

Personal Interest Project

How do teenage pregnancies affect and change a teen's social life?

They now tend to say, "It's children having children."

Contents

Introduction - 3-4

Log- 5-6

Chapter One – How did this happen to me when I used the pill? 7-11

Chapter Two- Decisions, decisions 12-15

Chapter Three- Looking for support? 16-19

Conclusion - 20-21

Annotated Resource List - 22-25

Personal Interest Project Introduction

Teenage pregnancy is constantly judged and frowned upon in today's society and yet it has been a trend for many years, so I thought that this topic would be an interesting one to research for my personal interest project. I chose this topic as it focuses particularly on personal and social identity and I am interested in researching and discovering how one is treated in society when having the status of being a teenage parent.

Throughout my pip I want to discover how teenage pregnancies can affect and change a teen's social life and identity. I am aiming to prove what social factors during teenage pregnancy cause change amongst the teenager themselves, and how they react to the pregnancy, what decisions have to be made and how important support can be during this crucial time.

The research methods I have used include questionnaires and interviews to discover the thoughts and opinions of teenage parents and to gain an insight in to their own stories and experiences as they became a parent in their teenage years. I am also going to complete a statistical analysis to analyse and interpret teenage pregnancy rates as well as a content analysis after viewing documentaries involving teenage pregnancy.

My cross-cultural component looks at the concept time focusing on the continuity and change of teenage pregnancy through the generations of a current teenage mother, along with her mother who had her at a young age also, as well as the grandmother. My other cross-cultural component focuses on the society and cultural concept gender where I interviewed a male and female couple and compared their perspectives on teenage pregnancy. I believe these cross-cultural perspectives will provide me with information and views regarding teenage pregnancies that are beyond my everyday experience, as it is an issue in society that can occur often but is not spoken of everyday. Gaining perspectives of those from another culture and generation will portray a better understanding as to how teenage pregnancies can affect family dynamics and ones social life depending on the time or culture.

By using my chosen research methods and taking part in discovering cross-cultural comparisons, I believe the topic teenage pregnancy will guide me to a better understanding of society and culture as it is seen as an issue that encounters many judgements and trends involving persons and social identity, that continue to change depending on the culture and society we are brought up in or experiencing.

By completing this personal interest project while focusing on particular concepts of society and culture, I believe my chosen research methods along with the cross-cultural comparison, will help in developing my investigative and research skills that will contribute to an improved understanding of the factors of personal and social identity within particular societies and cultures, as well as enhancing my personal social and cultural literacy.

Log

I started to think of topics I could use for my pip after receiving all the information about the pip requirements. I soon decided on the question "How do teenage pregnancies affect and change a teen's social life?" I created a survey for teenage mothers to fill out, but found it was too difficult to get permission to hand them out at my local hospital as the survey would have had to have gone through the ethics committee which the maternity staff were hesitant to do. So instead I created a questionnaire to prepare for interviewing a range of teenage mothers by other means. I started off this process by sending off my questionnaire via a teenage pregnancy forum site known as 'Bub Hub.' I got in contact with a number of teenage parents in my area via the telephone and organised a time and place to meet three of these teenage parents. I interviewed the other three mothers on the phone, and one via email. There were only two couples including both the mother and father who I met in person.

I talked to my teacher about my pip topic, and decided to narrow down my question to 'How do teenage pregnancies affect family dynamics in my local community.' I began my introduction discussing my cross cultural comparison, research methods I will be undertaking, reasons why I chose this topic, and what I aim to achieve throughout my pip.

I viewed a documentary on the school 'Plumpton High Babies.' I also hired books on teenage pregnancy called "Teenage Mothers: Raising A Baby" by Julie K. Endersbe and "Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy" by Mary Nolan. They shared stories of teenage parents, as well as gave a variety of information about what is involved in teenage pregnancies.

I began writing chapter one of my Pip, called "Seventeen and Pregnant." It involves information and statements from my interviewees, as well as information from resources I used. I began chapter two, which focuses on support systems. Throughout this chapter I focus on what factors can affect family support. I also discussed support systems available and how they can be helpful for teenage parents.

I named chapter three, "The Baby is Born, what happens next?" I spoke about the research I have conducted to discover what can happen after a baby is born, and the decisions that have to be made for example adoption, or fostering the baby. I decided to split my first chapter into two to focus on the following two areas. The first chapter now discusses the reactions that can occur during teenage pregnancies and the second chapter discusses "So what happens with my life now?" focusing on the life changes that usually occur throughout teenage pregnancies. My third chapter is focusing particularly on the importance of support. I have decided to not include the chapter "The baby is born, what happens next?" and to just have the first three chapters.

