

# Looking Through the Eyes of Male Adolescents: Making Rational Decisions on Teenage Pregnancy Based on Role of Responsibility, Social Influences, and Consequence Awareness

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## ABSTRACT

Lack of awareness of teenage pregnancy among male adolescents is a global concern. I explored the perceptions of male adolescents towards teenage pregnancy. I used a qualitative descriptive research design and interviewed 10 purposively selected participants. Using thematic analysis, I found that male adolescents perceive teenage pregnancy as a burdened responsibility with significant emotional and financial demands, and as a broader social issue beyond individual concern. Family upbringing, peer influence, and social expectations shape their perceptions, highlighting the importance of parental guidance and open communication. Adolescents recognize the consequences of early pregnancy and the role of social institutions in guiding their values and behaviors. These factors collectively influence rational decision-making, encouraging maturity and thoughtful choices in relationships. Promotion of awareness that teenage pregnancy is a burdened responsibility influenced by social factors and consequences, through informed decision-making, open communication, and inclusive educational initiatives, is encouraged. Future research may include exploratory factor analysis, multiple linear regression, and case studies on teenage pregnancy to examine further and strengthen the understanding of adolescent decision-making and behaviors related to teenage pregnancy.

**Keywords:** Male adolescents, making rational decisions, teenage pregnancy, role of responsibility, social influences, consequence awareness

## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem and Its Setting

The lack of awareness regarding teenage pregnancy among male adolescents represents a global issue. Despite increased international focus on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, male adolescents are frequently underrepresented in awareness initiatives. Recent literature by Chandra-Mouli et al. (2023) demonstrates that adolescent males possess insufficient knowledge concerning contraception, pregnancy risks, and shared accountability, contributing to a persistent global gap in reproductive awareness.

The lack of awareness among male adolescents remains a pressing issue in various countries. In the United States, a study of Widman et al. (2023) indicated that male adolescents possess a limited understanding of reproductive health responsibilities, particularly in pregnancy prevention. Similarly, a study by Jonas et al. (2024) revealed that male adolescents often exhibit gaps in knowledge regarding reproductive and sexual health. Additionally, the study of Kamath et al. (2016) in India emphasized the inadequate awareness of pregnancy-related risks and consequences among male adolescents.

Comparable challenges are evident in the Philippines, where the lack of awareness regarding teenage pregnancy among male adolescents is increasingly acknowledged as a critical concern. Joemar et al. (2023) indicated that male adolescents remain less engaged and less informed than their female counterparts, despite intensified national programs. Additionally, as shown by Lantiere et al. (2022), male adolescents are often insufficiently informed about reproductive health and responsibilities.

The multifaceted consequences of inadequate awareness concerning teenage pregnancy among male adolescents extend beyond individual experiences and have broader social implications. Chandra-Mouli et al. (2023) found that insufficient awareness among male adolescents is associated with unintended pregnancies and a lack of shared responsibility in reproductive decision-making. Jonas et al. (2024) further identified emotional, social, and economic challenges faced by teenage parents. As an educator and advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights, these consequences motivated the undertaking of this research.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is highly relevant to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which seek to promote responsible health behaviors, raise awareness of reproductive health, and encourage both boys and girls to take part in preventing teenage pregnancy. In exploring the perceptions of male adolescents towards teenage pregnancy, this study may contribute to the comprehension of reproductive health that may serve as a basis for the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education in the Philippines. Additionally, the research aligns with Holy Cross of Davao College's Vision, Mission, and Goals, which highlight service, transformation, and the development of socially responsible and compassionate individuals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In this study, I explored the perceptions of male adolescents towards teenage pregnancy. Specifically, I sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the thoughts and understanding of male adolescents about teenage pregnancy?
2. What are the environmental influences that shape the perceptions of male adolescents on teenage pregnancy?
3. What are the observational learnings of male adolescents on teenage pregnancy?
4. What are the behaviors of male adolescents regarding teenage pregnancy?

### **Assumptions**

I assumed that male adolescents form their perceptions of adolescent pregnancy through the dynamic interaction of personal cognitive factors, environmental influences, and observational experiences. These interconnected factors collectively influence how male adolescents interpret, understand, and assign meaning to adolescent pregnancy.

### **Theoretical Lens**

This study is anchored on the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, which posits that the perceptions of male adolescents towards teenage pregnancy are shaped through the interaction of personal cognitive factors, environmental influences, and observational learning. This theory further explains that male adolescents interpret, experience, and observe their surroundings, which shape their behaviors and thinking processes.

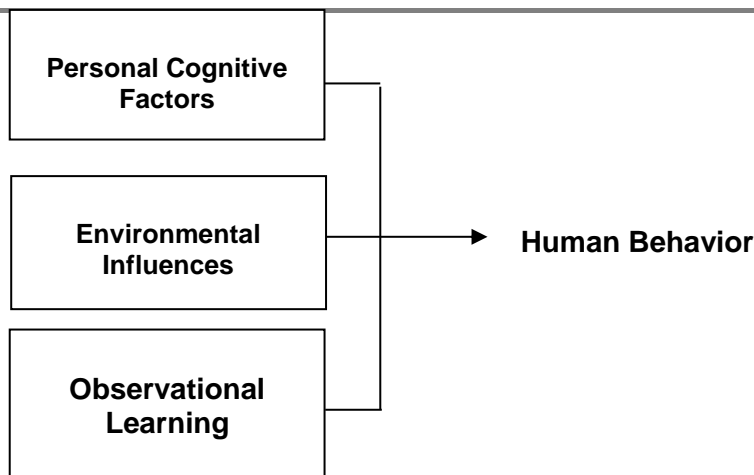


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

## METHODOLOGY

In this section, I presented the research design, locale of the study, sample and sampling technique, data gathering and data analysis technique, and trustworthiness of the study.

