



## Improving the well-being of teenage mothers through resilience-focused interventions in rural schools

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**Abstract**— The well-being and resilience of teenage mothers are adversely affected after the sudden transition into motherhood. This could be explained by the insufficient support in their social environment, such as the family, church, and school, which increased the rate of school dropouts. This study explores the source of the support system that teenage mothers receive in their motherhood in rural secondary schools. It adopts a qualitative approach and research design. The interpretive paradigm was used in this study. Five teenage mothers from five rural schools were purposefully selected for this study. It employed amended semi-structured interviews to generate data. The thematic findings revealed that teenage mothers received support packages entailing unified, interconnected, and inclusive community structures, such as local health institutions, faith-based organisations, neighbourhoods, inter alia. Lastly, this study recommends that schools be critical in implementing effective, resilience-focused interventions to support and empower teenage mothers to cope with early parenthood, academic responsibilities, and psycho-social demands.

**Keywords:** Social ecology of resilience, Rural schools, Teenage mothers, Well-being

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### I. INTRODUCTION

THE well-being and resilience of teenage mothers are adversely affected after the sudden transition into motherhood. This could be explained by the insufficient support in their social environment, such as the family, church, and school, which increased the rate of school dropouts. Xiong (2015) highlighted that teenage mothers are hopeless and unlikely to succeed in school due to their undeveloped age. During their motherhood, they have been demarcated from being adolescent mothers, becoming pregnant, and parenting their children (Cosden, 2014, p.1). scholars have demonstrated that in South Africa, pregnant teenagers are primarily from low-income African and Coloured groups, which realise the necessity of returning to school despite challenges (Madhavan et al., 2013). Similarly, the mothers of teenage mothers' care for them (Madhavan, 2010). Thus, teenage mothers are most likely to dropout of school due to a lack of support (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Like in other African environments, there is an overwhelming agreement that finishing secondary education is mandatory and a requirement for achieving success and socio-economic accomplishments (Lloyd, 2005; Smith, 2001). While studies have concentrated on the necessity of empowering teenage mothers by inspiring them to return to school (Jewkes et al., 2009), there is hardly any consideration for caregivers who assist with their re-appearance at school. African teenagers count on household associates for support in many contexts, for instance, when they or their offspring need clothes, medicine, money, schooling, and food (Madhavan et al., 2013). Some reforms have been made to prevent and manage learner pregnancy at schools in the basic education system. These provide a positive and supportive environment where all pregnant learners can access professional advice, information, referrals, treatment, care, counselling, and support (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2018, p. 17). The

South African Constitution stipulated that no person, school, policy, or practice may unfairly discriminate against learners based on their pregnancy or post-pregnancy status (ÁFRICA, 2020, 1996; South African Schools Act [SASA] No. 84 of 1996 as Amended). The importance of 'the retention and re-enrolment of affected learners (teenage mothers) in school' is also stressed (DBE, 2018, p. 8).

Current interventions in South Africa and abroad are chronicled below. The United States of America (USA) developed online intervention programmes (Logsdon et al., 2018, p. 1), school-based programmes with social work participation (Van Pelt, 2012), and an abstinence education programme. Underway in the United Kingdom are group work intervention programmes called FAST (Family and Schools Together) (Campbell-Wilson, 2011). In sub-Saharan African countries like Zimbabwe, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa, school-based, peer-based, mass media-based, health facility-based, and community-based Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Education intervention programmes were introduced to support teenage mothers in schools (Kalembo et al., 2013). Empowerment of teenage mothers in Kenya involves creating opportunities to return to school, acquire life skills training, enhance self-esteem, and foster economic enablement. In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, policies are required to guarantee the setting up of multi-disciplinary teams that accommodate the all-inclusive needs of teenage mothers, including retaining them so they eventually complete school (Nkani & Bhana, 2016). In Gauteng, as socio-ecological resilience resources, pastors, biological parents, teachers, peers, and partners enhance teenage mothers' resilience (Malindi, 2018).

### II. INTRODUCTION

#### Theoretical framework

#### Social ecology of resilience

It is important to note that the social ecology of resilience was an

advancement from the Bio-Social-Ecological Systems model of human development. Some scholars opposed the idea that an individual relies on their strengths to develop and become resilient within the multisystem, including interaction with the self, others, and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ungar, 2018, 2011, 2012; Ungar et al., 2013). Folke et al. (2016, p. 41) mentioned that the social ecology of resilience stresses that persons, societies, economies, and cultures are rooted parts of the environment and shape it from local to universal scales. Therefore, the researcher understands that teenage mothers are human beings, come from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and are community members, regardless of their status or stature. These notions should not be disregarded in conversations relating to their resilience.

This theory could be reciprocal and reciprocal (Ungar et al., 2013). It is reciprocity when dealing with the mutuality, interchange, and exchange process. It is a reciprocal process that entails giving, taking, sharing, and mutual. The interaction occurs between individuals and their environments where one is not more important than the other, but the person and their background are equally significant (Ungar et al., 2013; Ungar, 2018). Similarly, Lerner (2006) indicated that resilience is not a distinctive characteristic of the individuals or the societies around them but rather a dynamic feature of the association between elements, denoting their communal regulation (reciprocity) and change over time.

The two issues that pertain to the social ecology of resilience's reciprocal process are individuals and environments (Ungar et al., 2013, p. 350). The researcher's understanding of the first issue is that individuals exposed to risk cannot independently become resilient but depend on structures or organisations within their socio-ecological environment for support. The researcher's understanding of the second issue is that teenage mothers can gain support from the socio-ecological environment; for example, school, family, neighbourhood, community, and culture can help them bounce back, recover or survive despite the misfortune preventing them from becoming resilient. Hence, interactions of teenage mothers with multi-layered socio-ecological systems for support can enhance their well-being and resilience. In this regard, the social ecology of resilience helps us understand people and their environments as resources relating to resilience (Ungar, 2008; Ungar et al., 2013).

