.

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby *consent/ do not consent* to an audio recording the interview sessions. (Please mark your selection with a **X**)

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

Appendix D: Interview guide



Interview guide

1. **How old are you?**
2. **How many children do you have?**
3. **Are you single or married?**
4. **How long have you being in the university**

Interview Questions

- 1.1 Did you plan to be a mother while being a student at university?
- 1.2 What are the challenges of being a student and a mother?
- 1.3 Who cares for your child/ren while you are at university?
- 1.4 What kind of support do you get from family, friends, the child's father and social agencies in caring for your child?

- 1.5 What kind of support do you get at university?
- 1.6 What do you enjoy most doing with your child?
- 1.7 How has the baby affected your social life?
- 1.8 How has your overall attendance at school been since the birth of your child?
- 1.9 Do you ever miss deadlines for schoolwork because of the child?
- 1.10 Do you ever have to postpone class work because of the child(ren)?
- 1.11 What are your positive experience of being a mother while a student?
- 1.12 Do you think that your life is very different from other female students who are not mothers? Please explain
- 1.13 How have you being able to balance motherhood and being a student?
- 1.14 What advice would you give to other university female students that may be in your situation that may assist them?

Appendix E: Sample of transcriptions

Sithulile (researcher) well, I might as well introduce myself as well then, my name is Sithulile, I am masters student: Gender Education in the school of education at the university of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The title of my project is *“Being student and a mother: Exploring experiences of motherhood among university students”* being a full time student is likely to be challenging and or rewarding for young mothers studying at the university. Much of the research on teenage mothers have been carried out in schools. Although some university student fall under the same category of age “teenage”, but not much attention has been given to their experiences, the study can be significant by contributing knowledge that help understand students’ experience of being a mother and full time student.

Participant 1: Dane 23 year old single mother with 1child and doing 4th year

Did you plan to be a mother while being a student at university?

“Not all: I didn’t plan, I got pregnant when I was in my first year so it was unplanned”

Probe

So you mean it was unplanned it just happened incidental?

“yeah”

What are the challenges of being a mother and a student?

“Yoh the challenges hmm when it comes to studying and doing your work assignment it is very hard to take care of your child and you have to study at same time: it very hard to balance being a mother and studying at same time”

Who care for your child while you at the university?

“I am living with at home and I travel every day as I am not living at res. Yoh my child 1 week she lives with my sister in Umlazi and 1 week she is living with my mother. So every week I am travelling 1 week I am going to Umlazi to drop her off and the other I am coming back to Chatsworth it is very difficult.”

Probe

So it doesn't affect you that you seeing your child going from one place to another

"It does affect me when she's in Umlazi I don't see her for the whole week she's with my sister and when she is in Chatsworth she is with my mother and my mother works night shift she is normally leaves around 3pm and leaves her with my brother, so it affect me I will be in class and I am in like what she is doing "kaze udlalaphi kanjalo"

Probe: She is not going to day care Centre?

"no no yoh I am living in Chatsworth I can't afford its very expensive"

Probe: So it is very expensive to afford a child care center while you at the university

"Yes"

Probe: Oh I get you financially you can't afford because you still a student

"Yes so I have to travel to one week this side and 1 week the other side it is very exhausting sometimes I don't have time to look at my books. Weekend I have to travel to Umlazi and fetch her and the other week go back to the other place"

[What kind of support do you get from family, friends, the child's father and social agencies in caring for your child?](#)

"So the child father is not there as I am a single parent, he is not there in my life or child life. My family are very supportive they are assisting me to raise her, without assistance from them I would be nothing"

Probe: Oh that good because they give you support that you need: that good

"And they pushing me to study they gave second chance in life as I made a mistake I had a child but they didn't give up on me. They said go back to school"

Probe: They know that with education you going to succeed anyway and you will be fine anyway

[What kind of support do you get at university?](#)

"From the university? University don't give any support at all, truly I haven had about any support, because if you pregnant and writing exams and you need to go to clinic or to your doctor, you don't get special treatment, no support at all. I can go and give birth and they still want their assignment, they want their work to be done and there is no policy in place that said

its gives you such time because you went to deliver or to give birth or you pregnant or you this, they don't care if in or not"

Probe: Nobody care where are you?

