



RESEARCH TITLE

EVALUATING THE LONG – TERM CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES IN RURAL SCHOOLS WITHIN UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT: A SOCIOECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The research design and methods are the main topics of Chapter 3 of this dissertation, which also provides the foundation for the study "Evaluating the Long-Term Consequences of Teenage Pregnancies in Rural Schools: A Socioeconomic and Educational Perspective." Any research project needs a methodology chapter since it establishes the fundamental reasoning behind the techniques used for the investigation and guarantees that the research questions are adequately answered. The study paradigm, design, population, sampling strategy, data collecting techniques, and analytic methodologies are all described in this chapter. The procedures used to ensure the study's reliability and ethical integrity are also detailed there. This chapter aims to lay out the research methods in a way that is easy to grasp so that the complex dynamics of teen pregnancies in rural South African schools may be studied from a socioeconomic and educational perspective.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a study's "research paradigm" is the set of underlying philosophical assumptions and conceptual framework that determine the study's methodology, guiding principles, and standards in academic research. By using these frameworks, researchers are able to better understand the data and outcomes. They do more than just carry out the procedures; they also mirror the researcher's perspective and influence how they engage with the material.

This research looked at the long-term impacts of adolescent pregnancies on rural South African pupils via the lens of interpretivism. As a research paradigm, interpretivism is based on the idea that reality is relative and depends on social construction. Understanding the intricate relationship between people's experiences, emotions, and societal institutions is of paramount significance, making the social sciences ideal domains for this approach (Bryman, 2016). Researchers should completely immerse themselves in the social contexts of participants, according to interpretivism, if they want to comprehend their viewpoints and experiences.

There are many reasons why interpretivism is a perfect match for this research. Firstly, we may delve deeply into the personal narratives of adolescent moms in rural South African classrooms thanks to interpretivism. This paradigm completely explains the educational and economical implications of adolescent pregnancies from the participants' viewpoints since it concentrates on people's experiences and views. This is especially important when considering the potential influence of cultural, societal, and economic aspects on individual experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Furthermore, the study's focus on examining the impact of community perspectives and traditional beliefs on adolescent pregnancies makes interpretivism's context-based approach all the more applicable. This view maintains that in order to comprehend something to its fullest, one must take into account the larger historical, social, and cultural setting in which it emerged. Take rural South Africa as an example; its distinct sociocultural setting is essential for understanding how community views affect adolescent pregnancies (Creswell, 2013).

Since interpretivism depends so much on the researcher's interpretation of the participants' experiences, its detractors, including positivists, contend that it lacks objectivity (Popper, 1959). Quantitative approaches that are too objective, according to supporters like Schutz (1967), miss the mark when it comes to understanding the nuances of human behaviour and society. Teen pregnancy in rural schools is complex and subjective, but the interpretivist approach provides a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the problems at hand, whereas more positivist methods may fail to do so.

In this part, we highlight how important it is to connect the research paradigm with the research issue. The interpretivist method outperforms the positivist one in terms of achieving the study aims, which are to get a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of teen moms. Consistent with Weber's (1949) perspectives on the significance of *Verstehen* (understanding) in the field of social sciences, this encourages a compassionate understanding of human behaviour.

This research employed interpretivism as its technique to investigate teen pregnancies in rural South Africa from a sociological and emotional vantage point. This paradigm fully understands the socioeconomic and educational problems faced by adolescent parents by capturing their subjective experiences and opinions.

3.3 Research Approach

A research technique is an essential part of any academic study as it guides the investigation of research questions and the gathering of relevant information. It contains the general strategy and justifications that direct the study's execution, as well as the processes and methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Creswell (2013) asserts that the research strategy determines the course of the study design and impacts the selection of certain research techniques.

A qualitative research methodology was used for this investigation. The main goal of exploratory qualitative research is to comprehend underlying motives, beliefs, and justifications. It sheds light on an issue and aids in the formulation of concepts or theories for prospective quantitative study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research is a methodological tradition that depends on human interaction in order to investigate complicated phenomena within their contexts.

There are several reasons why this study's qualitative technique was chosen. First of all, the nature of the study topic necessitates a thorough comprehension of individual experiences, cultural expectations, and educational results pertaining to adolescent pregnancies in rural schools. A complete understanding of the long-term effects of adolescent pregnancies requires an ability to capture the subtle richness of these experiences and intricate narratives, which the qualitative method excels at conveying.

Furthermore, since the study's socioeconomic and educational views are heavily reliant on the subjective components of adolescent pregnancy—such as individual experiences, feelings, and society perceptions—the qualitative technique is well-suited for examining these aspects. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), qualitative techniques provide rich, deep insights that quantitative approaches often overlook, allowing researchers to dive into the complexities of social phenomena and human behaviour.

