

THE LIFE-WORLD OF THE SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

by

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DECLARATION

" I declare that this dissertation '*The life-world of the schoolgirl-mother*' represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."

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N BEESHAM

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November 2000

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother. The study commenced with an orientation framework in which the problem of the high incidence of teenage pregnancies was analyzed.

The orientation to this study is followed by a chapter concerning the design of the research, substantiating the choice of format, methods of data collection and analysis. A qualitative research method was chosen on account of its explorative, descriptive and contextual nature. Data was collected by means of interviews with schoolgirl-mothers. The data was analyzed by using a phenomenological approach in which emerging themes were identified. This was followed by a literature review to compare and complement the qualitative data analysis.

The results from the qualitative research showed that adolescent girls are not adequately informed about the meaning of the onset of menarche and this lack of authentic knowledge may result in teenage pregnancy while still in school. Most girls fell pregnant between the ages of 15 and 17 years. Schoolgirl-mothers also indicated their lack of knowledge concerning the availability and use of contraceptives. The study revealed a relation between socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy and a recurrence of adolescent parents with each new generation. Teenage pregnancy is associated with interruption in schooling and school dropout.

In the literature review the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother was discussed. She can only form a meaningful life-world by forming meaningful relationships with the self, other people, things and ideas and religion. Being a teenage mother causes these relationships to become impaired because the girl is not mature enough or emotionally ready for the responsibilities of motherhood.

The study concludes with findings from the research and the following recommendations were made:

- Accountable sexuality education must be available to all teenagers.
- Clinics must be easily accessible with adequately equipped personnel to assist teenagers on all aspects of sexuality.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is today no uncommon phenomenon to have pregnant girls or mothers as learners in schools. In some secondary schools as well as primary schools, many of the learners are unmarried mothers and unmarried fathers (Advertorial, 2000:8). Different cultures have different views on this phenomenon, and in some cultures such incidences are accepted as part of normal living (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:210). Whatever the views, it should be remembered that premarital or experimental sexual activity, in whatever culture, has severe negative effects on both the young, not-yet-adult, participants and the child who may possibly be born (Gerdes, 1990:235; Simpson, 1990:45).

Sexual unfolding is accomplished during adolescence and it is a period of recognition of sexual preferences and the development of sharing sexual pleasure in a loving relationship (Agarwal & Baveja, 1998:54). One of the main aspects of the development of adolescents is the contraction of heterosexual relationships (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:126). A major problem concerning these relationships is the enormous rise in teenage pregnancies in recent years (Advertorial, 2000:8). According to Lerner (1998:423) there is nothing new about adolescents engaging in sexual relationships. What is new, however, is the extent and involvement in these sexual relationships and how it affects the adolescent physically, emotionally and vocationally (Yomi-Roland, 2000).

As an adolescent the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother will also be affected with the added responsibility of motherhood. The life-world of the schoolgirl-mother, which includes her relations with the self, others, ideas and religion, are characterised by the inadequate realization of these relationships. These impaired relationships are an expression of her life-world as a schoolgirl-mother as compared with the life-world of a 'normal' schoolgirl. In her positions as an unmarried mother in school she experiences negative relations such as estrangement, rejection and so forth. The schoolgirl-mother's behaviour and actions should be interpreted within the context of her life-world (Vrey, 1990:186).

One fifth of the world population is between the age of twelve and twenty and in the adolescent phase. It is therefore not surprising that adolescent (teenage) mothers of school going age comprise thirty percent of the pregnancies in the world's population (Robinson, 2000:2). South Africa has a large teenage population and is rated to have the highest teenage pregnancy amongst the world's population (Advertorial, 2000:9).

It is therefore important that adolescents should be made aware that they are people with sexual feelings and attractions and most important, that they have reproductive capabilities. They should learn to interact in a competent, responsible, healthy and meaningful way to achieve balance between social responsibility and personal expression, freedom and growth (Crain, 1992:243).

1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The average age onset of sexual activity among South African teenagers is 15 years and more than one third of births in the country are to girls under the

age of 18 years (Advertorial, 2000:8). Apart from unwanted pregnancies sexually transmitted diseases are commonplace among sexually active teenagers and despite substantial education efforts over the past few years, condom usage among teenagers remains around 10% (Zungu, 2000:11). A national and demographic health survey in 1999 revealed that 35% of South African teenage girls have either been pregnant or had one child by the age of 19 years (Robinson, 2000:2).

It is therefore an undisputed fact that there is an increasing incidence of teenage pregnancy (Makgalabone, 1999:55). The specific conditions under which this problem occurs is certainly not homogenous and may vary from one demographic background to another. According to Chewning and Van Koningsveld (1998:1246-1248) and Makgalabone (1999:56-57) several studies indicated the following conditions contributing to teenage pregnancies:

- . Lack of sexuality knowledge, sex education and guidance.
- . Lack of parental care, control and supervision for example single parent families.
- . Peer group pressure or influence.
- . Lack of recreation facilities and social entertainment.
- . Exposure to sex movies and pornographic material.
- . Lack of parental example in wrong role modelling.
- . The perception of "marriage-and-not-education-a-priority."

Research studies show that black adolescents are more likely to engage in sexual activities at an early age because of socio-cultural conditions such as "miss-guidance" from initiation (Soal, 2000:4; Zungu, 2000:4).

From the above it became clear that many unplanned and unwanted pregnancies occur during adolescence when young people become sexually active without adequate knowledge about contraceptives and the result and consequences of their actions (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:180).

An unwanted pregnancy and the birth of a baby have various psychological and health consequences for both mother and child (Saphire, 1986:425). Irresponsible sexual activities by teenagers can also lead to emotional, health and sexual problems, curtail the schoolgirl-mother's education, reduce employment opportunities and result in adverse socio-economic consequences.

According to Makgalabone (1999:57) and Gerdes (1990:235) teenage pregnancy is causing much concern in many countries, including South Africa for, *inter alia*, the following reasons:

- . Medically, adolescent pregnancy is considered high-risk pregnancy because of the higher incidence of prenatal complications, prematurity and infant mortality.
- . Educationally, it often means an interruption of or end to schooling, which ushers in a cycle of failure in occupational training for the mother.

- Socially, it may perpetuate the conditions of deprivation and poverty that often characterise the teenage mother's background.
- Emotionally, it may be an attempt to satisfy unmet emotional needs for intimacy, bonding and being needed. It may relate to the girl's search for identity or becoming a mother, the girl may feel she has attained a certain identity and status.
- Role confusion in the family may ensue as the 'grandmother' becomes 'mother' and the real mother becomes more of a 'sister' than a mother to her child.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In essence the problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to the life-world of the girl who becomes a mother while still in school. Being a pregnant teenager inevitably leads to schooling disruption which means a life-world remarkably different from that of other schoolgirls and thus some of the questions that require answers are:

- Do schoolgirls, in the adolescence phase, have adequate knowledge about sexuality issues?
- Does motherhood during a girl's schooling years have any affect on her life-world and therefore her relationship with the self, others, ideas and things, and religion?

What are the future opportunities for the schoolgirl-mother and her child?

1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

In the interest of clarity and understanding, important concepts in this study need to be elucidated.

1.4.1 The gender issue

In this study all references to any gender include references to the other gender.

1.4.2 Adolescent

The adolescent is the youth at the stage between childhood and adulthood, termed adolescence (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:13). According to Le Roux (1992:3) the development of the adolescent's code of moral behaviour, self-discovery and the establishment of an identity, changes in emphasis, and the actualization of social independence are characteristic of this phase.

1.4.3 Education

Education is the practice - the educator's concern in assisting the child on his way to adulthood. Education can therefore be defined as the conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a non-adult to bring him to independence (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:366). Education

as pedagogic assistance is the positive influencing of a non-adult by an adult, with the specific purpose of effecting changes of significant value. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:5) contend that education refers to the help and support which the child receives from an adult with a view of attaining adulthood.

1.4.Experience

According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:383) the term experience as derived from the German term "erfahren" and the Afrikaans word "ervaar" implies to be in motion and while being in motion to undergo or experience something. The verb "erfahren" also implies the acquisition of knowledge, getting to know and becoming aware of something. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:19) state that experience is related to the emotional and affective dimension of being human and indicates an evaluation of a fluid situation in broad categories of pleasant and unpleasant. Examples of feelings experienced, such as excitement, disappointment, gaiety and frustration during involvement in a situation indicates how a person is emotionally effected by the situation (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:6). Experience never occurs in a vacuum, but is related to a person's situation.

1.4.5 Life-world

Life-world or daily life is the world in which people conduct a way of life and a mode of being (Crain, 1992:260). Every person lives in his own life-world. According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:435) life-world is a life-reality in contrast to non-reality and includes, among other things, the education reality, the social reality, the life-world of the young child, the adolescent, the adult, etc.

Du Toit and Kruger (1991:15) say a person's life-world includes everything that has meaning for him, not only the geographical world, but all the relationships with people, objects, ideas and oneself. Vrey (1990:21) describes life-world as a *gestalt* of meaningful relationships where behaviour and actions should be interpreted within the context of the life-world, since one has attributed significance which one understands.

1.4.6 Lived-experience

Every human being live-experiences life in his own unique manner, which means that the child in an educative situation must be supported to constitute for himself a personal world of meaning (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:453). Lived-experience is regarded as a central category in educational psychology.

1.4.7 Relationship

A relationship is a particular mode in which persons, things, ideas, self and God are mutually connected (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:193). Such relationships are usually dynamic and interactive and are initiated by the individual through his involvement and the assigning of meaning in his life-world. Relationships implies an association between two referents and the child is busy throughout life with these associations, giving them meaning and so forming a relationship (Vrey, 1990:20-21). Relationships can be experienced as pleasant or unpleasant and is then either encouraged or avoided. Le Roux (1992:14) describes relationship as the dynamic, interactive, truly human stand or alignment with another person or persons, whereby bipolar association or interaction is established and mutual influence is realised.

1.4.8 Schoolgirl-mother

The schoolgirl-mother can be described as a girl of school going age who has reached sexual maturity and is able to bear children (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:210). A girl can be seen as a schoolgirl-mother if she is an adolescent, in school and of compulsory school age.

1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The aims are:

- To undertake an empirical investigation into the life-world of schoolgirl-mothers.
- To study and report on relevant existing literature pertaining to the life-world of schoolgirl-mothers.
- To make certain recommendations and guidelines in order to provide:
 - correct sexuality education;
 - suitable prevention methods to girls for becoming pregnant while still in school; and
 - accountable assistance to schoolgirl-mothers and their babies to meet their needs.

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows:

- A qualitative study comprising structured interviews with schoolgirl-mothers.
- A literature study of available, relevant literature.
- Visits to clinics and informal interviews with the clinic staff concerning contraception, prenatal and postnatal care.

1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY

In chapter 2 the method of research followed in this study will be explained.

The interview responses from the schoolgirl-mothers will be analyzed and presented in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will focus on a literature review of the life-world of the adolescent schoolgirl-mother.

Chapter 5 will comprise of findings from the research, shortcomings of the study and certain relevant recommendations.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to a plan for selecting respondents (subjects), research sites and data collecting procedures to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:162). The method of research shows which individuals will be studied, and when and where and under which circumstances they will be studied. The aim of sound research methods is to provide results that are judged to be credible. Credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable. Silverman (1997:56) says credibility is enhanced when the research design takes into account potential sources of error that may undermine the quality of the research and may distort the findings.