I have completed my first compulsory cross cultural comparison, time where I interviewed both a teenage mother and her own mother who also had her at a young age. My other cross-cultural comparison gender where I interview and compare the perspectives of a male and female couple. After completing all the elements required I realised the time efficiency could have been used more effectively. Experiencing the journey of researching and completing my pip, I feel as though I have learnt more in which the way "society and culture" including its concepts can relate to the things we experience within our everyday lives being time, gender, authority and power within our society.

Chapter one – How did this happen to me when I used the pill?

In Australia, society has set the standard for teenage pregnancy which goes back many years now. So what is a teen girl to think when she becomes pregnant? That this is a normal and acceptable occurrence or is it something that she will be frowned upon by our society? When is the right time to have a baby or is no time the right time for a teenage girl? According to Furstenberg [1] (2001), parenthood introduces the notion of social standards through what he refers to as the normative schedule. This schedule is clarified as being the timing of life events which can vary from one society to another. When a teenager finds out she is pregnant, in the Australian cultural society, this is not simply the norm and may go on to create a major imbalance in her social life. Furstenberg states that when a teenager falls pregnant and goes on to premature motherhood, it puts significant others involved into a position that they were not prepared for (date). But what about those teenage girls that were brought up in a family where teenage pregnancy is the norm, or something that they had always wanted? Would these families represent the minority or are they judged by society as being of a lower socio economical social standard? So many thoughts have gone through my mind whilst gathering information for this personal interest project.

In this chapter I aim to synthesize what the social factors and feelings that a teenager can encounter when first finding out they are pregnant. This includes talking about the reactions from the teenage parents, their parents and peers. I created a questionnaire and posted it on a baby blog website known as 'Bub Hub' [2]. I researched mainly gaining a range of qualitative perspectives, gathering opinions from teenage girls and using their feedback and perspectives to then analyse my findings from a quantitative perspective, which involved using statistical analysis. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Pregnant teens and mums (2010) [3] suggests that the birth rate of teenage mothers in Australia has fallen over the last 20 years, from a national average of 28.1 per 1000 births to women aged fifteen to

¹ Unplanned Parenthood (2001) Furstenberg retrieved on 22nd April (2010) from '<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2162297>'

² The Bub hub ,2001, The bub hub Pty Ltd retrieved on 15th March 2010 from 'www.bubhub.com.au'

³ Pregnant teens and mums data Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010 ABC retrieved on May 21st 2010 from 'http://www.abc.net.au/plumpton/resources_full.htm'

nineteen in 1980, to an average of 20.1 per 1000 in 1996. This statistics show that teenage pregnancy continues to decrease within the Australian society. I imagine numbers may have dropped due to the readily availability of contraception such as the contraceptive pill which was introduced to Australia more than 40 years ago which gave women more control over their reproduction and sexual freedom. (A pill a day)(2002) [4]

First of all, to understand this topic, I am going to share some of the thoughts and experiences that the teenage girls I interviewed went through when they found out they were pregnant. I understand the types of questions I put forward to the girls could be quite confronting and emotional, although they helped me to gather the information necessary to gain insight into this topic, and thankfully the teenage parents were happy to answer all of my questions.

When asking the question, "What was your first reaction when finding out you were pregnant?" I received responses such as "*I was shocked and scared*" or "*I was angry at myself, I thought it would never happen to me*". On the other end of the scale one girl stated "*I was shocked as my partner and I thought we were unable to have children, but I was excited and happy as I always wanted to have a baby by the time I was twenty*". This indicates how all women experience and feel a variety and mixture of emotions when finding out they're pregnant. Nolan (2002) [5] explains how teenage girls might be shocked, amazed, terrified, excited and uncertain all at once. From looking back at my primary and secondary research I have analysed that teenage women who still attend school and are not in a strong relationship will often act very scared and worried. [6] 'Kids health' (2010) states how teenagers, along with their parents will experience a wide range of emotions from shock and disappointment, to grief and worry about the future.