"Nobody cares what is going on"

Probe: Even if you can report that I am going to give birth and I will come after

"I don't think they can they can consider that because there is no written policy that covers that or they can support you with that"

What do you enjoy the most doing with your child?

Everything and having a child while studying its pushes you more, to want to get this degree because you know you living for someone. You want to get educated and want best for your child and your child to be educated. So my child is my strength she encourage me. Sometimes you know with a workload we get, you will be like no this is not for me. But you look at your child and you will be like this is for her.

Probe: So you can actually said your child is motivating you to be more responsible than ever

"Yes my child is my motivation because sometimes you will be like no I am thinking about dropping out but your heart will say no. You think about your child and where you come from your home and you will get back on your feet"

How has the baby affected your social life?

"Hmmm my social life, I would say it has affected me negatively and positively because I can't move up and down in my child is in Chatsworth I can't go out with my friends. And I can't be staying on campus without doing nothing because I know I left a child at home, so I am not interacting much with my age group as much as before"

Probe: So you actually said your child has taught you to be more responsible than any other girls at your age group because they still in things.

"yes they still parting but when you have a child you have to be responsible sometimes you have to neglect your friends if you have too"

How has your overall attendance at school been since the birth of your child?

"It 100%, having a child it never affected me"

Do you ever miss a deadlines for schoolwork because of the child?

“No I haven’t as I said my family my mother I think she wouldn’t allow that she would rather not go to work than me missing a deadline at school”

Probe: That good: she is supporting you very well, she make sure that you priorities your school work first

Do you ever have to postpone class work because of child(ren)

“Yes may be if she has to go to the to the clinic, if I have a group work I have to tell my peer group members to sympathize with me yeah sometimes it does happened”

What are your positive experience of being a mother while a student?

“Positive experience of being a mother and a student I would say being responsible”

Do you think that your life is very different is very different from other female student who are not mothers? Please explain

“It is very different even I sometimes I would wish if I don’t have a child. Having a child is a huge responsibility, you see your friends that are at your same age group that they don’t have children, they doing their own thing yet they don’t have that mindset. That I have to do this for my child. It is stressing I am single mom and its very stressing sometimes y feel like I want to be like them but with a choice that I made I can’t go back, so my life is very different from them”

How have you being able to balance motherhood and being a student?

“I balance by the help of my family because when she is at Umlazi I get a chance to study and look at my books and get more time to study. When she is with me I come home as I travel every day to campus, I have to feed her and bath her, later on I will be exhausted, I don’t even look at my books and what a lecturer taught me, the next day I would come to campus with no idea what happened yesterday and tired but I do try to balance when she is with my sister”

What advice would you give to other university female students that may be in your situation that my assist them?

“As we all know that being a student and a mother is not easy. But the advice I will give them to student mothers is if you are a mother then take responsibility, accepting that you are a

mother, get support, I am not sure if some of us don't have families. But if you accept that I am different I am mom I need to play a role everything will fall into place"

Appendix F: Turnitin certificate

Being student and a mother: exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11%	8%	2%	7%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal <small>Student Paper</small>	2%
2	W. Lawrence Neuman. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, 5e, 2003 <small>Publication</small>	1%
3	mg.co.za <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
4	journals.ufs.ac.za <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
5	islmblogblog.files.wordpress.com <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
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9	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	1%
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Exclude matches < 1%

Appendix G: Editor's letter

Crispin Hemson
15 Morris Place
Glenwood
Durban
South Africa 4001

hemsonc@gmail.com
C: 082 926 5333
H: 031 206 1738


29th January 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have carried out a full language editing of a dissertation by Sithulile Bukhosini entitled: **Being student and a mother: Exploring the experiences of motherhood among university students**

.

Yours sincerely



Crispin Hemson