Within the research community, there is a discussion over the relative benefits of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Advocates of quantitative approaches, such as Popper (1959), make the case for their objectivity and generalizability. Advocates of qualitative research, like Creswell (2013), emphasise the richness and contextual knowledge that qualitative approaches provide, which are especially useful

for studies such as this one, in which the subject's subjective experiences and circumstances play a crucial role.

The interpretivist paradigm used in this research, which emphasises understanding people's subjective interpretations and experiences, is therefore well-aligned with the qualitative method. A thorough investigation of the research topics is made possible by this alignment, which guarantees that the paradigm, methodologies, and research methodology are consistent.

Moreover, the flexibility of the qualitative method permits the investigation of unforeseen themes and patterns that can surface during the research. For a research like this one, where the cultural and pedagogical aspects of adolescent pregnancies in rural South African schools may not be entirely foreseeable from the beginning, this flexibility is essential.

The study's aims, which include a thorough investigation of the long-term socio-economic and educational ramifications of adolescent pregnancies in rural areas, are well suited for the qualitative research technique. Teenage moms and other stakeholders have complex, subjective, and contextualised experiences, and this technique provide the instruments needed to record them. The resulting rich and comprehensive insights are crucial for comprehending the issue being studied.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a strategy framework that guides data collecting and analysis in a research effort. It includes the study technique and processes, effectively offering a plan for data collecting, measurement, and analysis. According to Creswell (2013), research design is a strategy or proposal for doing research that includes choices on the sort of study to be undertaken, data gathering methods, and data analysis methodologies. The cohesive framework is what makes research methodical and guarantees that the study successfully meets the research questions and goals.

An exploratory research approach was used for this study on "Evaluating the Long-Term Consequences of Teenage Pregnancies in Rural Schools: A Socioeconomic and Educational Perspective." Stebbins (2001) defines exploratory research as "the examination of a research problem that is not clearly defined." It is utilised when there

is a need to thoroughly comprehend a phenomena, establish hypotheses, and give insights for future, more rigorous investigation. Emerging areas of study benefit greatly from this method when there is a dearth of existing knowledge and the researcher is aiming to get both familiarity with the subject and fresh insights into it (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

A variety of factors make an exploratory research approach appropriate for this topic. Teen pregnancy in rural South African schools is a complicated issue with many social and pedagogical dimensions. Through an investigative method, the research thoroughly examines these dynamics, offering a basic comprehension of the setting, difficulties, and experiences of adolescent moms. The researcher is able to explore facets of the phenomena that may not be immediately obvious because to the method's adaptability and open-ended character.

This study requires an exploratory design that allows for many data gathering approaches, such as focus groups, observation, and interviews, in order to have a better understanding of the subjective experiences and opinions of teen parents (Yin, 2018). The ability to adapt the study to new findings is essential in fields with little past research, and this design provides precisely that.

Critics, such as Saunders et al. (2019), contend that exploratory research is less rigorous than more definite study methodologies, takes more time, and doesn't produce as predictable conclusions. Supporters of exploratory research state that it offers a more flexible and adaptable way to comprehend complex topics in fields where little is known (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

The exploratory approach is especially useful in this study since it coincides with the interpretivist worldview that underpins the research. This congruence guarantees that the study methodology and paradigm complement each other, allowing for a complete and nuanced investigation of the long-term repercussions of adolescent pregnancy in rural schools.

The exploratory approach also aids in the identification of relevant factors and the development of hypotheses that may be tested in future research. This is especially important in the context of this research, since comprehending the long-term socioeconomic and educational consequences necessitates an initial thorough investigation to identify the numerous elements at work.

3.5 Target Population

In a research study, the total set of people or things to whom the researcher hopes to apply the results is referred to as the target population. The target demographic for the ongoing study, "Evaluating the Long-Term Consequences of Teenage Pregnancies in Rural Schools: A Socioeconomic and Educational Perspective," is diverse. The majority of this demographic are young women who became pregnant as teenagers while enrolled in South African rural schools. This group is important because it offers firsthand knowledge of the effects that adolescent pregnancies have on individuals, the economy, and education.

The study's target demographic include not just these young women but also educators working in rural South African schools, such as administrators and instructors. Their viewpoints are essential because they may provide contextual information regarding how adolescent pregnancy affects schooling as well as insights into the difficulties and support networks found in educational settings. Moreover, the target demographic in these remote locations includes healthcare professionals. Understanding the health-related implications of adolescent pregnancy as well as the availability and quality of healthcare services for these young moms depend on their involvement.

A complete understanding of the problem requires this extensive target audience. It is ensured that the study highlights the intricacy and diverse character of adolescent pregnancy in rural South African environments by including various points of view.