The environment's critical role in people's lives provides avenues to explore how people live and thrive amid adversities. In this way, one can discover the value inherent in what rural areas can do to improve the well-being of teenage mothers. Therefore, the social ecology of resilience allows all the people and their environments to be part of the conversation that leads to interventions that improve the well-being of teenage mothers in their context. According to Ungar (2012, p. 1), this perspective makes the comprehension of resilience cover the discourse relating to constructive human growth even under hardship. This relates to social-ecological aspects such as adversity, social and environmental issues such as family, schools, neighbourhood, community services, and cultural practices as believable as emotional facets of positive development when under stress.

This study views the social ecology of resilience as allowing him to learn about teenage mothers' challenges as individual challenges emanating from their communities, reflect on what they can do about the challenges, suggest ways to be supported, and improve their lives. The research question for this study echoes the social ecology of resilience agenda of individual-environment networking or person-context exchanges, seeking a profound realisation of the current state of teenage mothers in a selected rural area and ways in which their lives can be improved. Through the lens of the social ecology of resilience, which emphasises the individual, collective and social-ecological factors, improved well-being of teenage mothers can be experienced (Ungar, 2012; Theron & Theron, 2010).

#### **Components of Social Ecology of Resilience**

The adopted Socio-ecological framework by Ungar (2012, p. 1) integrates five components of support, referred to as resources that can

be utilised by teenage mothers to improve their well-being and resilience. These components are the family, school, neighbourhood, community services, and cultural practices from their socio-ecological environment. Ungar (2012, p. 1) pointed out that these components are as significant as the psychological characteristics of positive change under stress. Based on the above understanding, this study adopts Ungar's (2012) model, which fits the five socio-ecological environment components. Teenage mothers in rural schools can exploit these sources of support to recognise and enhance their well-being and resilience. The presented Social Ecology of Resilience model has been selected to illustrate the theoretical underpinning of this study. It demonstrates the sources of support as components for improving teenage mothers' well-being and resilience within rural backgrounds. The interventions to be introduced would align themselves with contributors highlighting the need to ensure ongoing nurturance and support for mothers through relational, interpersonal, and therapeutic approaches and by fostering close networks with people in their everyday life setting (Luthar & Eisenberg, 2017, p. 338). The latter statement highlights that support for teenage mothers at the school level and beyond the school's borders underscores the appreciated role these components can play in their socio-ecological environment to cope with and enhance their positive development. Similarly, Kulkarni et al. (2010, p. 218) indicated that most support programmes for teenage mothers are not stand-alone but vary in intervention. The model directly indicates that "interaction takes place between individuals (teenage mothers) and their environments", that "one (teenage mother) is not more important than the other (environment)", but "both the person (teenage mother) and the background are equally significant" (Ungar, 2018, pp. 9-11), denoting that for the improvement of their well-being and resilience, the interconnectedness of the teenage mothers and the five components of the Social Ecology of Resilience, is paramount. To improve teenage mothers' overall well-being and resilience, the combination of the components, which are the family, school, neighbourhood, community services, and cultural practices, can be very beneficial and be regarded as momentous "lifelines" in the backdrop of this study. The components of the social ecology of resilience are addressed in the next section.

#### **Individual: Teenage mother**

According to Ebersöhn and Bouwer (2013, p. 2), "children are active participants in their development, with unique personal abilities". The individual's abilities, in this case, the teenage mothers' abilities, are emphasised by the first component of the social ecology of the resilience model. Ebersöhn and Bouwer (2013, p. 4) and Ungar (2012, p. 17) contended that individuals rely on these abilities for support to find solutions to their challenges. Children's Bureau (2015, p. 3) refers to the abilities of teenage mothers to (a) cognitive knowledge, (b) sense of optimism, (c) self-efficacy, (d) academic skills, and (e) problem skills. Ramatea (2020, p. 45) echoed this view in her studies, stating that individual strengths, capacities, talents, and social skills are qualities of individual abilities, denoting that it can be the motive for building resilience for teenage mothers, enabling them to cope with responsibilities related to early motherhood. According to Masten (2014, p. 303), an individual's ability and the interactions between an individual's environment components determine resilience. So, by drawing support from some or all components in their environment, teenage mothers can improve their well-being and build resilience. Ricks (2016, p. 2) noted that teenage mothers possess strength. They are driven to be respectable parents and go-getting and have the potential to live highly productive lives. In practice, they employ an asset viewpoint about those strengths. Thus, all individuals have inner and outer resources unrelated to their circumstances. Those resources serve as strengths that are more related to well-being and resilience.

Distinct abilities, such as positive character and intellectual skill in the process of undesirable practice by building hope, are fundamental in the development of resilience (Collins, 2010, p. 8), signifying that despite the trauma and responsibilities that come with teenage pregnancy, surrounding oneself with positive people and having a

positive mindset reaps positive outcomes. In addition, Liebenberg and Moore (2018, p. 2) posit that resilience encompasses both individual abilities and interpersonal resources situated in societal ecologies, which denotes that, as unique individuals, teenage mothers can tap into their inner strength, agency, or sense of optimism (Children's Bureau, 2015, p. 3), and reach out to either their immediate or extended family, school, neighbours, community structures or cultural practices (components of SER) to enhance their overall well-being.

#### **School**

Another component of the Social Ecology of Resilience that can offer continuing educational and social support for teenage mothers is the school (Collins, 2010, p. 11), as it enshrines other support resources. Schools, as a resource of support in the background of this research, refer to rural Secondary schools in QwaQwa. Examples of these support structures are the School-Based Support Team, responsible for the identification and referral of learners experiencing barriers (teenage motherhood) to learning and development, and the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning committee, which ensures that learners across the board (including teenage mothers) receive adequate support and are not excluded from or left behind during the teaching and learning process. Vogel and Watson (2017, p. 17) alluded to the vital role education plays in fostering teenage mothers' resilience and enabling them to complete school.

Furthermore, Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008, p. 527) perceive the school as an essential support resource for teenage mothers' educational attainment. They clarify the importance of identifying the resources needed to help young teenage mothers remain in and progress with school. When teenage mothers are emotionally distressed or experiencing academic challenges, the support provided by peers can only be favourable to them (Ricks, 2016, p. 5). In his research findings, Malindi (2018, p. 4) explained that peers play a pivotal role in enhancing resilience in teenage mothers. This is unswerving with the conclusions reached by Ricks (2016, p. 5), who cited that those positive relationships between teenage mothers and their peers are fundamental pillars of strength and support. This means that away from home, tolerance and companionship by their peers and schoolmates remain vital ingredients of support for teenage mothers during this time, which is characterised by uncertainty and serves as enablers or enhancers of their well-being and resilience.

