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## Enter Her Novice World: A Narrative Study on The Life of a Teenage Student–Mother

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### ABSTRACT

This study unraveled the challenges of a teenage mother while studying as a senior high school student amidst the tremors of the pandemic. In doing so, a qualitative narrative research design was used in gathering the data, and an unstructured interview was done with the main participant. The listed responses were scrutinized to formulate a general conclusion regarding the overall condition of the teenage mother. Based on the findings, it was revealed that the teenage student-mother is prone to conflicts, and to combat these conflicts, perseverance along with hard work is a must. For the most part, it has been established that the amount of support received by the teenage student-mother is one of the major reasons that contribute to their overall state because in every aspect of life they are involved in, their children will always be a part of them because they are the utmost priority of these teenage student-mothers. In general, the researchers concluded that in the participant's time in distance learning, her parenting was not affected that much by her school work. With this being said, her positive attitude towards her grueling circumstance led to her overall success in both her motherly and academic duties. She was able to continue her studies and take care of her child all at once because of the new learning environment brought out by distance learning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy is a widespread issue that every part of the world continues to face (Franjić, 2018; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2013). Aside from the fact that it conflictingly affects social relationships and the state of teen mothers, it also greatly impacts one's educational attainments and the scope of their academic performance— negatively (Mangeli et al., 2017; Scholder et al., 2012; Rosenbaum & Rochford, 2008)). Moreover, teenage students are well aware of its vastness and its existence. However, teenage pregnancy is still a major issue and the reason why it happens among them varies from each other. Although it is acknowledged as a problem by the students, it has been found that they are not that deeply aware of the problem itself because of their lack of knowledge (Lebese et al., 2015; Cassidy et al., 2012; Cotton, 2006; Beagan, 2003). This should not be the case because they are the ones directly involved in the matter at hand and the significance of education for teenagers themselves regarding the said problem is extremely helpful in combating the aforementioned issue itself.

It has been implied that teenage pregnancy among students continues to become a problem. As a result, the scope of the educational attainments of these teenage mothers and their state, in general, are negatively affected. Because of these, underlying problems among teenage student-mothers are being magnified and education becomes a lesser priority and is usually delayed. Thus, this study intended to fully recognize the student mother's burdens of studying while caring for a child: the efforts being exerted to balance their time between attending their classes, complying with their requirements, and looking out for their child. The results of this study will serve as a window regarding teenage pregnancy and education and will focus on the state of teenage student-mothers amid the pandemic.

## 2. METHOD

The study utilized a qualitative narrative study design to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon of how teenage pregnancy manifests itself in students who have experienced the said issue amid the pandemic. A narrative study approach was used for the progression of this study and was conducted by an unstructured interview done by the researchers whilst conforming with the precautionary measures for the pandemic at the same time.

### 2.1. Participants of the Study

The participant of the study is a student-mother who had an early pregnancy during her teenage years as a student. She is well acquainted with one of the researchers. The criteria used as a basis for her inclusion in the study are as follows: (1) one who had early pregnancy during her teenage years or adolescence stage as a student, (2) one who complies with her motherly duties, (3) one who complies with her academic obligations whilst following a course of study, (4) and one who has experienced the tremors brought by teenage pregnancy amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Following this, the researchers considered only one participant because only one satisfies the criteria that the researchers of this study have set.

### 2.2. Data Gathering Instruments

The instrument used in collecting data from the participant was an unstructured interview. In an unstructured interview, the researchers are free to interrogate the participant with questions that were not planned but are still relevant to the study. Moreover, the interviewer alters the sequence and wording of questions which is less formal.

