

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Teen pregnancy or adolescent pregnancy occurs when a woman under the age of 20 becomes pregnant (WHO 2020). It mainly refers to teenagers aged 15 to 19 (WHO 2020). However, it can involve girls as young as ten (Traci C. Johnson 2020). According to a report published in the June 2006 issue of Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, the reason teens are having sex is that they want their relationships to provide them with intimacy, social status, and sexual pleasure – and they have a strong expectation that these goals will be met if they have sex (Habib 2006).

Young pregnancies are worldwide problems that occurred in either developed and developing countries (WHO 2020). Commonly, the problems appear due to several issues, such as poverty, less quality of education, and lack of employment opportunities (WHO 2020). Some societies in certain countries give a lot of pressure on young marriages and young pregnancies (WHO 2020). Pregnancy and childbirth are not something that many teenage girls intend or want (International 2022). Teenage pregnancies increase additional health risks for both the mother and the child (Plus 2018). Teens are frequently denied prenatal care, which can lead to complications later in life (Plus 2018). They are more likely to

develop pregnancy-related hypertension and its complications (Plus 2018). Premature birth and low birth weight are two risks for the baby (Plus 2018).

In addition to having an impact on the health of mothers and babies, teen mothers must also be faced with the stigmatization of teen mothers. The stigmatization of teen mothers has happened since more than a half-century ago, and in recent years teenage pregnancies have been associated with several negative stereotypes that emphasize the risks and deficits of teenage mothers (SmithBattle 2013). The word "stigma", according to Erving Goffman (1993), refers to the situation of a person who is disqualified from full social recognition.

Teen mothers are vulnerable to being stigmatized, especially because of their gender and age background (Lewis, et al. 2017). Because they are pregnant at a young age they also felt stigma from their family and society. Teen pregnancy can also have detrimental social and economic consequences for teenage girls, their families, and their communities (International 2022). Unmarried pregnant teens may experience stigma or rejection from their parents and friends, as well as violence threats (International 2022). Girls who become pregnant before the age of 18 are also more likely to face violence in a marriage or partnership (International 2022).

The media is also a medium where the stigmatization of teen mothers can be formed. Media stories, and trade speeches from advocacy groups portray teen mothers, with a few exceptions, as irresponsible and incompetent parents whose lives have forever been demoralized by parental care (Lewis, et al., 2017).

According to Yardley (cited in Greyson et al., 2019), there is research that indicates that teen mothers are acutely aware of being socially stigmatized by individuals, social services, and the media. It can refer to the previous study of Martin and Jensen in Greyson et al., 2019, which found that high school-aged viewers of *Teen Mom* were more positive in their views about teenage pregnancy and parenting, feeding ongoing public accusations that such media glamorized young parenthood.

MTV is one of the TV channels in America that has produced the reality show called "*MTV Teen Mom*", in which they intended to decrease teen pregnancy (Harwood 2014). It was created and developed by Lauren Dolgen. The reality show talks about some teen mothers who are trying to face responsibilities in the life of parenthood and how they challenge themselves to raise their children (MTV 2022). The teen mother on the show is a sixteen years old pregnant girl (MTV 2022). *MTV Teen Mom* launched in the USA on 11th June 2009 with the original name *16th & Pregnant* (MTV 2022). They made spin-offs of the TV show several times with different names and seasons. Since last September 2020, they have come up again with the title "*MTV Teen Mom 2 season 10*" (MTV 2022). *MTV Teen Mom* joined with the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy to address this issue responsibly (Dolgen 2011). The National Campaign developed an online resource at www.stayteen.org to accompany the show and answer viewers' pregnancy questions (Critic 2009). Every time the episode airs, MTV promotes the website StayTeen.org, which "encourage[s] you to enjoy your teen years and avoid the responsibilities that come with too-early pregnancy and parenting"

(Dockterman 2014). Birth control, STDs, and dating abuse are all covered on the website (Dockterman 2014).

MTV Teen Mom is not only broadcast on television but is also uploaded on the YouTube platform. *MTV Teen Mom* posted its first video on its YouTube channel on 13 January 2014 with "*MTV's Teen Mom*" as the name of their YouTube channel (MTV 2022). On their YouTube channel, they post all the episodes from *16th & Pregnant* until the new seasons. They post a new video at least once a week, where sometimes they repost and combine the old various videos and make a new video from them.