According to Ricks (2016, p. 5), the school setup contains more than a few resources that can be utilised for problem resolution and life enrichment. Again, a caring educational milieu endorses positive relationships amongst teachers and schoolchildren, peers and pupils, and school and home. These relations can be foundations of strength and support for teenage mothers. Therefore, in this study, the school can be seen as a tremendously valuable resource providing care and support for teenage mothers to boost their resilience and improve their well-being.

#### **Family and extended family**

The cornerstone or foundation of support for children is their families (Hess et al., 2002; Vandenberg, 2012). According to Zakeri, Jowkar, and Razmjoe (2010, p. 1068), resilience is enabled when biological mothers provide social support to young mothers (their children). The family and extended family remain part of teenage mothers' daily living. This component comprises parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives as sources of support. Asomani (2017, p. 29) clarifies that "the immediate setting of a developing person includes the home and the family". The presence and role of the family in teenage mothers' lives are significant. The importance of the extended family amongst the rural communities is explicit. Immediate and extended families take over responsibilities such as caring for the children of teenage mothers when they are at school, community projects, and when teenage mothers are away from home. For example, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters co-parent with teenage mothers.

In the current study, the researcher acknowledged the existence of a lot of collaborative work among family members. This concurs with

Wahn et al. (2005), who maintain those teenage mothers cope resiliently with the challenges of early parenthood with social support from the whole family. Vogel and Watson (2017, p. 17) also observed that family support assists teenage mothers in graduating from high school.

The family component is a source of support because teenage mothers, like children, grow up, surround themselves, and interrelate with family members daily. It is a source where they can draw positive elements appropriate for improving their well-being and resilience development. However, Luthar et al. (2000) affirmed that family factors enhance resilience. This stresses the interrelationship of the teenage mother (individual) with the rest of the family (Socio-ecological environment), which is deemed beneficial to their well-being, signifying that they cannot socially exclude themselves from the socio-ecological environment or exist in complete isolation (Bunting & McAuley, 2004, p. 208). Family support can help teenage mothers cope with their problems. The family remains fundamental for growing and developing individuals (Ramatea, 2020, p. 46).

#### **Neighbours**

Neighbours constitute another component of the Social Ecology of Resilience. According to the Collins English Dictionary (2021), neighbours are 'the people who live near or close to you' or 'in the house or flat next to yours'. This suggests that teenage mothers live close to their neighbours. Ebersöhn (2017, p. 2), Schoon (2006, p. 19), and Theron and Theron (2010, pp. 1-2) mentioned the role neighbourhood plays as an interrelated structure to the positive outcomes and personal growth of individuals facing adversity. The researcher avers that neighbours contribute to improving the well-being and resilience of teenage mothers by being friendly, available, approachable, tolerant, accepting, respectful, helpful, trustworthy, and caring for and supportive of them.

#### **Community structures**

An individual is undeniably part of the community web. Asomani (2017, p. 29) affirmed this view and indicated that "the immediate setting of a developing person includes the community," the fourth component in the Social Ecology of Resilience framework. Community structures consist of government departments, for example, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Development, local clinics, South African Schools Act (SASA), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, and faith-based organisations. These are sources of support existing outside the school environment. Teenage mothers can tap into any valuable sources of support inside, outside, and in the community to improve their well-being and resilience. In the process, relationships develop among people (teenage mothers and the socio-ecological environment).

According to Clark (2000, p. 3), a social ecology necessitates considering the whole planet as a kind of community in which individuals are members, including teenage mothers. On the other hand, Child Welfare Information Gateway (ibid) noted that a positive community environment presents protective factors with the most persuasive current evidence for expectant and child-rearing teenagers. This is in line with the views of Sherman and Greenfield (2013, p. 75), who indicated that it becomes evident that the emotional and psychological well-being of expecting teenagers and teenage mothers is related to relationships with and the level of support received from other community members. Furthermore, Van Pelt (2012, p. 1) maintained that partnership with external community organisations is another effective school-based programme with social work participation designed to prevent teenage mothers from dropping out of school, which signifies that psycho-social support is imperative in improving the well-being of teenage mothers. The well-being of teenage mothers can be enhanced by nurturing ties with community structures such as Faith-based organisations, and Department of Social Development.

#### **Cultural practices**

Cultural practices are the last component of the Social Ecology of Resilience Theory, significantly improving teenage mothers' well-being and resilience. Ale and Howe (2010, p. 1) pointed out that culture and environment influence the well-being of teenage mothers in rural

schools because it is a health issue with possible complications for teenage mothers. They can also risk dropping out of school due to a lack of academic support from teachers, financial support from parents and the baby's father, and social isolation from their peers. Based on this understanding, Theron and Theron (2010, p. 2) maintained that processes for teenage mothers inform resilience in bounded contexts and cultures. On the other hand, community and culture make available well-being resources and understandings in a traditionally eloquent way (Ungar, 2018), contributing to the improvement of the well-being of teenage mothers.

Theron and Theron (2010, p. 1) mentioned the urge for collective encouragement of indigenous (South African) experiences of resilience. The history of resilience has empowered South African youth. Resilience is gradually being theorised as an ethnically and contextually nuanced concept. This indicates the relevance of cultural practices that improve teenage mothers' well-being and resilience. This means that any positive encouragement, guidance, effort, input, or idea from the past that relates to teenage mothers' well-being should be regarded as a building block for the improvement of the well-being of teenage mothers. Shean (2015) suggested that growth is embedded in the cultural and historical background. Resilience, therefore, is construed as a "reciprocal process that is embedded in a given social ecology and that relies on culturally appropriate interaction between youths and their social ecologies" (Ungar, 2011, p. 10). Therefore, values or contributions from the past as sources of support improve the well-being of teenage mothers and build their resilience; thus, they should be acknowledged and implemented.

So, 'building bridges' between and networking with and receiving support from any component of the social ecology of resilience can be precious for teenage mothers to cope, enhance their competence, and improve their general health and well-being and boost their resilience during and throughout their schooling and overall contribute to successful and positive development.