In this chapter the qualitative method of research utilised in this study will be focused on. The method of research, validity of the research and the role and reciprocity of research ethics will be discussed.

2.2 AIMS OF THIS QUALITATIVE STUDY

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Understanding is acquired by analysing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating participants' meanings for these situations and events (Berg, 1995:7). Participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, thoughts and actions. The goal of the researcher in this

study was to understand the school-girl mother's perspective of her life-world, relationship with the self and others and her future prospects. The qualitative technique will allow the researcher to share in the understandings and perceptions of the school-girl mother and to explore how she structures and gives meaning to her life-world. Qualitative research will also provide the researcher with a mean of accessing unquantifiable facts about school-girl mothers.

2.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study can be specified as a single case studies programme evaluation, based on qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research.

2.3.1 Qualitative

According to Lyman (Morse & Field, 1996:8) qualitative methods are particularly useful when describing a phenomenon from the *emic* perspective which is the perspective from a 'native point of view'. The phenomenon of girls falling pregnant, becoming mothers and continuing with their school career was described from a local (indigenous) perspective. Qualitative research is usually conducted in a naturalistic setting, so the context in which the phenomenon occurs is considered to be part of the phenomenon itself (Mouton, 1996:45). Therefore no attempt is made by the researcher to place experimental controls upon the phenomenon being studied or to control the 'extraneous' variables. In this study the researcher aimed to explore all accessible aspects of the problem and the intervening variables arising from the context of the study are considered a part of the problem (Morse & Field, 1996:9).

Struebert and Carpenter (1995:12) emphasize the following six significant characteristics of qualitative research:

- A belief in multiple realities.
- A commitment to identify, an approach to an understanding that will support the phenomenon under investigation.
- Commitment to the participant's point of view.
- To conduct inquiry in such a way that it does not disturb the natural context of the phenomena of interest.
- Acknowledge the participation of the researcher in the research.
- Conveyance of the understanding of phenomena by reporting in a literature style rich with the participant commentary.

In this study the researcher strived to acknowledge all the above characteristics and therefore chose qualitative research, rather than quantitative research methods.

2.3.2 Explorative

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42) the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. In this study the goal was to gain insight into the life-world of the school-girl mother. Mouton (1996:103) says the aim of exploratory research is to establish the 'facts', to gather new data and to determine whether there are interesting patterns in the data.

The purpose of the current study is to establish whether motherhood has any significant effect on the life-world of a school-girl mother. The researcher will remain open for any new ideas and suggestions and will seek to explore as comprehensively as possible in order to achieve the best results. Preconceived notions tend to send research in a specific direction and should therefore be avoided (Mouton, 1996:45).

2.3.3 Descriptive

Descriptive research is primarily concerned with the nature and the degree of existing situations and the purpose is to describe things as accurately and precisely as possible, things the way they are or were (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:281). The descriptive method seeks to describe the situation as it is, thus there is no intervention on the part of the researcher and therefore no control (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:59). In this study the researcher seeks to describe the schoolgirl-mother in settings such as the home, the school and her relationships with the self and other and then interprets the obtained data.

2.3.4 Contextual

In a contextual research strategy the phenomena are studied in terms of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. Presenting the context is essential to understand the study and for extending the understandings acquired to future research or practices (Mouton, 1996:133). In this study a contextual strategy will be followed due to the importance of focusing attention on the life-world of the school-girl mother in order to gather in-depth information on her real-life experiences. The goal is therefore not to generalise the findings to a specific population, but to keep it contextual specific and true to this specific study.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:352) the presentation of participants' language is imperative, because this is the data, just as in quantitative research statistical tables are the data. Most qualitative studies present data in two ways, namely:

- short illustrative quotations; and
- entire paragraphs of field notes and interview transcripts.

In this study the researcher will try to integrate quotations from the interviewees into the analytic interpretations which will be offered in the next chapter.

2.4 SAMPLING

Qualitative researchers view sampling processes as dynamic, *ad hoc* and phasic rather than static or *a priori* parameters of populations (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:401). While there are statistical rules for probability sampling and sample size, there are no guidelines for purposeful sample size and samples can range from one to forty (Morse & Field, 1996:45). Purposeful sampling is mostly used in qualitative research. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:95) describe purposeful sampling as "selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth" when one wants to understand something about cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all such cases.

In purposeful sampling the researcher searches for information-rich key informants, groups, places or events to study. In other words these samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating (Mouton, 1996:67). The sample for this study was selected purposefully because only school-girl mothers are relevant to the research problem.

Secondary schools in the Stanger (KwaDukuza) area in northern KwaZulu Natal were targeted. These schools were visited to establish if there were girls with one (or more) children. A letter to seek permission from the parents and their daughters to partake in the research project was delivered to them (Annexure 1). After receiving consent from the schoolgirl-mothers and their parent(s) individual appointments were arranged for conducting the interviews.

2.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

2.5.1 Literature study

Neuman (1997:89) explains the importance of a literature review as an integral part of the research process as follows: "Scientific research is not an activity of isolated hermits who ignore others' findings. Rather, it is a collective effort of many researchers who share their results with one another and who pursue knowledge as a community." Unlike in many quantitative studies researchers in qualitative studies locate and criticize most of the literature for the study during data collection and analysis. They do a continuing literature review because the exact research focus and questions evolve as the research progresses (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:143). This approach to reviewing the literature merely reflects the discovery orientation and inductive approach typical of qualitative research.

In this study the researcher will endeavour to continue to read broadly in the literature as data is collected. The aim of this continuous literature review is not to provide the researcher with preconceived ideas but to lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

2.5.2 Interviews

Morse and Field (1996:26) describe interviews in qualitative research as open-response questions to obtain data of participants: how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or 'make sense' of the important events in their lives.

In this study a standardized open-ended interview (Annexure 2) will be conducted with schoolgirl-mothers to establish how they experience their life-world. In this standardized open-ended interview the participants are asked the same questions in the same order, thus reducing interviewer bias. The aspects taken into consideration by the researcher in the selection of this interview strategy are that it:

- is centered on the interviewee's life world;
- seeks to understand the meaning of the phenomena in the interviewees life-world;
- is qualitative;
- is descriptive;
- is specific;
- is presuppositionless;
- focused on certain themes;
- is open for ambiguities and changes;
- depends on the sensitivity of the interviewer;
- takes place in an interpersonal interaction; and
- may be a positive experience.

In this study individual interviews will be conducted between the researcher (interviewer) and an interviewee to collect the necessary information (data) concerning the life-world of the school-girl mother. According to Silverman

(1997:113) empirical data can be obtained by means of interviewing people and asking questions about their perceptions, activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns, thoughts, future expectations, etc. All interviews are an interpersonal interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

In qualitative research the interviewer is the primary research instrument and therefore plays a significant role in the collection and analysis of the data. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:163) maintain that the personal characteristics of the interviewer, such as age, experience in interviewing, educational level and gender, may influence the responses of the interviewee. The empathy, sensitivity, humour and sincerity of the interviewer also plays an important role in interviews.

An important factor to consider in conducting interviews is deciding at what stage the collected data will be sufficient. According to Mouton (1996:164) the following criteria will indicate that enough data has been obtained:

- When resources are exhausted.
- When the data collected do not provide any new information.
- When data shows similarities.
- When new data is irrelevant to existing knowledge.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative studies data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process integrated into all phases of qualitative research which means that categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection (Creswell, 1998:142). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:502) qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting,

categorizing, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, qualitative data analysis varies widely because of the different research foci, purposes and data collection techniques.

All the data from the interviews with the purposefully selected school-girl mothers will be transcribed and then analyzed. When conducting the analysis the researcher will give consideration to the following factors concerning the data obtained during the interviews:

- . the words;
- . the context;
- . the internal consistency;
- . the frequency or extensiveness of comments;
- . the intensity of comments; and
- . the specificity of responses.

Although the process of qualitative data analysis varies, several general principles and common practises guide most researchers. The following general rules in qualitative data analysis were taken into account by the researcher in this study (Creswell, 1998: 143; Merriam, 1998:183):

- . Data analysis begins as soon as the first set of data is gathered and runs parallel to data collection because each activity (data collection and interim analysis) informs and drives the other activities.
- . Data analysis, like data collection, proceeds in a relatively orderly manner and requires self-discipline, and organised mind and perseverance.

- . Attending to data is a reflective activity that usually produces a set of analytical notes or memos that guide the analysis process.
- . It is difficult to process large amounts of diverse data all at once and the analyst concentrates on sets of smaller and similar data at any one time.
- . Data segments are categorized according to an organizing system of topics predominantly derived from the data themselves. The categories are preliminary and tentative in the beginning, and they remain flexible, not rigid schemes.
- . The main intellectual tool is comparison. The technique of comparing and contrasting is used in practically all intellectual tasks during analysis; identifying data segments, naming a category (theme), and grouping each data segment into a topical category. The goal is to identify similarities and distinctions between categories to discover patterns.

2.7 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

2.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (Merriam, 1998:91). According to Schumacher and McMillan (1997: 404) validity addresses these questions:

- . Do researchers actually observe what they think they observe?
- . Do researchers usually hear the meanings that they think they hear?

Validity of qualitative designs is therefore the degree to which interpretations and concepts have *mutual meanings* between the participants and the researcher. The researcher and participants agree on the description or composition of events, especially the meanings of these events.

In qualitative research claims for validity rest on the data collection and analysis techniques (Berg, 1995:5). Qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of any of nine possible strategies to enhance design validity: prolonged field work, participants verbatim language, low-inference descriptors, multiple researches, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participant review and negative cases. The following table (Table 1) summarises the strategies utilised by the researcher to enhance validity.

Table 1: Strategies to enhance validity

Strategy	Description of application
Prolonged and persistent field work	Allows interim data analysis and corroboration to ensure the match between findings and participant reality
Participant language; verbatim account	Obtain literal statements of participants and quotations from documents
Low-inference descriptors	Record precise, almost literal, and detailed descriptions of people and situations
Mechanically recorded data	Use of tape recorders
Participant researcher	Use of participant recorded perceptions in anecdotal records for corroboration
Member checking	Check informally with participants for accuracy during data collection.
Negative cases or discrepant data	Actively search for, record, analyze and report negative cases of discrepant data that are an exception to patterns or that modify patterns found in data
Participant review	Ask each participant to review the researcher's synthesis of all interviews with the person for accuracy of representation

2.7.2 Disciplined subjectivity

Disciplined subjectivity refers to the researcher's rigorous self-monitoring, that is, continuous self-questioning and re-evaluation of all phases of the research process (Morse & Field, 1996:66). Emotions in field work are essential in data

collection activities because of the face-to-face interaction and feelings also serve several useful functions throughout the research process (Neuman, 1997:123). According to Mouton (1996:109) researchers combine any of six possible strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of their subjectivity and perspective. In this study the researcher aimed to minimize researcher bias in accordance with the six strategies (Table 2) as identified by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:409):

Table 2: Strategies to minimize researcher bias

Strategy	Description of application
Peer debriefer	Select a colleague who facilitates the logical analysis of data and interpretation when the topic is emotionally charged or the researcher experiences conflicting values in data collection
Field lag	Maintain a log of dates, time, places, persons and activities to obtain access to informants and for each data set collected.
Field journal	Record the decisions made during the emerging design and the rationale; including judgements of data validity
Ethical considerations	Record the ethical dilemmas, decisions and actions in a field journal
Formal corroboration of initial findings	Conduct formal confirmation activities such as a survey, focus group or interviews

2.8 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:102) research ethics are about acquiring and disseminating trustworthy information in ways that cause no harm to those being studied. Throughout the process of data collection the problem of persuading participants to co-operate with the researcher is ever present. While lack of co-operation can be detrimental to a research project, participants have the *right* to refuse to participate and this must be respected by the researcher. Generally accepted ethical rights of participants that should be respected by the researcher are the following (Neuman, 1997:143; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:418-421):

- . Written consent of all respondents to take part in the research must be acquired as well as approval to use the data obtained.
- . The anonymity of all participants and institutions (schools) involved in the research must be protected.
- . The privacy of a respondent implicates that an individual's private behaviour or thoughts will not be misused to put him or her in a position of embarrassment.
- . The quality of research emphasises the integrity of the researcher. There should be a continuous awareness of personal values and beliefs.
- . The necessary planning must be done to prevent any possibility of physical or psychological harm to respondents.

