

# **Resilience of Pregnant and Parenting Learners to Pursue Educational Aspirations Within a Stigmatising School Setting in Rural South Africa**

## **Abstract.**

This study was premised on the increased demand for enrolment of pregnant and parenting learners (PPLs) at ordinary or conventional schools in South Africa due to the democratisation of access to education after the 1994 democratic dispensation. The study investigated how pregnant and parenting schoolgirls were resilient to continue with their educational aspirations at formal schools despite the social challenges that they faced in the school, family and community environments. A qualitative case study design was employed, and for confidentiality of the study participants, a face to face key-participant individual interview was the main data gathering instrument. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to select a total of 8 PPLs, 4 learners from each of the two schools who were either pregnant or had given birth at the time of data gathering to express their coping strategies within a formal school setting. Study results revealed that setting new goals after pregnancy, desire to achieve self-efficacy, strategies against hate language and support from their significant others were key contributors to the resilience for the continued pursuit of the PPLs' educational aspirations. The main recommendation from the study is for school management teams to help build a safe, child friendly and inclusive social environment among the school-based education duty bearers.

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