#### **Relevancy to this study**

The literature around the Social Ecology of Resilience proposes an interconnectedness of individuals (teenage mothers) with resilience-focused interventions from their socio-ecological environment, for example, the family, school, neighbourhood, community services, cultural practices, etcetera, which consequently improve the well-being of teenage mothers (Walsh, 2012; Lane & Dorfman, 1997).

In addition, Luthar et al. (2000, p. 3) concur that resilience results from an individual's networking with components within the socio-ecological environment. The application is also appropriate in child psychology (Cicchetti, 2013; Clauss-Ehlers, 2008; Coifman et al., 2007; Nix et al., 2005).

This positioned its concern within the theory description to validate the status of the social ecology of resilience theory in this research. The Social Ecology of Resilience Theory is relevant to this study because it shows that the concept can be approached in various domains. Luther, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) acknowledged it when stating that individuals can exhibit resilience in various domains such as education, emotion, and behaviours.

However, many factors contribute to teenage mothers' resilience and psychological well-being (Biggs et al., 2015). Schluter and Schoon (2015) also mentioned that resilience principles are built. This study utilised the Social Ecology of Resilience to build resilience among teenage mothers facing challenges and adverse change. "A social-ecological understanding of resilience recognises the important contributions of family and social networks, community services, and cultural influences in the positive development of youth in conditions of adversity" (Walsh, 2012, p. 173). Reciprocated relations are formed among communities, schools, and families, making them interdependent. The social ecology of resilience framework clearly explains this dependency. "As such, schools, families, and communities are an integrated system that involves every member of the community in pluralistic and co-ordinated educational activities" (Lane & Dorfman, 1997, p. 12)

This is consistent with the findings of some South African academics whose research studies used this theory mostly in rural contexts. Such studies were carried out by Singh and Naicker (2019), Theron (2016), Gopal and Nunlall (2017), and Bezuidenhout et al. (2015).

Correspondingly, Hall and Theron (2016) regard the Social Ecology of Resilience Theory as meaningful, as the positive collaboration between adolescents and their social ecologies results in resilience. Thus, this study avers that resilience-focused intervention by supportive social ecologies (Hall & Theron, 2016) can improve the well-being of teenage mothers (Biggs et al., 2015; Singh & Naicker, 2019; Walsh, 2012).

### **III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study explores the support system teenage mothers receive in their motherhood in rural secondary schools.

### **IV. METHODS**

#### **Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is a cluster of beliefs that dictates which scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2012, p. 630). Still, this study is within the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm considers the teenage mothers regarding their motherhood condition through contact. It provides insight into their life backgrounds, rural schools on a social basis or socio-ecological environment, and their lives. The individuals who are teenage mothers are shaped by their background, and the researcher intends to construe the significance of their life backgrounds.

#### **Research approach**

Qualitative research deals with the overriding qualities of unique know-how and the connotations linked with phenomena. Therefore, qualitative researchers are interested in the whole-world experience, the complexity of human familiarity, personal and independent uniqueness, and the distinctiveness of individual involvements and meaning connected with a specific phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014, pp. 173-174). Keyton (2011, p. 58) maintains that personal feelings influence qualitative research, and it considers human values, as the researcher is the main instrument in qualitative research. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014, pp. 172-174) stated that the fundamental qualities of personal experiences and the connotations related to the phenomenon (teenage mothers) are what qualitative research deals with. Qualitative research taps into the lived experiences of individuals. Moreover, exploring 'whole-world experience' is the aim of qualitative research, with its interest in the depth of human experience.

#### **Arts-based research design**

According to Eisner (2008, p. 26), people's daily experiences are often visual and sensory, and these cannot be fully articulated in words, as not all facts are reducible to language. Thus, other means of communication, such as drawings, may capture diverse stages of life experiences (Bagnoli, 2013, p. 2).

The draw-and-write method is often used in situations involving children, including teenage mothers. The technique is also useful in multicultural studies, where participants may struggle to express themselves orally. People of all ages can employ pictorial and artistic approaches. During their draw-and-write sessions, teenage mothers articulated their experiences that could hardly be expressed vocally (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 118). Thus, teenage mothers use drawings in this study to make the interviewing process extra profound through worth memory-aids (Scott, 2000, p. 149). As young respondents, teenage mothers participated in arts-based research.

#### **Participants**

The teenage mothers in this study were the participants. They were learners from the rural schools based in QwaQwa in the Eastern Free State. Five female participants from five different schools in Grade 12 participated in the study. All of them resided with their families and not

with their partners.

Five teenage mothers from different rural schools at QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyane Education District were selected for the interviews. The selection was based on the location (Corbetta, 2011; Singh, 2015) of five different rural schools in QwaQwa and demographics of teenage mothers (Alasuutari et al., 2008, p. 223). Aurini et al. (2016, p. 55) explained that the backbone of the qualitative research design requires several prearranged selections regarding how, where, and with whom the research was conducted, hence adopting the purposive sampling technique. Sampling signifies some form of purpose because it is fundamentally tied to the project's objectives and diverse research questions and entails multiple possibilities for purposive sampling.

#### **Data generation methods**

##### *Semi-structured interviews*

In-depth, face-to-face interviews guided by open-ended questions were conducted individually with all the relevant participants (teenage mothers). These interviews were audio-taped and transcribed (Creswell, 2012; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). *[Amended due to the COVID-19 pandemic – Ref: Ethical Clearance – Date: 2020-05-19]*

Leonard and Leonard (2003, p. 13) stated that the topics to be included in the interview guide and questions to be asked (by the interviewer to the teenage mothers) are decided upon long before the face-to-face interviews are conducted. For the communication to be organised, flexibility is critical, and altering the arrangement of the key questions to inquire for more facts can be done by the interviewer. The interviewer can use an aide-memoir to be prompted of the key themes and matters they are broadly engrossed in and to help them link the different fragments. Therefore, the interviewer can modify the research tool to suit the interviewee's needs. Sufficient freedom to digress is the prerogative of the interview (teenage mother).

Stokes (2011, p. 11) indicated that the interviewees (teenage mothers) would also be asked several essential open-ended questions during face-to-face interviews. The interviewee elaborates on topics that can be too perplexing to analyse but could generate richer and more detailed perceptions. Alasuutari et al. (2008, p. 218) emphasised that it permits probative continuation questions and exploration of themes unexpected by the questioner, enabling the development of an indirect understanding of what transpires in the situation and why.