3.6 Sampling

In research, sampling refers to the act of choosing a group of people from the target population to represent the complete population. The validity and reliability of study results are heavily influenced by the quality of sampling. Purposive sampling was used in this investigation. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling is choosing people based on certain features and attributes that correspond with the study aims. It is a sort of non-probability sampling in which the researcher utilises their discretion to choose participants who are most likely to add to the study's depth and breadth of information (Bryman, 2016).

The use of purposive sampling in this study is supported on numerous reasons. First, the nature of the study topic necessitates extensive expertise and experience with adolescent pregnancy in rural schools. Purposive sampling enables the selection of persons with direct experience or specialist knowledge about the issue, enhancing the data with their unique ideas and viewpoints.

Furthermore, due to the complexities of the issue of adolescent pregnancy in rural South African settings, a sampling strategy that can identify and choose participants who can express the different elements of the problem is required. This includes not just the young women who have been impacted, but also educators, healthcare professionals, and community members who may provide a variety of viewpoints on the economical and educational repercussions of adolescent pregnancy.

Purposive sampling, according to critics such as Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), lacks the representativeness of probability sampling approaches, possibly restricting the generalizability of the results. However, since this is an exploratory study, the depth and usefulness of material are prioritised above statistical generalisation. Purposive sampling proponents, such as Teddlie and Yu (2007), argue that this method is especially useful in qualitative research, where the objective is to obtain a better knowledge of a phenomena rather than generalise results to a wider population.

Purposive sampling is useful in this research because it assures the inclusion of individuals with direct experience or expert knowledge regarding adolescent pregnancy in rural South African schools. This sampling strategy is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm and the study's exploratory research design, allowing for a more in-depth examination of the research issue.

Purposive sampling was utilised in this research on purpose to guarantee that the data acquired is rich, relevant, and focused on the important concerns concerning adolescent pregnancy in rural schools. This technique allows for a more in-depth insight of the targeted population's lived experiences, issues, and viewpoints, which contributes considerably to the study's goals.

3.7 Data Analysis

In research, data analysis refers to the systematic use of statistical and/or logical procedures to explain, display, compress, recapitulate, and assess data. According to Creswell (2013), this process includes many processes such as preparing the data for analysis, doing multiple analyses, interpreting the findings, and presenting them in a relevant way. Data analysis is vital because it transforms raw data into insights and information relevant to the study's aims.

Thematic analysis was used in this investigation. Thematic analysis is a tool for discovering, analysing, and reporting on data patterns, often known as themes. It describes the data gathering process in detail, summarises it, and offers interpretations of the study topic in many areas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Because it may be used across many theoretical and epistemological frameworks, this technique is appropriate for social science investigations that need the comprehension and assessment of several viewpoints.

Following acclimatisation with the data, the steps of creating initial codes, searching for themes, evaluating themes, defining and identifying themes, and delivering the report are all necessary steps in doing thematic analysis. This approach allows us to analyse the data in a methodical and comprehensive way, which improves our understanding of the situation by exposing narratives and patterns.

Thematic analysis was used in this research for several reasons. To begin, since it offers a comprehensive and extensive analysis of the data, theme analysis is well-suited to the qualitative investigation. To better understand the multifaceted experiences of teen moms enrolled in rural South African schools, the researchers in this study used thematic analysis to sort through the narratives of these students.

Furthermore, thematic analysis is appropriate for exploratory research in which the researcher strives to identify and analyse the data's underlying ideas and meanings. This is critical in a research like this, when the socioeconomic and educational effects of adolescent pregnancy are not obvious and need a thorough knowledge of the persons involved's lived experiences.

Some critics contend that thematic analysis is excessively subjective since it strongly depends on the researcher's interpretation of the data (Antaki et al., 2003). This subjectivity, however, may be advantageous in qualitative research, where the purpose is to comprehend and interpret the complexities of human experiences.

Proponents of thematic analysis, such as Braun and Clarke (2006), say that it is a flexible and accessible approach for creating a rich and thorough, but complicated, description of data.

This study's theme analysis adheres to the interpretivist paradigm since it entails understanding the meanings and experiences of the participants from their point of view. This alignment guarantees that the data analysis technique supports the overall study methodology and goals.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is an important term that supports the study's reliability and validity. It entails demonstrating the research's credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability. These components were conceptualised by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as counterparts to validity and reliability in quantitative research, but adapted to the nature of qualitative inquiry.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility entails determining the veracity of the study's results. To establish credibility in this study on "Evaluating the Long-Term Consequences of Teenage Pregnancies in Rural Schools," numerous techniques will be used. Long-term involvement and constant observation in the field will be essential (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This entails spending enough time in rural schools and communities to obtain a thorough knowledge and to establish trust among participants. Triangulation will also be utilised to cross-verify facts and interpretations by merging different data sources such as interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Furthermore, participant validation, also known as member checking, will be carried out, in which participants will assess the results to validate their correctness and resonance with their own experiences (Krefting, 1991).