The respondent or any participant in the research has the right to withdraw at any time from the research, despite any prior consent.

2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the various aspects regarding the research methodology to be used in this study were discussed. The research design was explored as well as the evaluative research cycle. Attention was also given to strategies to enhance trustworthiness and ethical measures relevant to this study.

The ensuing chapter will focus on the analysis of the research data.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology to be followed in this study was explained in chapter two. In this explanation attention was given to the qualitative method of research and the way in which qualitative data is collected.

In this chapter the data collected will be analyzed and the results thereof will be discussed. After giving a brief explanation of qualitative data analysis, the findings of the research will be discussed under the following headings:

- Biographical data of the respondents.
- The discussion of data obtained by means of interviews.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The analyses of data means the breakdown of the whole into its constituent elements (themes, sub-themes and categories) or parts so that the hierarchy of ideas is clarified, and/or relations between ideas are expressed more explicitly. Analysis of qualitative data involves the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories and the systematic exposure of the connection and interconnection between them and the arrangement and structure which holds the whole together.

3.2.1 Qualitative data

Qualitative data obtained by means of interviews can be voluminous and sitting down to make sense out of pages of interviews and field notes can be overwhelming (Creswell, 1998:150). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:533) data analysis is eclectic, in other words there is no 'right way' with regards to the interpretation and presentation of data.

The analysis of qualitative data is based on data 'reduction' and 'interpretation'. Voluminous amounts of information have to be reduced to certain patterns, categories and themes and then interpreted according to some schema. However, despite the variation, usually two aspects of a study are presented as data:

- the context; and
- the quotations of the participants'(respondents') language.

The actual statements of the people interviewed (or observed) represent their constructions of their life-world, the meanings they give to social situations and events. The researcher's task is to arrange these views in a logical manner, making the participants' meanings as clear as possible.

3.2.2 Interviews

The researcher was unknown to the respondents selected for this study. This eliminated any bias or influence from the interviewer during the interviews. Initially, respondents felt uncomfortable and embarrassed to share their experiences. However, as the interview progressed, respondents began to feel more at home as better rapport developed between interviewer and

interviewee and the latter were more willing to share her experiences. Some of the respondents lacked the ability to adequately express themselves in telling about some of their experiences. In such cases they had to be coaxed into verbalising their account of their experiences.

The study focused on a very sensitive issue concerning the traditional black culture. Because of these cultural issues with regards sexuality issues it was therefore not possible to adhere to the rigid rules of qualitative research in conducting interviews. The questions asked to a respondent were related to the aim of the research, namely how does she experiences her life-world as a schoolgirl who is a mother with the responsibility of caring and raising a child or children. Questions often had to be rephrased and even changed to obtain responses relevant to the aim of the interviews.

3.2.3 Reduction and interpretation of data

The data obtained consisted of recorded responses from the schoolgirl - mothers to questions asked by the interviewer. In order to obtain answers to the research questions it is necessary to interpret the responses. This was done by analysing the responses of the respondents and the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories. This method of data analysis is inductive because the identification of one theme led to the identification of a further theme or category.

The responses of the schoolgirl-mothers were included in the discussion of the themes. The respondents' answers to questions were directly quoted in order to give the lived-experience of the schoolgirl-mothers first hand. The fact that the quotations appear to be incoherent, illogical or confused in some instances, is an indication of the respondents' inability to express their

experiences and feelings in words. The questions were formulated in English which is a second language to the respondents.

3.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

The study comprised of 16 black schoolgirl-mothers. These individuals can be described as follows: Their ages ranged between 15 and 19 years. All of them were from the same demographic background and socio-economic status. The fathers of their children are all from the same race group as the mothers. None of the schoolgirl-mothers are married to the child's father. Fourteen of the respondents are still at school. Two are in grade 10, five in grade 11 and seven in grade 12. All the respondents indicated that they had to repeat a year on their return to school. One of the respondents had since completed matric.

3.4 THE EMERGENCE OF THEMES

A theme analysis describes the specific and distinctive recurring qualities, characteristics, subjects of discourse, concerns, etc. expressed during interviews. The researcher reflectively analyses aspects of human actions and events that illustrate recurring themes (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:455). The complexity and the interrelationships of the events and human lives are emphasized. In this study the themes were identified by the individual case studies and thereafter the themes were synthesized across the cases. The themes that emerged provided an explanation of the situations as experienced in the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother.

3.4.1 Socio-economic factors

The majority of respondents lived with large families in small two or three roomed houses. The homes comprised basic necessities and they experience this as normal living conditions since all the families in the neighbourhood occupied similar houses. A small number of the respondents however said that their living space was insufficient for the number of inhabitants. This is authenticated by the following replies:

"We have a two roomed house. It is extremely crowded for us. There are 13 people in our family. Our grandparents also live with us. We do not have too much furniture. Only my father works and it quite tough."

"We have two bedrooms in our house. My mother, two sisters, our children and I share one room. My three brothers sleep in the other. There isn't much space to move about."

Most of the schoolgirl-mothers had to walk long distances to and from school. After a long and tedious school day, respondents arrive at home where all the normal household chores await them. They have to take care of younger children including their own, prepare meals together with their schoolwork.

The residential area in which the respondents live lack any recreational facilities. No parks, sports fields, swimming pools, movie theatres, etc. were in close vicinity. The area only had one undeveloped field that was used by the boys for playing soccer. There were no opportunities for any recreational activities for the young people in the area. The situation was described as follows:

"There are no parks or gardens, this is more like a farm area. The TV and radio are the only forms of entertainment we have."

"We have no recreational facilities except for a small ground where the boys play soccer."

The majority of the respondents had no access to medical aid because of their socio-economic status. The low socio-economic status of the respondents families was the result of inadequate education that forced them into unskilled jobs with insufficient remuneration to support their families. The main mode of transport for the respondents were the bus service, taxis or by foot. The respondents perceive their home-life as difficult. They feel they could only afford the most essential items to make a living.

3.4.2 Knowledge about sexuality

Lack of authentic knowledge about sexuality issues seemed to be one of the major causes of pregnancies amongst the schoolgirls in this study. Adequate knowledge about sexuality can only be obtained by education. The family milieu and parents are regarded as the most suitable to inform the child about sexuality issues. Mothers fail to communicate the 'facts of life' to their daughters. Respondents indicated that information about menarche was acquired from an elder sister, peers at school or nurses from the local health department who visited the school annually. The latter spoke to the learners about nutrition, good hygiene and the monthly cycle. The following quotations show that there are still girls who are ill informed about the onset of menarche:

"I got my periods when I was 13 years old. I was shocked. I did not know about it."

"I got my first menses at the age of 13. I did not know what was happening."

Respondents were not advised about the consequences of engaging in a sexual relationship. They viewed a sexual relationship as an expression of love, a feeling of being wanted and of belonging to somebody. Peer pressure also emerged as an important factor for schoolgirls to get sexually active. This was confirmed by the following quotations from the girls:

"My boyfriend encouraged me and told me that if I truly loved him, I would sleep with him."

"I just wanted to be loved and feel loved by my boyfriend and we loved each other very much."

"My parents were going through a divorce. I felt so lonely and insecure and my boyfriend was warm, loving and understanding."

"My friends had sexual relationships and they used to boast about it at school. They were bragging about what their boyfriends could do."

"Some of my friends did have babies while they were still in school because they did not use a contraceptive."

Most pregnancies occur amongst girls in grades 8 to 12. The respondents were unaware of the possibility that being sexually active can result in falling pregnant. They only realised the full implications of their dilemma after the birth of the baby. Quotations that confirm the girls ignorance are:

"I did not know I could fall pregnant after having sex twice only."

"I did not know that by making love I could fall pregnant."

The majority of respondents indicated that they had no knowledge of contraception prior to falling pregnant. The discussion of issues concerning sexuality is still very much a taboo in black culture. Although the subject of menstruation is discussed amongst their peers, and being sexually active is bragged about, young girls are not adequately informed about the use of contraception. This is verified by the following responses from the girls that were interviewed:

"None of my friends and I knew anything about contraception until I fell pregnant."

"There is nobody that could tell me about contraceptives."

After their pregnancy the respondents, however, did seek information about contraception. All the respondents indicated that they are still sexually active and that they are now using some form of contraception. The most popular form seems to be the injection. Respondents verbalised as follows:

"I am still sexually active and now take the injection."

"I still sleep with my boyfriend and I am taking the pill now."

Respondents with more than one baby have different reasons for falling pregnant a second time while they were still in school:

"I did not use any contraception because my boyfriend might think I am sleeping around."

"I had the flu and was prescribed antibiotics by the local doctor. Nobody told me that this had an effect on the pill."

Although the respondents were knowledgeable about AIDS they are still in need of education concerning certain facts about AIDS and other venereal diseases. The sexual behaviour of adolescents in high school shows immaturity and irresponsibility. They are unaware or do not fully understand the risks and dangers of sexually transmitted diseases:

"I am afraid to get AIDS. I know that it can spread and you can get it from having unprotected sex. I do not know if my boyfriend has AIDS. I hope he doesn't"

"I did not think about AIDS. We do not know much about this and how you get it. Only after giving birth and going to the clinic did the nurse tell me about it. I am afraid. I know this is a killer disease."

"I know my boyfriend is sleeping with other girls. I do not think he has AIDS. He looks fit and well."

3.4.3 Family background

Most of the schoolgirl-mothers were brought up in large families. In many of the families the average number of children ranged between six and eight. Being a member of a large family can be a drawback. There is no privacy and very little living space. Schoolgirl responses on their living conditions are

as follows:

"We have a simple, small two roomed house. Eight of us live in it."

"We have two bedrooms in our house. Seven of us share the two rooms."

The mothers of the respondents were teenagers themselves when they gave birth to the respondent. Daughters see their mothers as exemplary in all aspects of life and therefore falling pregnant while still in school was accepted because it also happened to their mothers. The above is substantiated by the following quotes:

"I want to be kind and loving like my mother when I grow up."

"My mother is kind, she helps needy people especially our relations. I love her very much and would like to work hard and be like her."

"She sets a very good example for us to follow."

Most of the mothers of the respondents were single parents with a number of children to care for. Various problems are encountered by single mothers in the upbringing of their children. As a single parent the mother has to work and cannot afford to put her children in some form of care. After school they often go without adult supervision and are free to do what they want. There is no disciplinary figure and nobody to monitor their activities or what programmes they follow on television. The following quotations substantiate the above:

"My childhood was not very good. My mother, being a single parent, was not able to cope with our problems. We had no parental guidance. She was a mother who worked all day."

"My childhood was a happy one as my mother cared and provided for us. We are left alone all day while mum is gone to work. We have to do housework after school. We also watch a lot of television. I even cook for my mum. She is too tired to do anything when she gets back from work."