Rubin and Rubin (2012, p. 3) pointed out that, by posing research questions, focusing on the individuals (teenage mothers), is key; their emotional state and experiences will be better understood, including viewpoints on social life. According to Richie and Lewis (2003, p. 71), this technique aids the interviewer in understanding the outlooks of individuals contextualised within their specific history and/or experiences, allowing the researcher to connect these to personal circumstances because it facilitates the comprehensive exploration of multifaceted issues.

It is envisaged that these data collection techniques would enhance the exploration of improving the well-being of teenage mothers through resilience-focused interventions in rural schools. Face-to-face interviews *[Amended due to the COVID-19 pandemic – Ref: Ethical Clearance – Date: 2020-05-19]* would be conducted with the participants, who are the five (05) teenage mothers from rural areas of QwaQwa in the Free State, to collect the data to address the question: "How can resilience-focused interventions improve the well-being of teenage mothers in rural schools". As participants in the case study, the teenage mothers explained their different experiences and perceptions as teenage mothers regarding whether the support provided by various stakeholders was significant and whether sufficient resources were available to support them or if more support was needed to assist them in coping.

#### **Data generation procedure**

The data generation procedure started on 2 March 2020 after getting the ethical clearance, which was amended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and re-granted on 19 March 2020. On 20 May 2020, the researcher contacted principals from several rural schools in QwaQwa

telephonically (by landline and mobile phone) to obtain their consent to conduct the research project and identify willing participants (teenage mothers) in respective schools. The principals indicated that there were teenage mothers, but as agreed, consent should be granted by their parents or guardians using signatures authorising their participation in the research. Some principals requested that the consent forms for teenage mothers, the principal's permission letters, and the parents' consent forms be emailed to the schools. Still, this was not easy since load shedding, electricity shutdowns, and challenges of mobile network connectivity delayed processes. Principals advised that the semi-structured interview questions be typed and that the draw-and-write activity be presented through the questionnaire method as they indicated challenges previously referred to. In the meantime, all the necessary documents and instruments for the research were in place. Admittedly, the telephonic interaction with principals to get the ground research was extremely difficult due to network challenges, power load shedding, and prolonged electricity shutdowns. Eventually, the data was collected on 27 May 2020 and completed on 11 June 2020.

One hour and thirty minutes were dispensed for each of the semi-structured interviews and the drawing-and-writing sessions. According to Malebo (2016), the desire and will to get the research project done to constitute a vital component that enables the viability and realism of the research venture, which should be sustained and finalised.

#### **Data analysis**

This research study used thematic analysis to analyse data. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 6) defined thematic analysis as identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail.

Clarke and Braun (2013) maintained that a clearer direction is required on the practical features of qualitative analysis. This corroborates the views of Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 3), who argued that it is, by most, the persuasive process, probably because it advocates such a clear and operational outline for undertaking thematic analysis. Furthermore, they expounded that the goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, for example, patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue and that a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it.

The word-by-word responses of the participants (teenage mothers) were acknowledged as part of the coding process. Colour codes were used to cluster related codes, forming themes from originated categories. The natural extracts of participants' questionnaires and the draw-and-write technique were analysed thematically, and themes were classified according to the responses to each research question. The researcher then categorised data into themes, which were about the participants' data for using SER to improve the well-being of TMs within their designated schools. A six-phase guide is a beneficial framework for conducting this analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Becoming familiar with the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews and draw-and-write techniques to familiarise with the data. This study then started the process of reading and re-reading (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 5) the questionnaires, visualising the drawings and responses related to the drawings of the teenage mothers; thus, the researcher acquainted himself with the entire body of the data. Also, that helped in code identification, and the codes were grouped into categories and themes based on thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 6-11). Notes on early impersonations were jotted down.

In this phase, coding is inductive when generating initial codes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 5) because it reduces lots of data into small, meaningful pieces. This assisted the researcher in organising the data meaningfully and systematically. During the inductive analysis, the researcher used line-by-line coding to code every line of the hard copies. By reducing the data into smaller chunks, similarities or differences in the responses of the teenage mothers could be identified, indicating aiding or constrictive factors related to improving the well-being of teenage mothers through resilience-focused interventions.

Searching for themes, a theme can be regarded as something noteworthy or fascinating concerning the data and/or research inquiry, which is consistent with Braun & Clarke's definition of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). Significance is whereby a theme is characterised. A theme will then comprise preliminary codes with a corresponding meaning after the researcher has organised these codes into the original theme. After the researcher has examined the codes, the codes can then be fitted into one theme. The initial theme will be formed after collating the codes. Reviewing themes, the preliminary themes are re-read, altered, and developed to check whether they are logical. All the theme-related data should be grouped. Reading enables the researcher to determine whether the data corresponds with each theme, the entire data set context, and whether the themes work. The frequency of themes (how often they occur) might also interest the researcher, relying on the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Defining themes involves the last stage of fine-tuning them. The purpose is to '...identify the 'essence' of what each theme is about' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). It involves determining what the themes are saying, if sub-themes exist, and how each sub-theme is linked to the main theme. Write-up a report of the findings was done after the preliminary themes were grouped into codes and refined.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics is the building block of humanity. A board of ethics is found in educational policies and different academic spheres, including religion and bioethics. The Ethical Clearance Guidelines of Human Research establish the basis on which a study should be steered and guide the researchers over the full progression and yonder with nine critical concepts in research ethics. The nine concepts are relevant to the current research involving teenage mothers as human subjects. This study ensures that any harm and risk of harm might be mitigated to participants. This study ensures that informed consent has been signed by the participants, allowing them to approve participating in this study. This means the people granting permission must fully understand the purpose and process of the research, what the risks are, how these will be alleviated, and why the research is taking place. Vulnerable participants are at particular risk of harm due to their circumstances, are vulnerable to manipulation, or are forced to participate in the study. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were considered in this study. However, individuals or institutions have a right to privacy, and there should always be an intention to maintain confidentiality unless expressly waived by the participants.