In order to promote the show, *MTV Teen Mom* uses a big platform, i.e TV and Youtube channel. According to YouGov, MTV is categorized as the seventy most popular tv network and the ten most famous channels in America (YouGov 2020). According to ABC News in Grant 2010, every week, over three million people watch "*MTV Teen Mom*," thus, MTV is the highest-rated show. The "*16 and Pregnant*" spin-off is aimed at women aged 12–34, and it has captured the attention of young viewers across the country (Grant 2010). While YouTube is the second most popular platform, where everybody in this world can access it (Ortiz-Ospina 2019). In the world, YouTube has 1.9 billion users, and in the United States, 90% of YouTube users are 18–24 years old (Ortiz-Ospina 2019). *MTV's Teen Mom* YouTube channel already has 370 thousand subscribers with more than 394 million viewers (on count) (MTV 2022).

Here, we can assume that there are so many young people watching *MTV Teen Mom*. It also means that every video uploaded on YouTube and MTV can be influenced by people of all ages, especially young viewers. According to Bill Albert, spokesman for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the series (*Teen Mom*) sends a very powerful pregnancy prevention message (Grant 2010). "MTV is in the entertainment industry, and [we are] in the teen pregnancy prevention business", said Albert (Grant 2010). "Our two worlds have happily and effectively collided to minimize the number of teen pregnancies" (Grant 2010).

Alfreda Turner is one of the young women that got influenced by *Teen Mom*. She is a teen mom and college student, Turner gave birth to her 18-month-old son, Cameron, in April of 2009 (Grant 2010). She watches the show (*MTV Teen Mom*) to see if the girls (*MTV Teen Mom* casts) are dealing with challenges similar to her own, and by watching the show she can feel like she can also talk about her story with the girls (Grant 2010).

In order to carry out this study, the writer needs to have access to previous research that can act as a guide when conducting this study. Many studies have been conducted to analyze *MTV Teen Mom*, such as (Rodenhizer, et al. 2019) and (Kearney and Levine 2015). Both of the studies investigate how the show influences the viewers, (Rodenhizer, et al. 2019) found that dating violence influences the viewers' relationships, and (Kearney and Levine 2015) led to a reduction in teen births but increased interest in contraceptives and abortion. There has also been

research on the real young parents' perspective about the *MTV Teen Mom*, which the result indicates that the reality show is showing more dramatic stories, and the result found that there is an inaccuracy about real young parents in real life (Greyson, Chabot and Shoveller 2019). The writer also uses research about mass media that has been conducted, such as (Dedeas and Noviani 2020) and (Vandenbosch, Oosten, and Peter 2015) which found that media made a new perspective for viewers. (Dedeas and Noviani 2020) found out that the media made a new stereotype of women as mothers, and (Vandenbosch, Oosten, and Peter 2015) found out that sexual content can predict teenagers' sexually-focused behavior in popular mass media and vice versa.

By examining the previous studies mentioned above that analyze teen mothers, the media, and also the negative side of *MTV Teen Mom*. In this current study, the writer found an aspect that has not been discussed in previous studies, which is the positive side of media that shows teen mothers and also this reality show (*MTV Teen Mom*), and how the *MTV Teen Mom* as a media tried to challenge the stigmatization of teen mothers.

To analyze this studies the writer used stigma proposed by Erving Goffman, and qualitative as the method of the study. The primary data for this study is derived from video scene screenshots taken from the videos that they uploaded on YouTube under the name "*MTV's Teen Mom*". The data is examined based on three categories of stigma: Social, Personal, and Future Life stigma. The secondary data is collect from journals, articles, books, and previous studies about stigma and teen mothers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

How does *MTV Teen Mom* challenge the stigmatization of teen mothers?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study analyzed how reality shows, especially *MTV Teen Mom*, disapprove of the stigmatization of teen mothers in society and how *MTV Teen Mom* challenges the stigmatization of teen mothers and shows their positive side of them.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study focused on how reality shows function as a production of meaning and argued that it is not merely a sign but rather a meaningful sign. Therefore, conducting this study would be beneficial in order to investigate themes such as the portrayal of the stigma that occurs implicitly in a variety of mass media such as television and YouTube, as well as stigma where the issue is teen mothers for students at Airlangga University whose primary subject is cultural studies. It also is helpful for the subsequent writer if they carry out a study that is associated with this matter. It is possible that comparing this study to their other considerations and references will prove to be advantageous.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

As a result of the fact that a lot of unfamiliar terms are used in this study. In order to further assist the readers in comprehending the study, a definition of each of those terms has been provided.

Teen Mother : Women aged 11 to 19 who fall pregnant and raise their children (Greyson, Chabot and Shoveller 2019).

Stigma : Refers to the situation of the person who is disqualified from full social recognition (Goffman (1993).

MTV Teen Mom : Reality show from America that presents how teenagers facing becoming a mother (MTV 2022).

Reality Show : Explained in non-fictional scenarios as pre-planned yet largely unscripted programming with non-professional actors (Corner 2002).