3.4.3 Relationships

(1) Relations with parents

From the responses of the schoolgirl-mothers it becomes clear that a relationship characterised by acceptance and support exists between them and their parents. Even though parents were angry, shocked, embarrassed and disappointed when their child, who was still in school, fell pregnant, they still supported and assisted the girl throughout her pregnancy. The mothers of the schoolgirls took it upon themselves to make the necessary arrangements for them to visit clinics and to be admitted to hospitals. After discharge from the hospital parents brought the girl and baby home and provided for them. Most of the mothers taught the respondents how to take care of their babies by showing them how to bath, feed and handle them. The majority of the respondents indicated that their parents accepted the new born baby as a new member of the family. All the respondents and their children are still living with their parents who also support them. This supportive relationship with parents is confirmed by the following remarks made by the schoolgirl-mothers:

"They were angry but they supported me throughout my pregnancy."

"They supported me throughout my pregnancy. They advised me. They bought items for the baby and I and sent me to the clinic."

"They made the necessary arrangements for me to go for check-ups."

"They discouraged me to abort it but to accept it. They helped me throughout, they cared for me and bought items for me. They took me for check ups."

(2) Relations with father of child(ren)

According to the responses of the schoolgirl-mothers there is no evidence of a normal father-mother relationship between them and the boyfriend that fathered their child. Although most of the respondents still have sexual relationships with their children's fathers they do not get any support, emotional or otherwise, from them. More than half of the fathers of the schoolgirl-mothers' children are still in school and unable to provide for the child or the mother. The majority of fathers do not seem to be really interested in their children because they seem to make no effort to see their children. The following direct quotations are evident of the boyfriends' lack of interest in the children they fathered:

"Because my boyfriend is still at school, I do not get any help or support from him or his family. This is extremely hurtful. I want the best for my baby but cannot give it. I am not yet secure myself."

"I do not get any support from my boyfriend or his family. He has not even informed his family about the baby. He does not even come to see the baby or ask about him. This hurts me because we are still together and I hope to settle down with him one day."

"My boyfriend's family do not provide for the baby even though my boyfriend is still at school. They say that my father is rich and he should be able to provide for me. This makes me angry. My boyfriend says he loves me but he does not even want to see his baby."

A third of the schoolgirl-mothers have boyfriends who are out of school and working. These working boyfriends do show more interest in their children because they do come and visit sometimes. They or their parents also offer some financial support for the child:

"My boyfriend gives me R150,00 a month."

"My boyfriend provides R100,00 a month for the baby."

"My boyfriend is not working. His parents provided money and clothes when the baby was born."

The respondents revealed that although they still have a relationship with their child's father, he also has relationships with other girls. Polygamous relationships within the black culture shows the sexual strength and dominance of the male. The respondents accept this polygamy as they stated the following:

"I love my boyfriend very much."

"I don't want to lose my boyfriend."

The rejecting behaviour of some of boyfriends on learning that their girlfriend who is still in school was pregnant can be explained by the following remarks of the respondents:

"He was shocked. He spoke to me about an abortion. At first I agreed but when it came to getting it done, I backed out."

"He was worried but did not leave me. Later I found out he had a child from a previous relationship."

(3) Relations with peers

Relationships with peers and peer pressure play an important role during adolescence. They spend a lot of time together in groups and the individual has to conform in order to be accepted by the group. An adolescent may even take part in activities he himself does not approve of in order to be known as a member of the group. The adolescent will conform even if it means a contravention of social or parental norms. These aspects are highlighted by the following direct quotations:

"At primary school I had two friends who were sexually active. They never concentrated on their school work. They used to sleep around. One had more than one partner at a time. She fell pregnant but her boyfriend left her because of her behaviour."

"At high school I had other friends. They all had boyfriends, and were engaging in sexual activities. One of my friends even smokes and takes alcohol. One of my friends already had a baby and she dropped out of school. Initially my friends never used contraceptives, but now they all do."

"I have three best friends. We spent all our time together, at school and walking home to and from school." We used to talk about boys, sex, television, friends and music. We used to do our schoolwork and homework together. We used to talk about our relationship with boys, boys and their behaviour, the cutest guys at school, boys that we like to go out with, TV stars and music. We all share the same interest and we all have boyfriends. One of my friends was pregnant while I was pregnant and one is pregnant at the moment."

(4) Relations with motherhood

According to the respondents, they were still immature and not capable of taking care of a new born baby. They were not ready for motherhood. Although they were physically ready for motherhood they lacked emotional maturity for the responsibilities of being a mother. Most of the babies were cared for by the girls' mother or other family members. They lacked the necessary "adult experience" when their babies were born. They were not emotionally ready for the responsibility of motherhood. They also were not in a financial position to look after their babies because they have not completed their school career and planned to return to school. The following statements confirm the unpreparedness of schoolgirls for motherhood:

"I was forced to send my baby to my grandmother who lived 100 km away. I longed for my baby and it was very painful."

"It is extremely difficult. I am too young and not yet ready to accept adult responsibility."

"It is tough. I do not get enough time to do my own things, go out, complete my school work and go out with my friends."

"My boyfriend's family had to look after my baby."

"It is difficult, I had to care for my baby during the day and attend classes in the evening. I use to get very tired but was determined to do well."

(5) Relations with schoolwork

(i) Before pregnancy

According to the responses of the schoolgirl-mothers they did better in their schoolwork before they fell pregnant. They enjoyed going to school and had time to do their homework in the afternoons. They had time to spend with peers and their responsibility was to do household chores and homework in the afternoons. This is confirmed by the following direct quotations from the girls:

"It used to be good. I used to pass all subjects. There was a lot of competition between me and my friends."

"Good. I enjoyed school. I performed well."

(ii) During pregnancy

Schoolgirl-mothers indicated that they experienced a number of problems during their pregnancy. Some felt nauseous at school or too sick to attend school regularly. They had to stay away from school either to go to the clinic or to see a doctor. This certainly had a negative effect on their schoolwork and education in general. Most of them had to temporarily drop out of school during their pregnancy and had to repeat the grade they were in on their return to school. The effect of pregnancy on schoolwork is emphasised by the following direct quotations from the schoolgirl-mothers:

"It dropped. I could not concentrate fully. I use to worry about the birth and how I would care for the baby. I use to also worry that my boyfriend won't leave me."

"My marks dropped slightly. Much of the time was resting when I was feeling ill."

"It went right down. I could not concentrate on my lessons. I was very distracted. I use to think a lot about my boyfriend and the baby. I never use to write all my tests."

(iii) After the baby was born

Most of the schoolgirl-mothers were determined to complete their school career after the birth of their babies. Lost time had to be made up and they had to work harder than before in order to do well in school. To pass in school was important to them because they were aware of the importance of education and also that they had lost much time and had to repeat a grade.

They had to leave school to give birth and had to repeat the grade they were in. On their return to school they were in a lower grade than their peers. When at home in the afternoons they had to take care of their baby and do their homework. The determination of the girls on their return to school is confirmed by such direct quotations as:

"I had made up my mind to concentrate and pass. I knew that education was the key to the future. I was determined to do well because pupils my age were already ahead of me."

"Average. I had a lot of hope. I couldn't waste any more years at school. I was already lagging behind my friends and this prompted me to boost my concentration"

"Very poor. I had to repeat the grade."

"It is tough. I do not get enough time to do my own things, go out, complete my school work and go out with my friends."

"It is very difficult. I had to care for my baby during the day and attend classes in the evening. I use to get very tired but was determined to do well."

3.4.5 Future outlook

According to the schoolgirl-mothers their future seemed very bleak after the birth of their baby. At a young age they were saddled with the responsibility of bringing up a child while they were still children in school themselves. The possibility of furthering their studies, in order to qualify for better career

prospects, were remote because of the responsibilities of motherhood. Direct quotations that illustrate the schoolgirl-mother's outlook on her future are include:

"Bleak."

"Quite hopeless at the moment. I am saddled with two children at 18 years. I have no job, no career. I am dependent on my parents. I cannot financially support myself or my children."

"Not absolutely certain. At present it does not look bright, however, I am determined to continue my studies and become independent so I can support my baby."

3.4.6 The role of the media

All the respondents were positive that the media, in particular television, played a significant role in their pregnancy. Most respondents confirmed that they watch the soapies like "The Bold and the Beautiful, Loving, Days of our Lives, etc. They found these soapies very stimulating and could hardly wait for the next episode to catch up on the story. Soapies are also one of the main topics of discussion with their peers. The significant role played by the media in schoolgirl-pregnancy was confirmed by the following direct quotations from the respondents:

"I do watch a lot of television. My friends and I watch "Days of our Life" and the "Bold and the Beautiful". We also watch age restriction movies about love and sex. We also read magazine articles on sex. We also love movie stars and singers who have muscular bodies."

"You read in magazines all the time about love and love making. Some magazines openly discuss sex and sex positions and how to enjoy sex. Television and movies openly show these scenes. It also shows how good one feels. By watching and reading you feel good and you also want to enjoy, you want to experiment and experience."

"You read and see pictures about love and sex all the time. It makes you feel good. You want to see and experience for yourself."

"By watching television and reading magazines we too like to act out our experiences and fantasies. We also rely on the media and our friends for information about sex."

"Magazines and TV serials also encourage sex and extra marital affairs. These pictures show that it is okay to have these relationships. Youngsters pick up a lot from watching these programmes and reading. We also want to have fun and experience for ourselves. We rely on the media and our friends for extra information as our parents are too shy to talk about sex and relationships. I always wanted to be loved and thought that this happens by having sex."

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter certain themes, sub-themes and categories were identified from the data collected in the research. These themes were discussed with reference to the interviews conducted with the schoolgirl-mothers.

In the next chapter a literature review, of available and relevant literature, on the life-world of the adolescent schoolgirl-mother will be given .

CHAPTER 4

THE LIFE-WORLD OF THE ADOLESCENT SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

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CHAPTER 4

THE LIFE-WORLD OF THE ADOLESCENT SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the results of the qualitative study were utilised to evaluate the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother. The major themes that emerged from the interviews with the schoolgirl-mothers reflected the relations they form which in turn constitutes their life-world.

The schoolgirl-mothers in this study attend secondary schools which spans grade eight to grade twelve. Vrey (1990:165) says a learner enters secondary school as a child and leaves as a youth on the threshold of maturity. Physical growth is phenomenal during the secondary school period as the learner develops towards sexual maturity, but psychological development is the real key to the level of adulthood the adolescent shall have achieved (Papalia & Olds, 1992:6-7). The total development of these is described by the term adolescence. In this study the schoolgirl-mother is deemed as an adolescent who would normally form part of the secondary school population.

For the adolescent as a youth who is gradually, in a biological and cultural sense, growing into the adult world, the attribution of meaning is vital and cannot take place without involvement (Vrey, 1990:186). The quality of both meaning and involvement is determined by what the adolescent subjectively experiences, and both are components of self-actualization. Crain (1992:78) says a meaningful life-world is formed when the adolescent, by assigning meaning, forms relations with objects, people, ideas, values, the self and God.

Mwamwenda (1995:45) notes that the adolescent's life-world is always expanding, partly because of the broadness of his interests and his acquaintance with ideas.

The relationships formed are an expression of the life-world of the secondary school child as an adolescent. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:15) say these relationships may be interdependent and interactive; they are always dynamic and ever increasing and changing. This 'Gestalt' of meaningful relationships constitutes the adolescents life-world. All the adolescent's behaviour and actions should be interpreted within the context of his life-world and which he therefore understands (Olivier, Greyling & Venter, 1997:25).