The beneficence is the direct benefit participants, the community or organisations, and the larger society gain from the research. The reciprocity occurs when certain participants do not benefit implicitly from the research, considering the risk of harm they are subject to. The remuneration involves paying money or a token for participation, an accepted practice in much of the world. Examining the direct impact of such remuneration on the participants and their communities is imperative. This study ensures the avoidance of deception, which relates to not informing participants of the true purpose or research methods or deliberately falsifying information to misrepresent or conceal the precise nature of the research. Based on the latter, the participants (teenage mothers) were informed of their involvement in the study on the need for resilience-focused intervention programmes for teenage mothers in rural schools despite enormous adversity during audio-recorded one-on-one interviews. They were informed of the nature of the research, the data collection process, that the research study was for academic purposes and were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their information.

## **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teenage mother's profiles**

Teenage mothers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were all learners in Grade 12 at five different secondary schools A, B, C, D, and E. in rural areas. They were all from the Thabo Mofutsanyane Education District in QwaQwa in the

Free State Province. The ages of their children ranged between seven months and four years. They were living with either their parents or guardians. All of them were African learners, speaking Sesotho as their Home language. Table 4.1 describes the participants' profiles.

### **Sources of support teenage mothers received to meet their educational needs**

The findings revealed that teenage mothers received support from various sources, including personal, family, community, and schools, as they are critical and valuable to understanding the dynamics they are exposed to.

The questions and responses are as follows:

#### **Support system teenage mothers receive while attending schools RELATED FAMILY**

##### **From mothers**

*"My mother supported me by reassuring me that having a child is not the end of the world and that I could continue my life as normal"* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"My mother always does things that help me with my baby. She is the one who fetched me at the hospital when I had finished giving birth. She came for me and brought new clothes for my newborn"* (Teenage Mother 2).

*"My mother and sister help me. My mom was disappointed because she wanted me to complete my studies without disturbance. However, she never made me feel bad about anything. She was not angry; even the community or other people were not angry. It was all about me and the baby. She supported me through the whole process without any judgment"* (Teenage Mother 5).

However, their mothers seem to have played the most dominant role in assisting with child-rearing. This has been emphasised by many authors who stressed the critical role the mothers, caregivers, and family members, especially African teenage mothers, play by supporting them in a different context to concentrate on their education and prioritising remaining in and completing school (Madhavan, 2010; Jewkes et al., 2009; Madhavan et al., 2013; Vogel & Watson, 2017; Black et al., 2002; Hess et al., 2002).

##### **From sisters**

*"My sister supports me by looking after the child while I do my schoolwork"* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"My little sister helps me by checking on my son while I go to the clinic or town when I go out to school, and even after classes."* (Teenage Mother 4).

*"When my sister found out that I was pregnant, she was heartbroken. I could tell since she was the breadwinner. She wanted me to finish my Matriculation the previous year, but I could not. I also wanted to work hard to help her care for our family. Even though it was also a disappointment to her, she offered the best support. She gave full support and made sure that I did not regret being pregnant at such a young age"* (Teenage Mother 5).

Although the support system was available to the teen mothers, some experienced internal challenges as the pregnancy news was a disappointment to their family members. The abstract from one participant declares this.

*"When my sister found I was pregnant, she was heartbroken"* (Teenage Mother 5).

##### **From twins**

*"The twins help me to fetch my son from crèche while I am at school"* (Teenage Mother 4)

*"At weekends, the twins come to my home to take my son while I prepare to go to school. They also bath him on weekends. When it is my son's birthday, they buy him some gifts"* (Teenage Mother 4)

##### **Grandmother**

*"The grandmother's children are giving me a lot of the support I need the most by looking after my child while I am at school. She bathes her and feeds her before she goes to the crèche"* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"Grandmother gives me advice every time by calling to check how I am progressing with education"* (Teenage Mother 3).

##### **Child's father**

*"The father of the child is supporting me by taking the child to crèche and looking after her while I am at school"* (Teenage Mother 1)

*"The father of my child ensures that I get what I need for the baby, even if he does not have money. He asks for money from his father and sends it. That*



money helped me a lot as I managed to buy the baby's stuff like pampers and formulas (baby powder milk)" (Teenage Mother 2)

"Father is the one who supported me with most of the things that a mother can do for me, doing laundry as well as feeding the child." (Teen Mother 3).

#### **From friends**

"Friends never push me away. Instead, they always supported me and encouraged me to return to school. The baby's daddy would come home every day not knowing about the child until I ask for permission for him to see his son" (Teenage Mother 3).

#### **From aunts**

"My aunt helps me by buying food for us. She even buys medicine when the child is sick. My sister also helps me by buying clothes for my child, taking care of my child, and fetching the child to crèche. She even supports my education" (Teenage Mother 4).

The findings indicated that teenage mothers received support from close family members such as mothers, sisters, aunts, fathers, grandmothers, and children's fathers. These could show that the support systems within the African culture are vital. However, the teenage mothers' support is related to the scaffolding process. Most teenage mothers are in the developmental stages cognitively, physically, behaviourally, and physically. The equivalent work of caring for babies at their age is challenging and can significantly impact their families, relationships, and careers.

All participants wrote in genres and styles associated with what Fairclough (2003) called genre structure text. The participants responded that family members cared for their babies more than the teenage mother herself. The most serious challenge faced by teenage mothers was that they had multiple tasks to execute. For Fairclough (2003), if a sentence involves action, it broadly implies a social relation between somebody who recognises (i.e., the teenage mother who acknowledges that family members have taken care) and another who does not. The latter statement can be related to all the responses of Teenage Mothers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 above, as their responses "can" be accurate in the sense that they do not know how to go about child-rearing and comprehending school work, peers, and the current relationship with their partners. This resembles previous findings that teenage mothers comprehend the necessity of re-integrating themselves back into the educational environment (Madhavan et al., 2013). However, it would not be easy considering the encounters they might encounter during and after childbearing.

#### **SCHOOL**

The findings demonstrated that teenage mothers received support from friends, principals, and teachers since becoming mothers.

#### **From friends and peers**

"Friends support me. She gives me positive words to stay focused. My friend told me that having children is not bad. She visits me at home to see the baby" (Teenage Mother 1).

"My school friends were telling me everything is going to be okay" (Teenage Mother 2).