⁴ A pill a day (2002) In the news retrieved on 21st May (2010) on '<http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/thepill/default.htm>'

⁵ Nolan, M (2002) '*Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy*' Heinemann Library

⁶ Kids Health 2010 Nomours retrieved on 22nd April 2010 from 'http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/teen_pregnancy.html'

Nolan (2002) [7] states how many women go into a state of denial when finding out they are pregnant. They neglect the early signs of pregnancy and try to pretend that nothing is happening. After talking to my interviewee's, I became aware that many young girls neglected the signs of pregnancy as they felt that they were letting their parents down and were terrified of telling them the news. They can also often be frightened to tell their partner if they are still together, because they are afraid it will destroy their relationship. A woman I interviewed stated "*I knew I was having a baby, I just couldn't push myself to tell anyone.*" Another response I received was, "*I was throwing up all the time, the pregnancy test said I was pregnant, but I refused to believe it*". These statements show most pregnant teens would rather disbelieve they are pregnant as they are fearful of the truth. Nolan (2002) [8] states "*Time passes while they try to decide what to do*". I have discovered that delaying the news of the pregnancy can affect the outcome of the situation as other family members who eventually find out, will become extremely shocked as they had no warning and less time to work on a decision such as termination, or keeping the baby (personal communication, May 2010).

So how come some teenage girls are happy to be pregnant where as others are scared and disappointed? When taking part in my cross-cultural component using the society and culture concept time, I focused on discovering how teenage pregnancies have differed throughout society with the perspectives from different generations. I interviewed a woman who was "*happy and excited*" to become pregnant, along with her mother and grandmother. I created a specific questionnaire asking them each similar questions but received very different responses. Starting with the grandmother when asking "how did you react when first finding out you were pregnant" she explained how when she was young "*teenage pregnancies were considered normal and weren't seen as such an issue.*" Carnegie (2001) [9] states Premarital childbearing has increased among teenage women in the past two decades, with a levelling off in the mid-1990s. This increase indicates how being young and having a baby has gone through changing levels of acceptance in our

⁷ Nolan, M (2002) '*Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy*' Heinemann Library

⁸ Nolan, M (2002) '*Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy*' Heinemann Library

⁹ Historical changes in the transition the parenthood, (2001) Carnegie retrieved on 21st April (2010) from '<http://www.happinessonline.org/MoralDrift/p6.htm>'

society. Teenage pregnancies weren't such a major crisis back then compared to today's society. Carnegie (2001) [¹⁰] also adds back in the 17 and 1800s, having a baby when you were fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years old was the norm. The reason why they started so early was to have as many children as they possibly could before they got to the age where they could not produce anymore. In the early 1930s to the 1990s, the total proportion of first births were either pre-maritally born or pre-maritally conceived to women fifteen to nineteen years of age Carnegie (2001). By 1990-1994, only 16 percent of premarital pregnant teenage women were married before their first birth. These statistics show the continuation of increases in teenage pregnancies throughout time. After analysing the grandmothers responses, I have distinguished that society's views on teenage pregnancies have continued to change throughout time, and in past generations teenage pregnancy was considered more normal as it was important to settle and marry at an early age, which involved having children. When asking the pregnancy reactions of the middle aged mother, she stated *"I was shocked, but had felt a great amount of excitement at the same time"* She was glad to have the comforting support of her own mother (the grandmother) and verified how teenage pregnancy wasn't considered as "normal" within her time. Although it was accepted within her family as she was also born when her mother was a teenager in the 1960s. Teenage pregnancy in the 1960s consisted of rates higher than today's. This mother admits *"I did receive some uncomfortable looks, although teenage pregnancy was accepted within my family."* This analysis of this woman's experience proves that while being frowned upon by members within her environment, she kept in mind that she was happy and was glad to be accepted by her family and have their support. When interviewing the current teenage mother she states *"I was shocked at first as myself and my partner were told we were unable to have children as I suffer from endometriosis, but I was extremely happy as I always knew I wanted to have children before reaching the age of twenty."* This woman's response immediately depicts that she personally felt the need to produce a child at a young age, and doing so in her teenage years was acceptable amongst her family environment. The responses I received from each of these women prove that teenage pregnancy can pass through generations, as well as implying the way teenage pregnancies in society have changed and are viewed as becoming less

¹⁰ Historical changes in the transition the parenthood, (2001) Carnegie retrieved on 21st April (2010) from '<http://www.happinessonline.org/MoralDrift/p6.htm>'

common throughout time. Society in general knows that the child see's and listens to what their own parents achieve throughout their lives, and it may just seem like the right thing to do for them as well. The fact that it was previously normal to have a child in your teenage years, reflects on how times and society has continued to change. The idea of being young and having a baby has gone through changing levels of acceptance and views socially from the perspectives of our families, social institutions and private/public organizations.