In this chapter the life-world of the adolescent schoolgirl-mother will be described. Attention will be given to the relationships pertaining to adolescent motherhood.

4.2 THE ADOLESCENT PERIOD

The period in a human's life that intervenes between childhood and adulthood is referred to as adolescence. According to Gouws and Kruger (1994:5) efforts to link a specific chronological age to this period are rendered difficult by major cultural differences and it also appears that the age at which adolescence begins is declining while the duration of adolescence is increasing.

During early adolescence or puberty body growth accelerates, the reproductive organs become functional, sexual maturity is attained and secondary sexual characteristics appear (Olivier, Greyling & Venter, 1997:26).

To determine the end of adolescence is more difficult. Unlike the onset of puberty where physical development is the main criterion, a variety of social, legal, psychological and economic criteria are applied to determine the end of adolescence (Crain, 1992:256). According to Mwamwenda (1995:34) in addition to the divergent criteria for determining the end of adolescence, the individual also has to comply with certain culturally prescribed norms for adulthood before the end of adolescence can be generally recognised. In the more traditional societies communities as presented, for example, by black culture in South Africa, the individual has to pass through certain ritual initiation procedures to gain social recognition as an adult (Ramalebana & Le Roux, 1998:162).

During the adolescent period, which is characterised by sexual maturity, one of the main tasks of parents and educators is to provide correct, sincere and unambiguous information and counselling to the adolescent concerning all aspects of sexuality (Olivier, 1996:6; Le Roux, 1992:47). Adolescents should be reassured that their bodies are undergoing natural and normal development, and should be informed in scientifically correct terms about the functioning of their bodies. Voydanoff and Donnelly (1990:40) say it is of the utmost importance that the dangers of premarital sex and promiscuity and the disadvantage of childbirth out of wedlock be pointed out to them.

4.3 THE ADOLESCENT'S RELATIONS

A relationship is a particular mode in which persons, things, ideas, self and God are mutually connected (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:193). Such relationships are usually dynamic and interactive and are initiated by the individual through his involvement and the assigning of meaning in his life-world. Vrey (1990:20-21) says a relationship implies an

association between two referents and the child is busy throughout life with these associations, giving them meaning and so forming a relationship. Central to all relationships is understanding, the attribution of significance or meaning through involvement and experience. A relationship can be experienced as pleasant or unpleasant and is then either encouraged or avoided - the poles attract or repel each other.

In the discussions that follow the relationships that the adolescent forms, and the role it play in sexuality, will be addressed.

4.3.1 Relationship with self

Knowledge of one's identity consists of recognizing and identifying oneself and the formation of a self-concept (Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja, 1994:157). The self-concept comprises the totality of evaluation of all the components of an adolescent's self-identity. According to Vrey (1990:167) self-identity in turn refers to the adolescent's conception of his body, of himself as a scholar including achievements and skills both within and outside the classroom. Each identity component is evaluated, so that self-conceptions vary in quality, high or low. The adolescent's self-concept is the integrated totality of all his conceptions about himself.

During early and middle adolescence, at secondary school, important bodily changes take place that profoundly affect his relations with ideas (sexuality issues) and people (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:193). The adolescent may experience his 'new' body as either admirable or humiliating. The physical self (body-image) is more important during adolescence than in any other stage of a person's life except possible old age (Vrey, 1990:167). The body is also the basis of sexual identity and when secondary sexual

characteristics appear, the teenager orientate to these according to his interpretation of how others perceive his changed body (Crain, 1992:235). Despite unisex clothing and hairstyles the adolescent cannot be sexually neutral and is evaluated by peers of both sexes in terms of sexuality.

According to the view of Papalia and Olds (1992:312) the acquisition of a sex role identity also depends on the way an adolescent perceives him/herself as masculine or feminine according to their own definition of these terms. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:75) say that the sexual awakening of the adolescent adds a whole new dimension to how he sees himself and therefore his self-concept. The adolescent develops a special and deep awareness of being a unique, adequate individual both physically and sexually. The question to be asked is whether the adolescent has the intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity to be able to handle and control the new found physical and sexual abilities (Papalia & Olds, 1992:342).

4.3.2 Relationship with others

Among the most critical developmental tasks that has to be performed by the adolescent are those of socialization, carving out a niche for himself in society, acquiring interpersonal skills, cultivating tolerance for personal and cultural differences and developing self-confidence (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:87). Consequently the adolescent gradually moves away from his parents, and acceptance by and consorting with this peer group assumes increasing importance (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:13). Friendship with members of the same sex deepen and heterosexual relationships rapidly assume a romantic or sexual dimension (Crain, 1992:67). In the adolescent's relationship with other people, his relationship with his parents and peer group will receive attention.

(1) Relationship with parents

Parents have a major role of shaping the identity as well as allowing adolescents to explore in order for them to fully develop during this transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Teenagers who have healthy parent-child communication, high self-esteem and high educational aspirations are more likely to postpone early childbearing (WWW. Advocates for youth organisations, 2000:1). Research has shown that various aspects regarding the family structure have an important influence on the sexual behaviour of the adolescent such as: large families; mothers and/or sisters that were teenage mothers themselves; and adolescents from divorced families (Myburgh & Anders, 1989:127). According to Voydanoff and Donnelly (1990:34-35) lack of parental control as well as frequent dating of single parents result in early sexual experience by their children. Chewing and Van Koningsveld (1998:1274) say that the social status of parents is associated with first sexual intercourse during adolescence. Black adolescent females living in areas characterised by high poverty are more likely to engage in sexual intercourse at much younger ages. Adolescents from single parent households are also more likely to be sexually active at younger ages than their counterparts from families with both parents present. Saphire (1986:419) maintains that various factors within the family may effect teenage sexual behaviour adversely viz:

- . Poor educational achievement by parents.
- . Large families with low socio-economic status.
- . Dysfunctional families.
- . Alcoholism.
- . Separation from parents at an early age.
- . Sexual naivety.
- . Parental reluctance to discuss sexuality issues.

Zungu (2000:11) writes that research conducted in South Africa shows that parents were still uncomfortable about taking responsibility for the sexuality education of their children. In many instances parents believe that knowledge about sexuality would promote and increase sexual activity.

Makgalabone (1999:16) say another important factor that has obvious far reaching sexual implications is overcrowding in families which causes lack of privacy for parents and older members of the family in the presence of younger children. Helge (1989:17) suggests that socio-economic conditions such as poverty, dysfunctional families, poor economy, isolation, lack of parental support, high drop out rate are among the factors resulting in teenage pregnancy.

Adolescent parents seem to recur with each new generation, Patterns of adolescent childbearing, single parenthood and prolonged dependence on the maternal extended family seems cyclic (Myburgh & Smith, 1990:159). Reported trends indicate that adolescent mothers and fathers are likely to have had adolescent parents themselves (Weinman, Schreiber & Robinson, 1992:8). This statement is substantiated by an article titled "Father at 14 and grandfather at 29" in the 'People Magazine' of January 2000 (Editor, 2000:24).

Mothers of schoolgirl-mothers play an important role in assisting to bring up their adolescent daughter's baby. Quite often the schoolgirl's grandmother may also play a major role in the child's upbringing especially when the adolescent girl continues her schooling and her mother is out at work.

Gouws and Kruger (1994:110) say one of the cardinal features of the adolescent's relations with his parents is a striving for independence, self-reliance and autonomy. Vrey (1990:172) maintains that this emancipation

urge does not emerge all at once in the adolescent years but develops gradually from infancy and builds up to its highest point during adolescence. The parents have authority and provide a secure basis from which the child initiates other relationships (Le Roux, 1992:36).

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:159) adolescents want their parents to care, understand that they want to do some things without their parents. To adolescents love, understanding and acceptance is more important than material things. In the absence of a sound relationship between parent and adolescent, the teenager searches for love in sexual intercourse as "pretence love" or "instant love" to serve as a substitute for parental love (Le Roux, 1992:90). According to Crain (1992:332) the absence of parental love, attention and support forces the adolescent to search for intimacy in heterosexual love affairs.

(2) Relationship with peers

During adolescence relations with peers are highly significant for self-concept formation and for self-actualization (Vrey, 1990:169). Adolescents share a great deal of their lives with the peer group; go to school with them, participate in sport with them, spend leisure time with them and sleep over at their homes (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:117). The peer group serves as a sounding board for the adolescent's ideas, thoughts and concerns. Matters that cannot be discussed with parents in some instances are freely discussed with the peer group, for example personal problems, teachers, parents, clothing, the future, sex, contraceptives, drugs, alcohol, etc.

Lloyd (1985:195) states that one of the major functions of the peer group is to provide a base of security outside the family. This security allows the

adolescent to begin the process of emotional detachment from the parents. This separation takes place over a period of time. There is no sudden rejection of parents but the adolescent gradually "lets go" in order to learn how to be an emotionally self supporting young adult (Grobler, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1999:38). The adolescent's greater attachment to his peers is obvious because of the shared time spent together as well as common preferences such as music, clothes, language, etc. (Myburgh & Smith, 1990:159).

Relations with peers become more important during late adolescence. Vrey (1990:170) mentions that apart from the company they share together, adolescents also value the opinions of their peers. Various facets of the adolescents relations are important for their self-actualization such as friendship, social acceptance, conformity and heterosexual relations. Simpson (1990:50-51) states that during late adolescence various factors can change a relationship with one's best friend, namely:

- when a person marries;
- when one moves away to another town, city, school; and
- when an adolescent girl has a baby.

Although babies are supposed to be little bundles of joy, it is hard to believe that they can bring about such a change in the relationship with one's best friend. During pregnancy and after the baby is born, the adolescent girl experiences difficulty in spending time with her friends and participating in the same peer group activities as before. The adolescent mother has different responsibilities and interests than her peer group members. Being a mother, her life is centred around her baby and the responsibilities of motherhood.

(i) Friends of the same sex

The adolescent's needs with respect to friends change as he develops with the result that different phases can be distinguished in the development and nature of his friendships (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:126). During early adolescence friendships between girls are mostly superficial and there is little evidence of real understanding, empathy and feeling. Papalia and Olds (1992:328-329) say the quality and function of friendship tend to change during mid-adolescence when the adolescent passes through another period of great uncertainty because of the transition to opposite-sex relationships. A close friend of the same sex with similar needs, aspirations and fears provides the security needed to enter into new relations with the opposite sex. The possibility therefore exists that if one of the girls in a close friendship engages in sexual activities, the other might also be tempted to do so in order not to feel left out (Maker, 2000:12,25). The same can also be true of boys.

Van der Walt (1999:11) says close friendships between adolescents of the same sex are characterised by greater emotional involvement and emphasis on loyalty, reliability, understanding, empathy and sincerity. Friendships of boys are based more on activities and common interests while the friendship maintained by girls are more intense, person-directed and emotional. According to Vrey (1990:170) the most meaningful friendships arise when adolescents meet as equals, feel at home with one another and feel free to share the most intimate secrets, the most private thoughts and emotions. They do not need to pretend or to fear that confidences will be betrayed. Close friendships are more common where important characteristics like intelligence and socio-economic status are shared.

In late adolescence a slight distance between close friends from the same sex develops because of the intimate heterosexual relations. Friends who use to

spend all their time together begin to spend more and more time in the presence of members of the opposite sex (McDowell, 1997:34).