"My friends took me as their sibling. They did not judge me even in the class; they did not tease me or say something that hurt me" (Teenage Mother 4).

"My friend encouraged me to study harder to be a good mom to my child. They would encourage me not to give up because of the situation at home. One of my friends would help me when I had not written the homework because the baby was crying at night, and then I would fall asleep. They helped me to cover work" (Teenage Mother 4).

#### **From principals**

"After they knew about my situation, they did not go to the office to tell the principal or teachers about it. They were even feeding my craving. Even when I gave birth, still nobody insulted me when I went to school. Instead, they were hurt" (Teenage Mother 3).

#### **From teachers**

"Some teachers were fine to me, but others would just stare at me until I feel very ashamed of myself. Others would talk to me nicely, trying to show that it was not the end of my world" (Teenage Mother 5).

However, not all teachers left a positive impression on the life of Teenage Mother 5, as she expressed her dismay over the way some

teachers were gazing at her, making her feel uncomfortable, mortified, and unwelcome. This caused an emotional state of isolation for Teenage Mother 5, like the findings of a study by Skobi and Makofane (2017, p. 236). Hence, many teenage mothers' express feelings of loneliness, fear, and isolation. Discrimination and stigmatisation are a significant challenge faced by pregnant teenagers, which may lead to isolation and suicidal ideations. Thus, social isolation and stigmatisation are major personal problems faced by pregnant teenagers. The negative attitude exhibited by some teachers, as mentioned by Teenage Mother 5, contrasts sharply with the DBE's draft policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (DBE, 2018, p. 17), outlining the school to be a supportive socio-ecological environment and a milieu where no-one is supposed to unfairly discriminate against the pre-pregnancy and post-pregnancy status of teenage mothers (ÁFRICA, 2020).

The findings suggested that teenage mothers had positive relationships with principals, teachers, and peers. Similarly, Malindi (2018) reported that resilience in early parenting is a product of complex combinations of personal and socio-ecological resilience resources. The personal resilience resources for early mothers include having a positive outlook on life, a sense of humour, tenacity, toughness, determination, and lifestyles characterised by religiosity and prayerfulness. The socio-ecological resilience resources included social capital from biological parents, partners, peers, teachers, and pastors. A secure and supportive environment as a physical resilience resource was beneficial for early parenting and school. Interventions to support early mothers should consider personal, physical, and socio-ecological resources. This indicates that the teenage mothers' positive experiences with their teachers and friends and their resiliency and well-being could be enhanced, enabling them to simultaneously confront and overcome challenges they might bump into upon being teenage mothers and learners.

#### **EXTENDED FAMILY**

The findings demonstrated that the teenage mothers received support from their grandmother of her baby (mother of children's father), and the family of children's father and sisters were supportive.

#### **From grandmothers**

"My baby's grandmother supported me by looking after the baby on weekends while I am at school and during the holidays." (Teenage Mother 1).

"My extended family just supported me with words. They motivated me, but that was all they have done to me" (Teenage Mother 2).

"They laugh at me and discourage me, gossiping about my situation; until my son was born, they loved him and asked me many times to visit them" (Teenage Mother 3).

"My child's aunt would call and ask how we were fairing. She would come and visit us and see how we were progressing. She would even sleepover to find out for herself" (Teenage Mother 2).

"My baby's father's family members, particularly his sisters, were supportive. They were so happy they had a baby and would come to our place. The elders from their side did not tolerate my mistakes and encouraged me to go back to school" (Teenage Mother 5).

"From my side, they quickly understood my mistakes and encouraged me to go to school" (Teenage Mother 5).

Although teenage mothers received support from their extended family, they faced challenges as they could not cope with many responsibilities and caring for their young children.

The above statements or responses by the teenage mothers corroborate what Giddens (Fairclough, 2003, p. 215) termed *disembodying*, 'a socio-historical process in which elements that develop in one area of social life become detached from that context and become available to flow; into the others. One would also have to check participants' grammatical expression; for example, there are the social actors in this scenario, but they refer to passive nouns like "his sisters," and they also indicate that they were not the owners of the social act, which is taking care of their babies.

#### **From the father of the children**

*"The father of the baby did duties that all responsible fathers do. He looks after the baby while I am in school. He takes the baby to a crèche and later goes to fetch her. Sometimes, while doing my homework, he looks after the baby. He feeds the baby when I am busy with schoolwork"* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"The baby's father supported me with money to do everything I needed. He wanted me to go to school the year that I got pregnant, but unfortunately, I stayed at home. He did everything in his power to avoid making me suffer alone. He met me halfway by giving me cash every month, even though it was not a lot of money. He contributed to the baby's growth"* (Teenage Mother 2).

*"He was there every time I needed him, making time for his son, buying what he needed. He would even give me, and his son love and care, even though he made mistakes that he thought I would not discover"* (Teenage Mother 3).

*"The father of my baby did not support me because of our fighting and the conflict between our families. Although he was working in Johannesburg, he did not care about us. He would call me and ask about the baby. After that, we would fight because he only asked about the baby that he did not support. He would not give us even R200 for the baby's pampers or the milk (formulas)"* (Teenage Mother 4).

*"At first, it was surprising and shocking for us that we were going to have a baby, but soon enough, it got to him and that it was happening."* (Teenage Mother 5).

*"Honestly, he never tried to run away from the matter, but he always wanted to find a solution to the problem we were going through"* (Teenage Mother 5).

*"It was heartbreaking for me that I was the only one who was supposed to leave school and stay at home, although we were together. However, I was then able to get over it"* (Teenage Mother 5).

*"My baby's father never wanted me to have an abortion, and we decided to keep the baby right away. He could not do much for me as he was still at school, but he always called to check on me and the baby. Sometimes, he would even give me money for the doctor if I was not feeling well. He still participates in our life and that of the baby"* (Teenage Mother 5).

This study was mainly conducted in a rural area. One can imagine the economic and social structure of rural areas, which cannot be compared to urban areas in terms of resources and capital circulation. Teenage Mother 4 highlighted the dilemma related to the lack of income and economic issues. Mukuna (2020) argued that being involved in a relationship as a couple or young parent is challenging. Money is a big issue, and the child's financial support is the focus. Various interventions would be required to care for the child's needs and various factors of integrating that child into the community.