### 2.3. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers chose a qualified participant who was subjected to the interview. Once the target participant was chosen, they explained to her the study. The researchers asked permission from the participants for their cooperation to give information regarding the said study and explained to them how it will aid the success of the researchers. The follow-up criteria for this study included; consent signed by the participant, willingness to share their lived experiences; and their commitment to take part in the follow-up queries of the researchers. An unstructured interview was done in gathering the data which was interpreted into a vernacular language conforming to the participant's responses.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Teenage Pregnancy Amid Distance Learning

Through narrative data analysis, it has been brought to the researchers' attention that the state of the participant can be associated with the support that has been given to her. According to the participant, although there are factors that contributed to damaging her physical state like body strains, body relapses, headaches, etc., and to her mental state which has been caused by negative factors that include negative statements that were said to her, she still managed to triumph over them since she chose to be strong whilst considering the amount of assistance they have attained. To put it another way, her general state is associated with her partner and their relatives that go out of their way just to help. This point can be strengthened by the fact as to how teenage mothers face a lot of challenges once they have entered motherhood while doing their student obligations at the same time (Zachry, 2005; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2012; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Haight *et al.*, 2009). The amount of support given to the mother will contribute to her overall convenience, the bigger the support, the greater the help.

To put it in simpler terms, the amount of support received by teenage mothers will help generate a broad overview regarding how they will face various conflicts that come with them and how it contributes to their overall state (Watts *et al.*, 2015).

### 3.2. Regulation of the Challenges Experienced

As children grow and develop, all parents face obstacles. Many of these issues are the same for both adolescent and mature parents. If you're a teen parent, though, you can face some unique problems, such as juggling school work and caring for a child. You may also feel judged or burdened by the responsibilities of raising a child at a young age, or you may feel judged for being a teenage parent (Neill-Weston & Morgan, 2017; Gray, 2003; Jackson & Mannix, 2004). These challenges that made their way towards the life of the main participant negatively affected her mental state and they range from her internal crises, financial issues, inexperience in tending to her child, conflicted relationships, awful statements, and the like.

Thoughts of taking her own life were rampant and it seemed like it was the only way for her to get out of the problem she has been involved in. Still, at the end of the day, the participant sought something that could be positive within the issues she is involved in and it extremely helped her see something there is to life that is worth living for— embracing her role as a mother that provides for her child.

In elaborating, acceptance of the participant's situation whilst moving forward, taking into account the people that have been supporting and rooting for her, is what enabled her to overcome the challenges brought upon her. The amount of support received by teenage mothers will help generate a broad overview regarding how they will face various conflicts

that come with them and how it contributes to their overall state. It is important to acknowledge and consider how the amount of assistance received by teen mothers contributes to their overall tranquil state while being a mother and a student (Watts et al., 2015).

### 3.3. Motherly Duties and Academic Obligations

The participant hasn't experienced many difficulties in her studies while being a mother. She managed to answer her modules by herself considering that her child hasn't been a nuisance to her while she is answering and studying her modules. She entered her school while bringing her child to claim the modules from her instructor with the thought of education as the primary key to success in her head. Succinctly, the state of teenage student-mothers while they handle their motherly and academic duties stems from how they manage their time and how they prioritize things— doing things based on their level of importance.

This aligns with the statement relayed by Sobngwi-Tambekou et al. (2022) which states that taking care of an infant while devoting themselves to school work at the same time offers endless challenges to young mothers. Studies reveal that parturition unseals the schooling of these teenage mothers. Also, adolescent moms from difficult homes value independence, which may be explained by their desire to escape the stressful environment in which they find themselves. This is why adolescent mothers are motivated to complete their education since they are likely aware of how a college education might assist them in better adapting to life's obstacles (Gatbonton, 2021).

## 4. CONCLUSION

The state of teenage student-mothers who comply with both their motherly duties and academic obligations depends on the amount of support they receive and the amount of inclusion and belonging they feel from particular people. Moving on, it is already a given that challenges brought out by various factors will forever haunt those involved in the aforementioned problem. Still, in combating these challenges, being rational brought out by sticking to one's ideals and principles is a crucial factor. As a result of an optimistic attitude toward the participant's trying circumstances, she was able to achieve overall achievement in both her motherly and academic responsibilities. In addition, the modular learning modality greatly aided her in continuing her studies while still caring for her child because she was able to classify and manage her tasks according to the new learning environment that distance learning provided.

## 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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