After analysing statistics, responses from interviewee's and reflecting on my secondary research, I have distinguished that the reactions that occur due to teenage pregnancies differ depending on one's social environment and their surroundings involving significant others. I have gained an improved understanding of teenage pregnancies and after taking part in using the cross cultural component time I feel I have discovered how societies throughout different generations produce a range of views on teenage pregnancies that have continued to change throughout time. Teenage pregnancy can contain many life changes including life changes decisions that must be made. These decisions can affect both the teenage parents and significant others, and this is what I am proceeding to talk about in chapter two. The life changes of a teenage parent.

Chapter Two- Decisions, decisions

After dealing with facing society along with the emotions that occur after a teen finds out they are pregnant they begin to ask themselves these life changing questions. What options are there to consider now? Termination? Adoption? Foster care? Do I keep my baby?

According to Endersbe (2000) [¹¹] after firstly discovering you are pregnant the decision of either terminating, or keeping the baby must be made. Nolan (2002) [¹²] states some women do not agree with abortion or they feel that they could not put themselves through the stress of terminating their pregnancy. I entered a forum site Stand Up Girl (2009) [¹³] and discovered that after the process of termination, some women begin to feel extremely guilty after realising what they have done. A teenage girl on the site states *"All I wanted was my baby back in my tummy."* This statement verifies how young girls in particular don't understand the concept and importance of their decisions when becoming pregnant. 'Ten Arguments for abortion and against abortion' (2009) [¹⁴] shows a mini debate and the contrasting perspectives of a variety of women, either for or against abortion. One against states *"Abortion punishes the unborn child who committed no crime instead, it is the perpetrator who should be punished."* A woman for abortion states *"Abortion is a safe medical procedure. The vast majority of women 88% who have an abortion do so in their first trimester. Medical abortions have less than 0.5% risk of serious complications and do not affect a woman's health or future ability to become pregnant or give birth"*. These different perspectives give an idea of how some women think more towards the emotional side, and others think more towards the physical side and importance of health during teenage pregnancy. So after declining the process of abortion, the only left options women have to consider is adoption, foster care, or keeping her baby." According to Nolan (2002) [¹⁵] It's impossible to make a definite decision

¹¹ Endersbe, J 'Teen Mothers: Raising a Baby,' (2000) Capstone Press

¹² Nolan, M. (2002) 'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy' Heinemann Library

¹³ Stand up girl 2010 Becky's story retrieved on 23rd March 2010 from '<http://www.standupgirl.com/>'

¹⁴ Ten arguments for abortion against abortion 2010 Women's issues retrieved on 25th March 2010 from '<http://womensissues.about.com/od/reproductiverights/a/AbortionArgumen.htm>'

¹⁵ Nolan, M. (2002) 'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy' Heinemann Library

about adoption until after the baby is born. Pregnancy is a time of tumultuous feelings, birth is a major life event. Nolan (2002) also states fostering is an alternative to adoption. 35% of the women I interviewed decided to go with adoption, one couple explained their reasons for this were the sixteen year old mother came from a house she described as *"full of drunks, drugs and always partying."* 'Teenage mums adoption and foster care' (2010) explains foster care and adoption are great options if you want to provide your baby with a better home, or keep your baby. Reasons for this may be perhaps you have a problem with drugs and alcohol, no family support, or for some other reason you are unable to provide adequate care and a safe and stable environment for your baby. This analysis of adoption and foster care synthesizes how all women have different perspectives when it comes to making these decisions.

Keeping the baby is another option. Approximately 80% of my interviewees explained how they decided to keep their baby. 'I'm a teen and pregnant' (2009) [¹⁶] states if you decide that you want to keep the baby, then you'll have to be prepared to be a parent. Being a parent is a full-time job whether you're an adult or a teenager. Nolan (2000) [¹⁷] states keeping the baby isn't an easy made decision and there are a number of factors that are likely to influence its success. One of my interviewees states *"It was a tough decision when deciding to keep our baby, but we are now extremely glad we did."*

I have distinguished that the keeping of the baby can encounter a variety of life changes for the teenage parents and significant others involved. Endersbe (2000) [¹⁸] states multiple amounts of changes can arise between friendships and relationships. I have comprehended that if a teenager's friends or family begin drifting away or are unsupportive, it impacts on them because when friendships and relationships crumble it dismantles and changes a substantial part of their lifestyle. A woman I interviewed states *"I felt I didn't have much in common with my friends anymore, as I found it hard to make time to meet with them."* This statement shows

¹⁶ 'I'm a teen and pregnant 2009 Pregnancy Info retrieved on 30th April 2010 from 'http://www.pregnancy-info.net/forums/Teen_Pregnancy/'

¹⁷ Nolan, M (2002) 'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy' Heinemann Library

¹⁸ Endersbe, J 'Teen Mothers: Raising a Baby,' (2000) Capstone Press

how when having a baby, the mother realises she is now not only responsible for herself.