Here, the researcher critically analysed the discourse, narrative, language, and text used by the participants in this study. The researcher identified economic challenges, precisely money, as playing a critical role in influencing a child's upbringing and the happiness of both young parents.

## **SOCIAL OR COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

### **From immediate neighbours**

*"The sister of my neighbour comes to my home to see me and the baby. She usually says if there is no one to look after the baby on the weekend when I must go to school, I may leave the baby with her"* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"My neighbours did not support me. All they expressed were congratulatory messages. My neighbours are not people you can live with because sometimes they seem jealous; they would be happy or angry on other days. So, they did not show up much regarding support"* (Teenage Mother 2).

*"My next-door neighbour gave me some useful stuff for my son because her child is a boy too, and he is growing up"* (Teenage Mother 3).

*"Others did not know me because I was new in that area, so I was always indoors even though they did not do anything because they wanted us to leave and go back to where we had been staying because they wanted to take the house"* (Teenage Mother 3).

*"My neighbours helped me a lot because they would take my son away from me when it was time to study. They would fetch him from school when I was at school. They wanted me to study all the time, and they would take the baby. Those people only wanted what was best for me. Sometimes, the neighbours would take my child to sleep with them at their home."* (Teenage Mother 4).

*"Our neighbours did not offer much support and would not say anything to me; it was just another disappointment to them"* (Teenage Mother 5).

It is essential to take note of the participants' worldviews, perspectives, and backgrounds when analysing their written text. It is sobering to note that contextuality is crucial in TA; consequently, placing specific texts in their context is essential when using this technique. On the one hand, this means taking the social, cultural, and institutional setting seriously (Vaara et al., 2021).

This study is problem-orientated as it seeks to underline and highlight the problems experienced by the teenage mothers. The researcher had the interest and questions in advance.

The researcher focused on what participants wrote in their text and identified what was critical; the participants' written text was analysed to see the patterns in the data set. Van Schalkwyk (2021) highlighted that he linguistic features of particular interest to TA could potentially be involved in a non-neutral pattern of representation that is not immediately obvious on the surface. Patterns of this kind may be found examining the vocabulary or metaphors used in a text, its grammar at the level of phrases and sentences, its textual organisation, its framing in relation either to other texts or too familiar cultural scripts or schemas, and how it addresses and positions the recipient.

### **From teachers**

*"My teacher supported me, but others viewed being a teenage mother coming to school as a disadvantage. Some teachers were making jokes about my issue."* (Teenage Mother 1).

*"One teacher supported me by telling me that life is tough, so I had to work as hard as I had done the previous year; she saw that I could make it"* (Teenage Mother 2).

*"They always came and encouraged us to apply for our careers and not repeat the same mistakes"* (Teenage Mother 3).

*"They always check out books to see whether we come; if not, they just make extra classes for those who do not come"* (Teenage Mother 3).

*"It can talk to any of them in a one-on-one session, but if you have a problem, they address it"* (Teenage Mother 4).

*"A teacher would assist us all girls, reassuring us that life goes on and that we would not get stuck on one point. He would tell us to leave the past and focus on the future. He would say the future is in our hands because, in life, no one would stand with you all along the way"* (Teenage Mother 4).

*"After having a baby, some teachers were very happy for me, especially since I returned to school. They talked to me about life and said returning to school was the wisest decision ever. Their talk with me was also helpful because it contributed to my recovery and made me feel better"* (Teenage Mother 5).

Despite this, teachers supported and cared for teenage mothers. Still, few teachers did not care about them as they had a significant and noticeable challenge in dealing with teenage mothers. Two critical things that emerged regarding the challenges facing young mothers relate to the teachers' behaviours towards teenage mothers and the policy challenge of educating teachers on the suitable approaches to handling the challenges teenage mothers face in schools, especially in rural areas.

However, what is key is that education (teachers/school) is a significant support component in teenage mothers' socio-ecological environment, as mentioned by all five participants.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Resiliency is evident from elements encompassing favourable human transformation (over unique qualities). In this study, the tools identified as critical in improving teenage mothers' well-being and resilience are the family structures, friends, school, health facilities, and teenage mothers' spouses. Resilience is therefore not just about the personal qualities of the child but how well the child's social and physical environment (including the child's school, family, and community) facilitates access to internal and external resources, such as healthy relationships, a powerful identity, social justice, material needs like food and education. The findings indicate that the teenage mothers confirmed the availability of support resources inside and outside the rural schools, which plays a fundamental role in improving the well-being of teenage mothers. The availability of interventions can effect a



positive change in teenage mothers' well-being and resilience mechanisms. Teenage mothers can have resilience, improved well-being, physical and mental growth, and a positive relationship with communities and fellow teenage mothers. So, most teenage mothers' socio-ecological components offered financial, emotional, economic, and social support, such as family, school, etc. Enabling factors for teenage mothers to enhance their well-being include a safe socio-ecological environment, which entails the family, community support, acceptance and tolerance, and sufficient psycho-social support, including the school community. Constraining factors that can hinder the well-being and resilience of teenage mothers and focused interventions for improving the well-being of teenage mothers in rural areas are the lack of family support, finances, and conflict in implementing policies. Teenage mothers do have the strength, inner drive, and capabilities (agency) to navigate and network with components in the socio-ecological environment (family, school, neighbours, church, etcetera), which thus provides resilience-focused interventions to them, resulting in the improvement of their overall health and well-being. This attests to the many sources of support available in and outside the school to improve teenage mothers' well-being. However, there are situations when resilience-focused interventions designed to enhance the well-being of teenage mothers are constrained, e.g., the father of the baby not supporting a teenage mother or teachers and extended family members laughing or gossiping about them regarding their pregnancies while they are at school. These negative experiences reported by teenage mothers impede the improvement of their well-being, along with other constraining factors, which include the lack of involvement of non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations in the well-being of teenage mothers. South Africa can support teenage mothers on home soil. This can be done by the identification of existing resources in their local rural settings that can be utilised as support lifelines but also deliberations by the rural communities around "fresh" intervention strategies that can make a positive contribution to the well-being of these vulnerable teenage mothers to support them to remain in school and complete their schooling careers.

## VII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

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