(ii) Heterosexual relationships

One of the main aspects of the adolescent's development towards adulthood is the contraction of heterosexual relationships (Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja, 1994:68). As early as puberty, the sexes begin to reach out tentatively to each other. Vrey (1990:172) points out that the boy-girl relationship is extremely important to the adolescent's self-actualization and self-reliance.

Heterosexual relationships are also characterised by a desire for authentic knowledge concerning the partner's body and the effect of the relationship on the other. Vrey (1990:172) says that boy-girl relationships during adolescence are also noted for uncertainty, doubt and anxiety. Whether the sex act has been experienced or not, both have urgent and anxious questions in their minds concerning contraception, pregnancy, abortion, masturbation, menstruation and related matters.

The heterosexual relationships of the adolescent years are characterised by different stages of caressing, holding hands, holding or being held, kissing, necking, light and heavy petting and 'going all the way' (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:128). According to Le Roux (1992:73) the development pattern of physical contact has remained basically consistent over the years, except that couples tend to pass through the various stages more rapidly at present, with the result that relationships tend to develop at an earlier age and to be more intimate than before.

A variety of reasons are given for early engagement in sexual activities, just

a few of these being peer group pressure, curiosity and sexual feelings and needs (Papalia & Olds, 1992: 323). The mass media is one of the greatest causes of early sexual activity among adolescents (Loubser, 2000:152). Dinkmeyer and McKay (1990:22) say the youth of today are constantly bombarded with sexual images in periodicals, films, videos, tapes and CD's. The human body is used in advertisements for a wide diversity of items, from chocolates to cars, to evoke sexual and erotic thoughts. The media also spreads misconceptions about sex and it is no wonder that adolescents believe that premarital sex with several partners and without precautions against pregnancy is perfectly in order (Bartlett, 2000). Adolescents are not assisted by the mass media where programmes depict sexual activity and emphasize certain aspects which viewers take to be the accepted and natural behaviour of adults, such as many partners, adultery and so on.

(4) Relationship with the father of the child

There has been much descriptive and statistical information about the adolescent mother, however, little is known about the adolescent father (Bartlett, 2000). According to Sadler (1987:232) reported trends do indicate that both adolescent fathers as well as adolescent mothers are likely to have adolescent parents.

The issue of multiple paternity exists within certain neighbourhoods or communities. Sadler (1987:235) mentions that the same father may have more than one child with several partners and among some male peer groups it is highly valued to have fathered children from multiple relationships. Within this phenomenon of multiple paternity it is not possible to establish a 'normal' mother-father-relationship as is found in a nuclear family.

Many adolescent fathers, especially if they are still young or still at school are more likely to live with their own family of origin. If one or both of the adolescent parents are still dependent on their families the emergence of a 'normal' parental relationship is not possible (Saphire, 1986:420). If both parents are still living with their families, the maternal family usually cares for the baby. According to Rhodes and Ebert (1994:589) the schoolgirl-mother often experiences the relationship with the child's father as problematic. These problems commonly range from "utter disappointment to unmet expectations for financial assistance" as well as no help concerning the upbringing of the child.

4.3.3 Relationships with things and ideas

In constituting a life-world, the adolescent is increasingly concerned with ideas, and they become important when he becomes aware of their significance for him and their implications for his own identity (Vrey, 1990: 177). The adolescent's cognitive powers function on an intellectual plane unknown to children and he can speculate on the nature, consequences, value and social and personal importance of an idea, for example, getting engaged in sexual activities.

Ramalebana (1995:4) refers to recent research that shows that the idea of having a baby whilst still in school is no longer seen as a curse or a stumbling block by many girls. Although the sudden and unexpected "maternity leave" drops the girl behind her peers in school, she invariably returns to school the year after giving birth to her baby. However, because of the level of cognitive development of the adolescent girl, she has the ability to theorise on the consequences, social and personal, that becoming a schoolgirl-mother will have in her life-world.

Another idea (thing) the black adolescent must come to terms with is the 'informal education' of the initiation schools. Meekers and Ahmed (1999:196) talk about the ceremonies that take place for a period between three to five years for children who reach puberty. Boys and girls are initiated in separate 'schools' by means of separate ceremonies called "bogwera" and "bonjale" respectively. These ceremonies are aimed at preparing them for adulthood, teaching them responsible sexual behaviour, selection of a suitable marriage partner and marital duties. Saphire (1986:418) says that the traditional rituals and ways of 'becoming of age' restricted adolescents' sexual activity by rigid cultural codes. With the acculturation of many of the traditional cultures in the country, initiation schools and ceremonies in their original form, have virtually disappeared.

4.3.4 Relationship with religion

Adolescence is characterised by a search for spiritual fulfilment and certainty, for religion that can serve as a spiritual refuge where conflict and doubt can be resolved and the meaning of life and the answers to life's questions can be found. Vrey (1990:182) maintains that a personal religion means a faith and hope to which an adolescent can cling to during the uncertainties and vicissitudes of his becoming an adult.

Adolescents' have an earnest desire to think for themselves in their religious development, which is a continuous endeavour to integrate religious dogma and the practical realities of life seeking answers from educators (parents and teachers) and in their own cogitations (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:196). According to Saphire (1986:420) two essential requirements would be authentic knowledge and the practical demonstration of religious norms. However, adolescents are frequently disillusioned by their educators'

inconsistencies in practising their religious norms, for example not going to church while constantly admonishing adolescents to do so (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:188). Inconsistencies from adults with regards to sexuality matters are also experienced as conflicting by adolescents, for example when adults caution them about the consequences of premarital sexual activities but were themselves teenage parents or are having extra marital affairs.

Many adolescents also have difficulty in reconciling the different religious norms which are portrayed in the media. Being exposed to many new ideas, practices and philosophies through the multi media, the adolescent is confronted by many other religious and secular norms (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:195). This exposure inspires the adolescents to think about their own religious beliefs which often include sexuality issues which are represented differently from their own normative beliefs by the media.

Adolescents need a religion that is continuous with life, consistent with the everyday world and can provide a faith to live by and which can enable the adolescent to withstand conflicts and doubts. The religion should be meaningful and personal to the adolescent as an individual. Adolescents seek a religion to live by and one that works practically for them, one with which they can easily identify and which relates to the problems they meet in their everyday social life (Brunson, 1991:74; Sadler, 1987:136).

4.4 SEXUAL ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

An attitude is a positive or negative emotional relationship with, or predisposition towards an object, institution or person (Le Roux, 1992:5). Perceptions refer to the act of receiving information through the senses. Behaviour is closely connected to the normative with the emphasis on what

is proper, improper, good or bad behaviour and is related to the acceptance of responsibility for a person's decisions and choices (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:325).

4.4.1 Adolescents' sexual attitude

Sexual attitudes are changing everywhere, but more particularly in the Western countries (Gallagher & Harris, 1998:29). This change is evident in more open-mindedness about and tolerance towards such matters as pre- and extramarital sexual activities, homosexuality, etc. Olivier, Goliath and Venter (1998:114) say premarital sex is generally regarded as acceptable and unmarried couples prefer to have babies without getting married first. Adolescents' intensified and earlier sexual activities compared to previous generations therefore merely reflect the overall trend toward greater sexual freedom and openness in Western society (Thapa & Raval, 1998:51).

Soal (2000:4) reports that in South Africa signs of greater sexual freedom and a new morality, that is not always compatible with parents' values and principles, have been evident for a considerable period. The mass media confront adolescents from all cultures with attitudes, values and usages that are completely different from those adhered to by their parents, with the result that they are much more liberal in their views about sexuality, sexual preferences and behaviour (Olivier, Goliath & Venter, 1998:113). It is, however, not necessarily correct to speak of moral decline and a sexual revolution. Papalia and Olds (1992:322) explain that attitudes usually change more than behaviour over time and adolescents might appear to be sexually more active now than a few decades ago merely because they are more outspoken about sex while their behaviour remains the same. The increased frankness in discussions about sexual matters and the tendency to be less

secretive about sexual behaviour may therefore be misleading.

Mwamwenda (1995:49) says adolescents move steadily away from the indirect, relative non-threatening sexuality of their childhood years to the more complex, emotionally charged sexual feelings and activities of adulthood. This sexual development coupled with the changed attitude towards sexual activities exerts an influence on the adolescent's experience of early sexual activity and sexual preferences.

4.4.2 Adolescents' sexual activities and pregnancy

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:210) say it is today no uncommon phenomenon to have pregnant girls or young mothers as learners in a school. In some schools many of the learners are unmarried mothers and unmarried fathers (Reporter, 2000:3). According to Gallagher and Harris (1998:34) unmarried fathers usually carry no responsibility whatsoever for their sexual actions. Different cultures have different views on this phenomenon, and in some cases such incidents are accepted as part of normal living.

According to Gerdes (1990:129) whatever the views, it should be remembered that premarital or experimental sexual activity, in whatever culture, has severe negative effects on both the young participants and the child who may possibly be born. McDowell (1997:23) says it is important that adolescents should be made aware to recognize that they are people with sexual feelings and attractions and most important, that they have reproductive capabilities. The peer pressure to conform or else to be different has to be resisted if the devastating effects of irresponsible sexual activity are to be avoided. Gerdes (1990:89) remarks that just as with other developmental aspects, these

adolescents should realize that the way they handle their sexuality has profound, deep and lasting effect on *themselves, others* and the *offspring*. Irresponsible sexual behaviour may have the following effects (Gallagher & Harris, 1998:39):

Effect on the self. An adolescent can suffer psychological effects such as guilt feelings, secrecy, fear and regret caused by:

- participating in an activity of which they do not have an adequate understanding;
- submitting to the pressure of a partner, perhaps against the will;
- guilt at such participation and fear of its consequences; and
- participation with various partners with no commitment.

Sexual permissiveness often results in the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases as the very much feared AIDS. Sexual activity may result in adolescent pregnancy, the disruption or severing of relationships with the family and disgrace. If a child is born, it can mean temporary disruption of schooling or dropping out of school.

Effect on others. In some cultures irresponsible sexual behaviour by adolescents brings shame, disgrace and embarrassment to others, especially the immediate family members. If the adolescent girl is to keep the child and remain out of wedlock, or even if she does marry, the child often has to be cared for by the grandparents or other family members

while the mother finishes her schooling or goes out to work. These young adolescents or schoolgirl-mothers cannot be considered adults for they are often not prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

Effect on the child. The child is usually unwanted. The child is cared for by grandparents or family members, or brought up in a single parent home or put out for adoption. The couple is forced into a marriage to "cover up". Statistics show that 90% of these marriages, in certain cultures, end up in the divorce courts after a couple of years by which time there is possibly more than one child involved. All these circumstances have a profound effect on the child, especially when he reaches the age of discretion, when he realises his origin and understands who he actually is. The child's whole life will be coloured by the irresponsible premarital sexual conduct of the parents.

For various reasons, such as the high level of sexual activity among adolescents, as well as their tendency not to use contraceptives, it is not surprising that teenage pregnancies are both a national and international social problem (Olivier, Goliath & Venter, 1998: 113). Although heightened sexuality, a lack of information about fertility and contraception, and a tendency not to use contraceptives, are generally cited as reasons for teenage pregnancies, there are several factors that exert an influence interactively (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:131):

- Having a baby may be viewed as a sign of maturity; a kind of status symbol.

- Motherhood may be used to achieve both identity and a feeling of being loved and needed.
- Pregnancy may be used as an escape from an unhappy home situation.
- Pregnancy may be a reaction to the loss of a parent through divorce, death or hospitalisation or institutionalisation.