I chose to use the concept gender for my other cross-cultural comparison to compare responses from both a male and females perspective on becoming a parent in their teenage years as well as the life changes they encountered. I made it simple by interviewing a male and female couple allowing them to share their responses together. When first asking how they felt their life has changed after the pregnancy the male openly stated, *"When first finding out about the pregnancy, I came across as angry and selfish, although now I'm happy to have a son."* Nolan (2002) [¹⁹] states how some young men become very angry and feel their girlfriend has cheated on them. Nolan (2002) uses a quote from a male father who expresses *"She told me she was on the pill and then she got pregnant. She really landed me in it."* This statement indicates how males often become angry and selfish when discovering their partner is pregnant. The male I interviewed added *"my life has completely changed for the better. It was tough completing school when having the status of being a teenage father, but after finishing school I had a greater chance at better employment."* 'Babies having babies' (2009) [²⁰] states that 80% of teenage parents don't complete their education, and rely on their family or welfare as they lack employment skills. Although in this particular case the father I interviewed completed his education which has led him to great employment. When interviewing the female and asking her perspectives on her pregnancy she states *"I was very shocked when first discovering I was pregnant, one of my first thoughts was I cannot go through abortion."* The female didn't complete her education and relied on her family for help and support through this life changing experience. When asking of the life changes the male expresses *"My life is much busier as a father, looking after my son and partner is very important, and money has been a bit of a problem."* 'Money issues as teenage parents' (2010) [²¹] explains how teenage parents see money as being a major factor, and is what leads teens to the need of support from welfare or

¹⁹ Nolan, M (2002) 'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy' Heinemann Library

²⁰ Babies having babies 2010 RipnRoll retrieved on 20th March 2010 from '<http://www.ripnroll.com/teenpregnancy.htm>'

²¹ Money issues as a teenage parent 2010 e-health forum retrieved on 25th April 2010 from '<http://ehealthforum.com/health/topic127337.html>'

their families. When asking the female of her life changes she explained *"I was disappointed to be unable to complete my HSC, and simply going out the movies with my friends is difficult to find time for, lack of sleep is what I found a problem when becoming a parent."* Nolan (2002) states babies want attention throughout all hours of the night, so be prepared for constant interruption of sleep. Nolan (2002) uses a teenage girls statement: *"The baby kept waking up during the night and wanted attention all day"*. This reflects on how teenage girls are unprepared for what may occur when having a baby. The analysis of both the male and female's responses show both differences and similarities amongst their perspectives. Differences being the male concentrated more on the money factor and the emotional side of the pregnancy. Whereas the female was affected by both the physical and emotional side, including lack of sleep and trying to gain as much support when going through emotions. Similarities involved they both were shocked when finding out about the pregnancy, although together they decided to keep their baby and are now glad to have a son, and during the time of the pregnancy they together felt the need for support from significant others such as family.

By analysing both a male and females perspectives on teenage pregnancy I have found that they both experience emotions during the process and they both play different roles when experiencing the pregnancy. I have comprehended during teenage pregnancy, when making the decision of abortion, adoption, foster care or keeping the baby, support is a major factor and can help the young mother and father to make more appropriate decisions and this is what I will be talking about in my next and final chapter.

Chapter Three- Looking For Support?

My baby is born, how can I get support? After continuing to research teenage pregnancy, I have come to realise that having support leads to a positive pregnancy and helps the teenage parents to continue to stay strong and hopeful. According to Endersbe (2000) [22] all teenage parents need a good support system. Many young teenagers find this support in their parents, and they can be a great help. Kids health (2010) [23] states that all parents should recognise their feelings and work through them to support their child. As well as the teenager, their parents and significant others may need support also. Support can be helpful in the way that it helps teenagers to not feel as though they are alone (Kids Health, 2010).