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability relates to how well the results may be applied in different circumstances or with different groups. While generalisation is not the purpose of qualitative research, giving a detailed account of the location, participants, and

experiences is essential for helping readers to assess the relevance of results to different situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research will include thorough descriptions of the rural South African backdrop, participant backgrounds, and data collection and analysis circumstances.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the long-term consistency of the research process. An audit trail will be kept that documents all phases of the study process (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). This contains detailed records of data gathering techniques, decision-making processes, data analysis, and research revisions. An external audit will also be conducted, in which an independent researcher reviews both the procedure and the outcome of the research to confirm that the study's conclusions are consistent and can be duplicated under identical conditions.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability It is important to ensure that the conclusions are formed by the respondents rather than by researcher bias, motive, or interest. To do this, the research process will be reflexive, with the researcher constantly assessing and recording their own biases and how they may impact the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A full methodological explanation will also be supplied, allowing other researchers to follow the decision trail and comprehend how findings were reached.

While these criteria are widely recognised in qualitative research, some researchers, such as Morse et al. (2002), believe that their strict application may be restrictive and may not be appropriate to all qualitative research traditions. As a result, it is critical to adjust these criteria to the unique nature and demands of this research in a flexible and contextual manner.

Ensuring the credibility of this study requires a thorough and deliberate strategy that adapts existing criteria to the specific circumstances and needs of the research. Thus, the project intends to create data that are trustworthy, transportable, reliable, and confirmable, thus giving vital insights into the long-term repercussions of adolescent pregnancy in rural South African schools.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in research are crucial to protecting the dignity, rights, and well-being of study participants. This is particularly important in difficult areas like adolescent pregnancy in rural schools. The research "Evaluating the Long-Term Consequences of Teenage Pregnancies in Rural Schools: A Socioeconomic and Educational Perspective" would follow many essential ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and harm minimization.

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a key ethical need in human subjects research. It guarantees that participants are fully informed about the nature, purpose, methods, and possible consequences of the study before choosing to participate. All participants will provide informed permission for this research. Underage participants will be given special consideration, and agreement will be secured from both the participants and their legal guardians. Flory and Emanuel (2004) emphasise that the consent procedure would use straightforward, intelligible language that avoids technical jargon.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participants' privacy must be protected, particularly considering the sensitive nature of the subject matter. All information gathered will be kept strictly secret. The identity of participants will not be revealed in any reports or publications resulting from the study. To guarantee anonymity, pseudonyms will be used, and all identifying information will be deleted or changed, as advised by Saunders et al. (2019).

3.9.3 Minimizing Harm

Emotional anguish might result from research on sensitive themes such as adolescent pregnancy. It is critical to limit any possible damage to participants. As proposed by Dickson-Swift et al. (2008), this will include establishing a friendly atmosphere during interviews and conversations, enabling participants to skip issues they are uncomfortable with, and giving them with information on support resources if discomfort occurs.

3.9.4 Cultural Sensitivity

Given the rural South African background, it is critical that the study be approached with cultural sensitivity. Understanding and respecting local traditions, beliefs, and

practises is required. According to Liamputong (2010), the study design and data collecting procedures will be culturally acceptable in order to avoid offending or alienating participants.

3.9.5 Researcher Reflexivity

As a qualitative study, it is critical to recognise the possibility of researcher bias. A important practise will be researcher reflexivity, in which the researcher regularly reflects on and critically assesses their assumptions, prejudices, and behaviours throughout the study process. According to Finlay (2002), this reflexivity will assist attenuate bias and increase the study's credibility.

3.9.6 Data Storage and Use

The management of data is likewise subject to ethical issues. Only the study team will have access to the safely stored data. In accordance with the Data Protection Act's standards, participants will be informed about how their data will be used, who will have access to it, and how long it will be stored (DPA, 2018).

Strict ethical rules will be followed throughout this study to guarantee that each participant's welfare, respect, and dignity are upheld. These ethical issues are crucial to the quality and integrity of the study and go beyond simple procedural issues.

3.10 Conclusion

To sum up, the research concept and methods for the study on the long-term effects of adolescent pregnancies in rural schools have been thoroughly described in Chapter 3. The chapter explained the applicability of an exploratory research design, purposive sampling, and an interpretivist paradigm for the goals of the study. In keeping with the qualitative character of the research, theme analysis was selected as the main technique for data analysis. In order to guarantee the robustness and dependability of the study results, the chapter also addressed the crucial components of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To respect the highest standards of research ethics, ethical issues were also extensively addressed, especially relevant given the sensitive nature of the subject. By providing comprehensive insights into the long-term socioeconomic and educational effects of adolescent pregnancy in rural South African settings, this

methodological approach hopes to advance the field's understanding and provide guidance for future policy and intervention initiatives.

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