In South Africa the situation of teenage pregnancy is compounded by a large number of superstitions and myths associated with pregnancy and contraception and many adolescents believe that (Robinson, 2000:2; Sole, 2000:6):

- the use of contraceptives makes them sterile;
- plastic wrap (cling wrap) makes an effective condom;
- a girl cannot get pregnant the first time;
- you cannot get pregnant if you are still having your period;
- you cannot get pregnant if the male withdraws on time; and
- you cannot get pregnant when you are standing.

Bartlett (2000) points to the fact that many adolescents grow up in a cultural environment where reproductive ability is seen as a sign of strength. Accordingly boys maintain that using condoms saps their "strength" and eliminates all pleasure from sexual encounter (Soal, 2000:4).

4.4.3 Adolescents' schooling

Very often adolescent child bearing is associated with dropping out of school as well as low educational attainment, but it must be also borne in mind that many pregnant and parenting teenagers do achieve some degree of success (Boult, 1991:23). Qualitative research conducted in 1998 showed that nearly all adolescent mothers express a desire to complete high school (Stevenson, Kenneth & Douglas, 1998:376). Quantitative research showed that 62% of urban minority teenage mothers completed their high school career and 14% pursued post secondary education. Van der Walt (1999:11) refers to the Soweto school girl who was so determined to complete high school that she even appealed to the Humans Rights Commission. According to the schools code of conduct, pregnant girls had to stay at home for the remainder of the year. After winning her case she was allowed to return to school five days after the birth of her baby. Pregnant schoolgirls tend to be poor attenders and few are able to continue schooling after birth (Brunson, 1991:132; Yomi-Roland, 2000).

Various studies indicate that the schooling of girls in particular is affected by pregnancy because they become more emotionally involved in the sexual relationship (Loubser, 2000:153; Traeen & Kvaalem, 1996:289). During the sexual transition in adolescence the girls become more pre-occupied with feelings of guilt, embarrassment and anxiety and are not able to fully concentrate on their school work (Rhodes & Ebert, 1994:590). The latter feelings intensify when the adolescent girl falls pregnant and it becomes even more difficult for the brain to focus on learning (Ramalebana & Le Roux, 1998:163). According to Sadler (1987:239) and Boult (1991:34) the schoolgirl-mother finds herself in the midst of two developmental crises, one of adolescence and the other of motherhood. Brunson (1991:55) mentions a

third crisis to be faced by the schoolgirl-mother, namely, the integrating of the new born baby in her life-world.

Ramalebana (1995:2) says it is not surprising that some schoolgirl-mothers develop emotional problems, negative attitudes and a low self-esteem on returning to school after giving birth. Often the boyfriends responsible for the pregnancy reject their responsibility which has a further traumatic effect on the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother. The negative self-image of a schoolgirl-mother has a detrimental affect on her learning experience and scholastic achievements (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn & Morgan, 1987:45).

4.5 SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Many adolescents are ignorant or lack information and knowledge regarding sexuality, sexuality transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Mogotlane (1993:12) states that many people believe that contraceptives can ultimately impair one's health while Helge (1989:18) states that in many cultures contraceptives are prohibited. A demographic survey conducted in 1998 revealed that whilst 95% of teenage respondents had some information on Aids, more than 50% of them thought that only thin and unhealthy looking people could be HIV positive (Reporter, 2000:29).

Many teenagers also lack adequate knowledge about contraceptives and many harbour fears about the effects of contraception on their health (Robinson, 2000:2). A large number of teenagers also lack adequate knowledge about the use of the pill or the condom (Traeen & Kvaem, 1996:291). The following findings emerged from research done by the health department (Madlala, 2000:8; Mogotlane, 1993:13-14):

- . Young men know less than young girls about contraceptives.
- . Most men do not regard contraception as their responsibility.
- . Women often lack motivation and confidence to seek advice about contraception or to use contraceptives.
- . Women are often too embarrassed to inquire about contraception.

Most adolescents would like to learn about sexuality issues from their parents but quite often parents are not inclined toward discussions on the topic (Advertorial, 2000:8; Marais, 1998:144). According to Gallagher and Harris (1998:41) research shows that when mothers and daughters discuss sex frankly, such information is particularly influential in preventing teenage pregnancy. Most sex information is gained by adolescents from their peers, the least reliable source and it is often inaccurate. The most accurate sources on issues of sexuality are medical workers, educators, parents and correct literature. The popular media carry distorted and inflated expressions of sexuality, often over emphasizing the pleasure aspect thereof without touching on its effects.

Sexuality education in schools has been thwarted by the following (Gerdes, 1990:68; Marais, 1998:144-149):

- . The educator's qualifications to give sexuality education.
- . What should be taught to learners and at what stage of their schooling.

- . The educator's age, level of maturity and personal characteristics.
- . The educator's philosophy of life.

McDowell (1997:5) reports that because of a heterogenous school population the aspect of sexuality education meets with many stumbling blocks. Important, however, is to note that responsible sexuality education in schools does not encourage adolescents sexual behaviour. According to Advertorial (2000:8-9) sexuality education promotes factual information, understanding, awareness and a more open approach, coupled with respect for the other party and responsibility.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:211) emphasise the need for factual knowledge concerning sexuality during early adolescence, and present the following sexuality education principles:

- . Give the adolescent basic, accurate information on all key aspects of sexuality.
- . Explore the emotional issues adolescents face as they seek to come to terms with self, peers, parents and the mass media.
- . Examine specific physical problems derived from individual differences in attractiveness and sexual function.
- . Assist the adolescent to develop behaviour that tries to meet personal needs and respects community and cultural standards.

- . Encourage a self-awareness to increase the power to make and implement decisions about sexuality.
- . Help the adolescent to be aware of the consequences of sexual activity and to be prepared to bear the consequences of his or her actions.

The educator should present adolescents with knowledge, the necessity for self-control, the consequences of sexual actions, a sound philosophy of life on which to base behaviour and respect for the opposite sex.

The following can help parents to know how to start talking to their children about sex (Advertorial, 2000:9; Loubser, 2000: 152-153; Maker, 2000:25):

- . Start young. The earlier you begin, the easier it is. By the time children are adolescents (teenagers) they will be prepared and less likely to make unwise choices.
- . Encourage talk. Be open when talking with children about all kinds of things. Create an environment of trust and communication.
- . Talk often. A once-in-a-lifetime sex talk will not give your children all the information they need. Repeat yourself and make sure you have been understood.
- . Be sensitive. Respect the age and stage that the child is at. Do not give more information that they want or need.

- Be supportive and positive. If you shout at your children or ignore their difficult questions, communication will become more difficult.
- Say what you believe. Do not be shy to tell children what you believe. They want and need some moral guidance.
- Listen to children. When children come to you with a question, show respect and listen. Make sure you understand their questions.
- Be honest. If you do not know the answer, say so. If you do not feel good talking about sex, say so, but in such a way that communication doesn't stop. Suggest someone else that your children could speak to, to get answers.

4.6 SUMMARY

The life-world of the adolescent schoolgirl-mother includes everything meaningful to her - not only the geographical world, but all the relationships with himself, others, objects and ideas, and God. The forming of meaningful relationships constitutes her life-world, and all her behaviour and actions should be interpreted within the context of this life-world.

In the next chapter attention will be given to findings, shortcomings and recommendations regarding this study.

CHAPTER 5

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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, SHORTCOMINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter the findings from the qualitative research and literature study will be presented. This will be followed by the shortcomings of the study and recommendations that emanated from the research done into the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother.

5.2 SUMMARY

Research statistics show that teenage pregnancy is rapidly increasing, not only in South Africa but also internationally. The high level of sexual activity among adolescents, as well as their tendency not to use contraceptives are some of the factors contributing to this high incidence of pregnancies. It is not surprising that teenage pregnancies are both a national and an international social problem that threatens to assume epidemic proportions. An unattached, unsupported and immature teenage mother is a knife at the throat of modern culture and a mortgage on the future vitality and hope of communities. This is especially true of the population in major cities where teenage illegitimacy is now the condition of a majority of births.

The transitional period of the adolescent years is characterised by biological, psychological, social, emotional and educational changes. Self-actualization is the comprehensive developmental task of adolescents and this can only be

achieved if they understand and orientate themselves, if they experience personal adequacy and if they belong to and is accepted by the significant others in their life-world. The emancipation of adolescents take place in assigning meaning to what they are involved in, the self, other people and objects and ideas. The developmental aims are achieved only in so far as the adolescent relates to the self, to people he esteems, objects and ideas, and religion.

While the adolescent is in the transitional period, society is also undergoing constant change under the influence of social change. At present the social fabric is very heterogeneous and changes are fluid and relative. The onus rests on the individual to direct his behaviour in accordance with the changes in society which can create problems for the adolescent because he is confronted by a bewildering variety of changes without guidelines or rules to help him decide which of these to accept and which to reject. Changed sexual attitudes and behaviour are evident at present as well as greater candour and permissiveness about premarital sex. The media, especially television, is constantly signalling that this kind of behaviour is acceptable and even normal.

The implications of the adolescent falling pregnant while still in school and becoming a schoolgirl-mother are legion. As an adolescent the schoolgirl-mother is often still emotionally immature and dependent on adult support. There may be economic problems if the father has not completed his education and does not have fixed employment to face the extra financial obligations involved in taking care of a baby. Adolescents may not be socially and personally mature enough to assume the new roles of parenthood imposed on them. A schoolgirl-mother has to temporarily drop out of school or leave school permanently.

The major goal of effective sexuality education must be prevention. Adolescents must be informed about, and warned against, the disadvantages and consequences of pregnancy. Motivation to avoid early pregnancy is essential but adolescents must still feel good about themselves and their awakening sexuality and strive for a successful and self-supporting future. Educators must also be prepared and able to offer emotional support if an adolescent does fall pregnant.

5.2.1 Statement of the problem

The problem addressed in this study concerns the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother. Not only does motherhood disrupt the adolescent girls school career, but also her as well as the child's future opportunities. Being a mother while still in school has a significant effect on the various relationships she forms which constitutes her life-world. Unwanted pregnancies amongst teenagers (adolescents) is one of the most important problems of our contemporary society and the life-world of the mother is not left unscathed by this. Accountable and responsible sexuality education is imperative to curb this phenomenon. We also have to inculcate norms and values regarding responsible sexual behaviour in adolescents.

5.2.2 Research methodology

This study utilized a structured interview that was conducted by the researcher (interviewer and research instrument) in order to obtain the interviewees as source. The information sought was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents by means of personal interviews. With the aim of interviewing schoolgirl-mothers judgemental sampling was done in schools in the Stanger (semi-urban) area in KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim of the interviews was to obtain information regarding the life-world of the schoolgirl-mother. The objective of the questions asked during the one to one interviews were to establish how the schoolgirl-mother experiences her life-world concerning the following:

- . socio-economic factors;
- . family background;
- . knowledge about sexuality issues;
- . relationship with the self, others, things and ideas;
- . the role of the media; and
- . future outlook.

5.2.3 Analysis and presentation of research results

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the information obtained from the interviews with schoolgirl-mothers. At the outset an explanation and description was provided as to the qualitative method employed in this study and the ensuing emergence of themes from the interviews. This was followed by an interpretation of the context of the interviews which were substantiated with quotations of the interviewees.