The teenage mothers I interviewed each had some form of support during their pregnancy whether it was from their parents, friends, a counsellor, or a teacher. Approximately 68% of my interviewees stated they found it easier to talk to people outside of their family as they helped the young teens to make more appropriate decisions. Nolan (2002) [24] states a trusted adult can help the girl break the news to her parents or other important people in her life. A woman I interviewed stated "*My English tutor was very helpful and supportive, and one of the first people I told I was pregnant.*" This shows other adults you may have some form of relationship with, can be easy to talk to and helpful in supporting you.

I have comprehended that support helps teenage mothers and fathers to learn the responsibilities of becoming a parent. According to Endersbe (2000), members of the family, friends or significant others who are close to the teenage parents may want to offer advice and support and be involved as it can become an exciting and happy event after the birth of the baby, but some offers of support may be short lived. Approximately 85% of teenage parents I interviewed explained that they were surprised their own parents in particular were very helpful and unexpectedly supportive once they had overcome the initial shock of finding out their child was pregnant. One teenage mother I interviewed stated "*Instead of being angry at me,*

²² Endersbe, J 'Teen Mothers: Raising a Baby,' (2000) Capstone Press

²³ Kids Health 2010 Nomours retrieved on 22nd April 2010 from 'http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/teen_pregnancy.html'

²⁴ Nolan, M. (2002) 'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy' Heinemann Library

my dad stood there hugging me, he added he'd stick by me the whole way whatever I did. I don't know how but I felt a massive relief when I heard this even though I knew what was up ahead of me." This statement shows how the support of a person, just being there and having something to say can have a remarkable difference on their feelings.

What support systems are available? When taking part in personal observation, conducting secondary research and receiving feedback from my interviewees, I have discovered many local support systems within the Australian society available particularly for teenage pregnancies. These support systems include the Pregnancy Advisory, Plumpton High Babies, and Young Parent Program Australia. The 'Pregnancy Advisory' (2009) [25] is available all throughout Australia, it provides support and services for young teenagers and significant others such as family and friends who are dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. A woman I interviewed explained the pregnancy advisory helped in supporting her, and comforted her within her environment. She states *"They provide high quality care for women and their partners in relation to unplanned pregnancies and abortions. Without their help I wouldn't have been able to face anyone."* Support and The Pregnancy Advisory in this case, has helped this women be able to overcome her situation and to face her immediate society. The Pregnancy Advisory understands teenage pregnancies can be an emotional situation, so they keep in mind the barriers created by language, culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, age and location. Teenage pregnancies can become a distressing and confusing experience, and the pregnancy advisory is available to support anyone who needs it even if the pregnancy was planned. The Pregnancy Advisory aims to provide a warm, supportive, non-judgmental space, enabling the teen to explore their thoughts and feelings about their unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, as well as discussing the teen's situation of deciding on abortion, adoption, fostering or keeping the baby.

Teenage pregnancy goes back decades and the trend continues and one must wonder why is this so? What I have noticed is that from the beginning it all comes back to education. While talking part in this project I have become aware that

²⁵ The Pregnancy Advisory 2009 Government of SA retrieved on 15th April 2010 from '<http://www.pregnancyadvisorycentre.com.au/>'

persons within different societies often look at teenage pregnancies in an unacceptable matter. Plumpton High Babies (PHB) ^[26] is a support system that focuses on both education and teenage pregnancies. PHB was formed especially for teenage mothers who still want to gain an education. It is a school that consists of teenage parents from all around Australia who come from different social classes, socio economic groups, and cultural backgrounds. PHB is welcome to any teenage parent who feels the want and need of support with their child and education. I recently viewed a documentary on this school and it advised how the teenage mothers have the option of taking their child along to class with them, or to a child department within the school where their child is looked after while the mother attends her classes. This comforts the teenage parents as they know they are able to gain an education while their baby is being cared for. The support of PHB has benefited teenage mothers because they will now have satisfactory education leading them to greater employment.

I have found that after gaining feedback and researching, counselling is a great form of support. At the pregnancy advisory it isn't compulsory, it's free of charge and available to anyone, which seems suitable for those in their teenage years. Counsellors dealing with teenage pregnancies aim to provide a warm, supportive, non-judgmental space, enabling the teen to explore their thoughts and feelings about their unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, or if they experienced abortion, adoption, or fostering their baby.

Counsellors can have a remarkable affect and help in making decisions that best suit the teenage parent. They will give out accurate information regarding options that are available including, continuing the pregnancy and parenting, continuing and choosing adoption, or terminating the pregnancy. The session is led by the teenager and gives them the opportunity to discuss any concerns or fears they may have and decision making strategies. Significant others who may feel they also need or support or want to help in supporting can also be involved. The 'Pregnancy Advisory' will support whoever is in need and they will take the time they need to make sure they make the right decision which will lead the pregnancy to being a positive

²⁶ Plumpton High Babies 2002 ABC NSW retrieved on 1st May 2010 from
'<http://www.abc.net.au/plumpton/stories/s791244.htm>'

experience.

After finalising all the research for my personal interest project, I have discovered throughout time societies outlook on teenage pregnancies have continued to change. Persons in society will either accept or frown upon teenage pregnancies. Judgements from others on teenage pregnancies usually depend on their personal experiences and knowledge. Teenage pregnancy occurs within a number of different societies and cultures and different aspects of teenage pregnancies continue to change throughout the upcoming generations of time.

Conclusion

After completing my personal interest project on teenage pregnancies I feel as though after using my research methods and taking part in my cross-cultural comparisons I learnt and have gained the ability to use particular research skills and methods such as constructing and using questionnaires, taking part in interviews as well as personal observation. I feel as though I have encountered an improved understanding of the concepts within society and culture.

The research methods I used throughout my pip helped to me discover and prove my hypothesis of how teenage pregnancies can change and affect a teen's social life. After gaining perspectives from teenage parents both male and female in my cross-cultural component gender, I felt an understanding as to why their responses contained both similarities and differences when talking about how teenage pregnancy had affected their lives. I distinguished that a males emotions throughout his life can be interrupted whereas both the physical and emotional side of a females life can experience change. After interviewing a range of teenage mothers, I have an improved knowledge as to what is involved when a teenage pregnancy occurs. I have become aware of the physical difficulties a teenage parent may encounter as well as the emotional. I feel I have attained a better understanding of how teenage parents, mothers in particular can be judged and stereotyped by persons throughout society and how the help of significant others and support can create a positive impact throughout a teenage pregnancy. Using a variety of my research tools gaining qualitative perspectives of others I found was effective in helping to understand the emotions and physical demands that may occur during teenage pregnancies. Using statistical analysis I found was effective when identifying continuity and change within teenage pregnancies that have occurred throughout different decades and generations. My cross cultural component was also effective and useful, as I gained the perspectives from teenage mothers from different generations.

If I was to undertake this research again, I would have probably used a focus group to make it be more like a case study and to gain the perspectives on a group of teenage parents instead of interviewing them each at different times. It was a

challenge in the beginning to find a focus group due to the confidentiality factor of teen pregnancy groups in my local community. I am happy with the process of the research skills I used as I feel after experiencing the use of the research methods, it enhanced and improved my research skills as an individual.

I feel as though by taking part in this personal interest project it has enhanced my social literacy, as I made use of the society and culture concepts when undertaking this project which helped improve my understandings of the feelings of persons who may be stereotyped throughout society. I feel as though I have grown as an individual after taking part in this pip experience as I have come into contact with others in society as part of my research and have learnt how to effectively use research methods. By using these methods throughout my research I feel as though it has helped me to improve in becoming more socially literate as an individual.

Annotated Resource List

A Pill A Day (2002). In the news retrieved on 21st May (2010) from
'<http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/thepill/default.htm>'

This website helped me to understand how important contraception is within a teenagers life when becoming sexually active. It involved many fact about birth control as well as included statistics as to how many girls within Australia become pregnant in their teenage years.

Babies having babies 2010 RipnRoll retrieved on 20th March 2010 from
'<http://www.ripnroll.com/teenpregnancy.htm>'

This website contained statistics on teenagers becoming parents and relying on welfare for support. It also gave detailed information as to why teenage parents feel the need to drop out of school and not continue their education.

Endersbe, J *'Teen Mothers: Raising a Baby,'* (2000) Capstone Press

This book was also really helpful in the way that it included detailed information regarding the duration of teenage pregnancies from the moment a teen finds out they are pregnant right through to what they may want for their future. It gives an idea of what is involved throughout the physical side of teenage pregnancies including prenatal care, and how having general check-ups with your general doctor is important. As well as the importance of having support for the emotional side of teenage pregnancy. This detailed information has given me a better knowledge of what is involved when raising a baby and caring for a newborn.

I'm a teen and pregnant 2009 Pregnancy Info retrieved on 30th April 2010 from
'http://www.pregnancy-info.net/forums/Teen_Pregnancy/'

This website gave an insight to what is involved when preparing to become a parent. It included detailed information a teenage parent must consider when choosing to become a parent, and how what they must prepare for may affect their social life.