5.2.7 Aims of the study

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf. 1.5) to determine the course of this study. These aims were realised through a literature study together with an empirical survey consisting of a structured questionnaire. On the basis of the aims and findings of this study certain recommendations were formulated.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 Findings from the empirical investigation

The following are, *inter alia*, some of the significant findings that emanate from the interviews conducted with the schoolgirl-mothers:

- Girls are not well informed about the onset and meaning of menarche and this lack of authentic knowledge may have resulted in pregnancy.
- Adolescents girls lack adequate information regarding the availability and use of contraceptives.
- The majority of girls fell pregnant between the ages of 15 and 17 years while still in school.
- There is a significant relation between the socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy:
 - In this research study all the schoolgirl-mothers are from families where the mother is a single-parent and has been a schoolgirl-mother herself. A number of respondents also indicated that they have a sister who was also a schoolgirl-mother.
 - Households are characterised by a lack of sufficient individual living space because of a large number of inhabitants in too small living conditions.

- Parents and family members are unskilled or semi-skilled and hold jobs with low remuneration
- . The relationship between the schoolgirl mother and her parents are characterised by acceptance and support. Although parents were not happy about the unwanted pregnancy they supported the girl throughout her pregnancy to the best of their ability.
- . A normal father-mother-relationship is non-existent between the schoolgirl-mother and the father of the child. Most of the fathers are still in school and thus unable to fulfil their responsibilities of fatherhood.
- . Boys are involved in multiple relationships which must be accepted by the girls.

5.3.2 Findings from the literature review

From an overview of the existing and relevant literature on life-world of schoolgirl-mothers the following findings could be made:

- . The schoolgirl-mother is in the adolescent phase of her life and thus between childhood and adulthood.
- . The life-world of the schoolgirl-mother is constituted by the meaningful relationship she forms with the self, others, ideas and things and religion.

- . During adolescence important bodily changes take place that profoundly affect the adolescent's relations with self, other people, things and ideas (sexuality issues) and religion.
- . An adolescent does not always have the intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity to be able to handle and control his new found physical and sexual abilities.
- . Adolescents gradually move away from their parents, and acceptance by and consorting with the peer group assume increasing importance.
- . A healthy parent-adolescent relationship, high self-esteem and high educational aspirations are more likely to postpone early childbearing.
- . Various aspects regarding the family structure have an important influence on the sexual behaviour of the adolescent such as: large families; mothers and/or sisters that were teenage mothers and adolescents from single parent families.
- . Parents are still uncomfortable about taking responsibility for the sexuality education of their children. In many instances parents believe that knowledge about sexuality would promote and increase sexual activity.
- . Adolescent parents seem to recur with each new generation, Patterns of adolescent childbearing, single parenthood and prolonged dependence on the maternal extended family seems cyclic.

- . The mothers of schoolgirl-mothers play an important role in assisting to bring up their adolescent daughter's baby.
- . Close friendships between adolescents of the same sex are characterised by greater emotional involvement and emphasis on loyalty, reliability, understanding, empathy and sincerity.
- . One of the main aspects of the adolescent's development towards adulthood is the contraction of heterosexual relationships. The boy-girl relationship is extremely important to the adolescent's self-actualization and self-reliance.
- . Heterosexual relationships are characterised by a desire for authentic knowledge concerning the partner's body and the effect of the relationship on the other.
- . A variety of reasons are given for early engagement in sexual activities, for example peer group pressure, curiosity and sexual feelings and needs.
- . Limited research has been done and little is known about the adolescent father.
- . Sexual attitudes are changing everywhere, but more particularly in the Western countries. Premarital sex is generally regarded as acceptable and unmarried couples prefer to have babies without getting married first.

- The mass media confront adolescents from all cultures with sexuality attitudes, values and usages that are often completely different from their parents. The result is that adolescents are much more liberal in their views about sexuality, sexual preferences and behaviour.
- Premarital or experimental sexual activity, in whatever culture, has severe negative effects on both the young participants and the child who may possibly be born.
- Very often adolescent child bearing is associated with dropping out of school as well as low educational attainment.
- Most adolescents would like to learn about sexuality issues from their parents but quite often parents are not inclined toward discussions on the topic
- As a result of a heterogenous school population the aspect of sexuality education often meets with many stumbling blocks.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Sexuality education

(1) Motivation

Inadequate sexuality education and information on sex can give rise to irresponsible teenage experimentation with sex with catastrophic results. Unwanted teenage (schoolgirl) pregnancies are on the increase and it is

shocking to learn how many teenagers have already had sexual intercourse. Despite a more liberal sexual disposition, sexuality issues remain a delicate and contentious subject which people find difficult to discuss openly. Parents generally find it difficult to speak openly to their children and offer them guidance on sexual matters. The professional educators and teaching authorities often shy away from sexuality education. This disinclination to address sexual matters in an educational setting gives rise to the perception among children that sex is bad and evil, and that adults are not prepared to address or listen to the child's questions on sex.

(2) Recommendations

In order to educate adolescents to instill a responsible and realistic attitude towards responsible sexuality behaviour, the following recommendations are applicable:

- . Politicians, health services, educationists and cultural leaders must promote and fund sexuality education so that teenagers do not engage in irresponsible sexual behaviour which may burden them with children that they cannot economically and emotionally support.
- . Women's leagues must vigorously promulgate in directing teenage girls to realise the important role of responsible sexual behaviour in preventing unwanted pregnancies.
- . An effective media based programme (television, radio, newspapers and popular magazines) on the dangers of irresponsible sexual behaviour must be encouraged and

promoted by government in order to reach as many teenagers as possible. These programmes should focus on the following:

- Address the unique needs and problems concerning the awakening sexuality of adolescents.
- Influential Youth Leaders should promote responsible attitudes to sexual behaviour amongst the youth.
- Creative and practical to assist parents in dealing with adolescent sexuality.

5.4.2 Clinics

(1) Motivation

All women, including schoolgirls, should have access to medical services which includes, *inter alia*, information about contraception and pre- and postnatal care. Women must be knowledgeable about methods of contraception. A variety of contraception methods are available and new ones will become available as a result of medical progress and research. Choice and information serve as the cornerstones of a women's health and their reproductive rights. Unwanted pregnancies can be prevented by contraceptives and the numerous consequences it might have on the mother and the family avoided.

(2) Recommendation

The recommendations are as follow:

- . Clinics must be easily accessible to the whole community. It is the right of every women (schoolgirl) to have free access to information on/ and services surrounding contraception and pregnancy.
- . Only well-trained staff should be employed in clinics. High quality care must be provided in order to ensure success and to maintain the health and satisfaction of clients. Quality care in clinics should include:
 - Providing complete and accurate information about contraceptive methods.
 - Ensuring that providers have technical skills necessary to safely provide suitable methods.
 - Ensuring that providers effectively communicate with clients in culturally appropriate ways.
 - Providing follow-up care to ensure continuity of services.
 - Providing an adequate logistic system to ensure continuity of supply.
 - Providing convenient and acceptable services to clients.
 - Sexuality education must be included in the school curriculum.

- Educators should be trained to offer specialised sexuality education in schools.

5.3.4 Further research

(1) Motivation

The research covered only black schoolgirl-mothers in a semi-urban area. The possibility exists that the life-world of a schoolgirl-mother from other culture groups and different areas of the country, may be different.

(2) Recommendation

It is recommended that a similar study of the life-world of a schoolgirl-mother be conducted with reference to other culture groups as well as in different areas of the country, for example rural and urban areas. Different family patterns and cultures may produce some dissimilarities in reported findings. Similarities in the results with other investigations would increase the validity the findings in this study.

5.4 SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings that emanate from this study include, *inter alia*, the following:

- Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, interviewing the respondents had become quite restrictive as the question "why" had to be avoided.
- Interviewees did not keep to the time of the appointment or failed to turn up for the appointment made with them.

- . To interview a schoolgirl mother meant doing so under her terms and conditions.
- . As an interviewer of a different race, I was looked upon with complete suspicion during interviews.
- . The scarcity of literature with specific reference to black schoolgirl-mothers hampered the research.
- . Interviews were conducted in English which is not the mother-tongue of the interviewees. The interviewees therefore often fail to express themselves adequately in a second language.

5.5 FINAL REMARKS

The aim of this study was to establish how the schoolgirl-mother's life-world is affected during and after her pregnancy. Responsible and informed sexuality behaviour is the unconditional desire for all adolescents during their transition period to adulthood. It also includes the responsibility of parents, schools, churches and community leaders to provide teenagers with the necessary information and assistance with regards to their awakening sexuality during the adolescent period. It is trusted that this study will persuade parents preparing for parenthood to include family planning in their plans. Motherhood is too demanding and complex a task to be performed by an adolescent girl who is sexually but not emotionally mature and has not completed her school career. It is also hoped that the recommendations in this study will be implemented and contribute to the effective prevention of unwanted pregnancies during the adolescent years.

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Ref:

June 30, 1999

Dear Respondent

INTERVIEW: LIFE-WORLD OF THE SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my MEd degree (Masters in Education) at the University of Zululand under the guidance of Proff. G Urbani and M S Vos. The research is concerned with "*The life-world of the schoolgirl-mother*".

As one of the selected respondents, I have taken the liberty of writing to you in order to seek your assistance in acquiring information about your experiences relating to the research. I would therefore request you and your parents permission to conduct an interview with you concerning the above topic.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information will be regarded as CONFIDENTIAL, and no personal details of any parent or schoolgirl will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular home, family or school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

N Beesham

Mrs N Beesham

G Urbani

Prof G Urbani

2000-11-28

Date

M S Vos

Prof M S Vos

PERMISSION FROM PARENTS TO BE INTERVIEWED

I, the undersigned
parent of hereby give
my permission that my daughter may be interviewed. I understand that all the
information obtained from my daughter will be treated with the highest
confidence and that no personal details of the family or respondent will be
mentioned in the findings of the research. I also understand that the signing of
this letter is not binding.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

PERMISSION SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER TO BE INTERVIEWED

I, the undersigned

hereby give my permission to be interviewed. I understand that all the information I give will be treated with the highest confidence and that no personal details of the family or myself will be mentioned in the findings of the research. I also understand that the signing of this letter is not binding.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

THE LIFE-WORLD OF THE SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Age in completed years as at 2000-01-01
- 1.2 Grade in school
- 1.3 Grade(s) repeated
- 1.4 At what age did you fall pregnant?
- 1.5 Do you live with your parents?
- 1.6 How many family members live with you?
- 1.7 Describe the home you live in
- 1.8 Are you a member of a medical aid scheme?
- 1.9 Which recreational facilities exists where you live?
.....
- 1.10 Is the child's father still in school?

2 LIFE-WORLD OF THE SCHOOLGIRL-MOTHER

- 2.1 Describe your childhood**
- 2.2 Tell me about your parents**
- 2.3 How did you experience the changes in your body during adolescence?**
- 2.4 Who explained this changes to you?**
- 2.5 Can you remember your first menstruation?**
- 2.6 Tell me about your first boyfriend**
- 2.7 Tell me about your relationship?**
- 2.8 Are you aware of sexually transmitted diseases?**
- 2.9 Are you familiar with contraceptives?**
- 2.10 What happened when you discovered you were pregnant?**
- 2.11 Did you consider an abortion?**
- 2.12 Describe your pregnancy**
- 2.13 Tell me about the father of your baby**
- 2.14 Tell me about your church**
- 2.15 How do you feel about school?**
- 2.16 Tell me about your friends**
- 2.17 What do you do after school?**
- 2.18 Tell me about your child**
- 2.19 Tell me about your brothers and/or sisters**
- 2.20 What is it like to be a mother?**
- 2.21 How do you see your future**