Kids Health 2010 Nomours retrieved on 22nd April 2010 from
http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/teen_pregnancy.html

Kids health gave an insight on how support is a major factor during teenage pregnancy, and provided detailed information on the feelings of the parents and how they can support their child during their pregnancy. It also provided plenty of information on the importance of health during pregnancy.

Money issues as a teenage parent 2010 e-health forum retrieved on 25th April 2010 from <http://ehealthforum.com/health/topic127337.html>

This source contained many different forums which contained information as to why money is a major factor during teenage pregnancy. It explained how money in particular can affect the teenage father, mother along with the baby and how financial support is extremely important during teenage pregnancy. This helped me to understand why teens see money as a major factor when having a child and why it is particularly important to support the teenage parents themselves along with the child.

Nolan, M. (2002) *'Need to Know Teenage Pregnancy'* Heinemann Library

This book was extremely helpful as it provided information on what can be involved within a teenage pregnancy from firstly discovering you are pregnant to the baby being born and looking at the teenagers future. It gave an insight to particular stories and experiences of teenage parents both mothers and fathers, and shared statements and quotations that can be helpful in understand the feelings and emotions that may occur throughout the time of a teenage pregnancy from a teenage parent and significant others.

Plumpton High Babies 2002 ABC NSW retrieved on 1st May 2010 from <http://www.abc.net.au/plumpton/stories/s791244.htm>

Plumpton High Babies is another support system available particularly for teenage mothers. I found it interesting as well as extremely helpful as it gave detailed

information as to how they support teenage mothers as well as provide them with an education. Plumpton High Babies I found was extremely supportive in the way they encourage teenagers to continue their education as well as learning how to look after and support their baby.

Pregnant teens and mums 2010 data Australian Bureau of Statistics ABC retrieved on May 21st 2010 from 'http://www.abc.net.au/plumpton/resources_full.htm'

This website was very useful as it showed many statistics on teenage pregnancies and how they continue to change throughout time. It helped me gain a perspective and a better understanding on my cross cultural comparison time as it gave detailed information and statistics as to how the rates for teenage pregnancies continue to increase.

Stand-up girl, 2010 Welcome to stand up girl NSW retrieved on 15th March 2010 from 'www.standupgirl.com'

This website was a forum that contained lots of detailed information for young girls who are pregnant. The resource contains many forums allowing pregnant teen girls to ask questions and express their feelings. I found this website useful as it helped me understand the perspectives of young girls who are pregnant and how some either regret the decisions they made or are happy with the outcome of their pregnancy.

The Bub hub ,2001, The bub hub Pty Ltd retrieved on 15th March 2010 from 'www.bubhub.com.au'

This is a forum site that helped me come in to contact with teenage parents in my local area, allowing me to gain an insight into their story and perspective when becoming a teenage parent.

Stand-up girl, 2010 Welcome to stand up girl NSW retrieved on 15th March 2010 from 'www.standupgirl.com'

This website was a forum that contained lots of detailed information for young girls

who are pregnant. The resource contains many forums allowing pregnant teen girls to ask questions and express their feelings. I found this website useful as it helped me understand the perspectives of young girls who are pregnant and how some either regret the decisions they made or are happy with the outcome of their pregnancy.

Ten arguments for abortion against abortion 2010 Women's issues retrieved on 25th March 2010 from

'<http://womensissues.about.com/od/reproductiverights/a/AbortionArgumen.htm>'

This source provided the perspectives women in society have on abortion, some perspectives being for abortion, and the other perspectives being against abortion. It gave me an idea of the thoughts of women throughout society and the reasons why some are for and against it depending on their physical health as well as emotions that can occur during the process of abortion.

The Pregnancy Advisory 2009 Government of SA retrieved on 15th April 2010 from

'<http://www.pregnancyadvisorycentre.com.au/>'

This site was about a support system called the Pregnancy Advisory. It provided information as to how they help teenagers in making the appropriate decisions during their pregnancy. I found it helpful particularly because it helped me understand how counselling can improve the outcome of a teenagers life when being involved in a teenage pregnancy, as well as the pregnancy advisory explains the options provided for teenage parents and what options are best to suit their lifestyle.

Unplanned Parenthood (2001) Furstenberg retrieved on 22nd April (2010) from

'<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2162297>'

This source provided me with detailed information on the timing of life events and the meaning of parenthood. It introduces the notion of social standards through what is referred to as the normative schedule. It helped me understand how Furstenberg has a view on the schedule that should play a role in persons of society's order of events.