### Research Design

I used a descriptive qualitative design to explore participants' perceptions in their own words (Doyle et al., 2020). It is best to use a descriptive qualitative design to understand the what and how of the phenomenon (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). This design is advantageous for highlighting the perceptions of male adolescents without bias or prejudice, and it emphasizes only the participant's interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### Locale of the Study

I conducted this study in Davao City, where adolescent pregnancy rates persist at high rates despite the presence of reproductive health programs. The study captured varying levels of awareness across diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts, where reproductive health information is available yet underutilized.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

In this study, I have invited a sample of 10 male adolescents aged 18–19 years who have been exposed to teenage pregnancy within their community and through media, including having friends or relatives who experienced early pregnancy, and who have been receiving advice or comments related to teenage pregnancy from their parents or relatives, and demonstrate concern or advocacy toward the issue. All participants are enrolled in a private Senior High School. I used purposive sampling, deliberately selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the study, which is best applied to identify individuals capable of providing substantial and relevant insights into the research problem (Campbell et al., 2020). This sampling approach is advantageous in this study, as it allows for the collection of rich data, ensures the inclusion of participants with meaningful experiences, and enhances the depth and quality of qualitative findings (Etikan, 2016).

### Data Gathering Techniques

In this study, I conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the participants. An in-depth interview is a technique that involves one-on-one, open-ended conversations that explore participants' perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). During this process, I established rapport and took notes on participants' responses. Focus group discussion is a technique that examines shared views and diverse perceptions among participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015), and, in facilitating this, I maintain a warm demeanor while guiding the discussion with established rapport. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions in a descriptive qualitative

design are well-suited, as they allow for the collection of insights, thereby enhancing the depth and richness of the data. Through this procedure, I gained rich and comprehensive perspectives on the social issue under study (Doyle et al., 2020).

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

I utilized thematic analysis to analyze the data from in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). This procedure identifies and organizes recurring patterns of themes as per Braun and Clarke (2013). I transcribed all recordings, reviewed them for accuracy, and manually coded them according to the constructs of the Social Cognitive Theory. I organized related codes into themes and subthemes that highlight shared beliefs and perceptions. I presented the findings narratively, augmented by participant quotations, to elucidate male adolescents' perceptions regarding adolescent pregnancy.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

In conducting the study, I adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness and ensured the rigor and credibility of this qualitative research. This includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved by ensuring that the findings accurately represented the participants' viewpoints, which I presented in their vernacular. Transferability and dependability were ensured by maintaining comprehensive, detailed documentation of the study process, research context, and methodologies. While confirmability was ensured through sustained objectivity throughout the research process, I did not interpret their narrative in my own words; instead, I practiced reflexivity by recognizing personal biases and prejudices that might influence data interpretation. These measures allowed the study to obtain ethical clearance from the institution's Society for Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE).

## **RESULTS**

In this section, the results are discussed based on the data gathered during the study. This part illustrated and explained the perceptions of male adolescents on teenage pregnancy. The themes and subthemes were generated from the data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### **Adolescent Pregnancy is a Burdened Responsibility**

In this theme, I have identified the viewpoints of male adolescents. This theme has five sub-themes, namely: Unpreparedness of Parental Role, Incapable of Raising a Child, Vulnerability to Stigma, Teenage Pregnancy becoming a Societal Concern, and Taking Accountability of One's Choice.

Unpreparedness for the parental role. During the conversation with the participants, they highlighted that most cases of teenage pregnancy are unplanned and occur due to a lack of reflection. Indeed, a participant shared:

Kanang maisip nako ba is pregnancies nga kanang accident gud kay most of the time ing-ana sad ang mga situations nga pag sa adolescent pregnancy na, the people involved gud kay dili sila fully prepared sa responsibility. (What comes to my mind is pregnancy that happens accidentally, because most of the time, situations like adolescent pregnancy occur when the people involved are not fully prepared for the responsibility)

#### **– IDI-P1**

The participant expressed concern for individuals experiencing this situation and regret for teenage parents who must face these challenges early in life, when resources are limited. Another participant shared:

Adolescent pregnancy would be those who were, let's say, maybe unprepared or... did the deed or the situation without really thinking it through and being surprised by the outcome. – **IDI-P2**

The statement felt satisfying because the participant noted that most teenage parents do not think critically before engaging in sexual activity and are shocked by the outcome. There is also a small amount of anger from the participant, as teenage parents do not fully consider possible risks and consequences. A participant during the in-depth interview reiterated:

Pregnancy means a girl or a woman at a very young age is getting pregnant early. Usually, when these girls are still in school and not fully prepared. – **IDI-P5**

The statement reveals the reality of what is happening to female adolescents, who are supposed to pursue their education and aspirations, yet in just one snap, everything changes. This supports the idea that teenage parents are still biologically transitioning, which makes them incapable of raising a child.

Incapable of raising a child. The participants highlighted the importance of being holistically prepared, especially financially, when raising a child. The participants expressed that teenage parents face difficulties in raising a child because it is a long-term responsibility, and they don't have a stable income or profession. During an in-depth interview, a participant shared:

So kuan, kuan man gud, kanang mag-struggle ka financially ba unya kana naay accident, kanang naay pregnancy, malisdan gyud ka mag-provide para sa child kay alangan wala gud kay stable na income or profession. (When you're struggling financially and then an accident happens, like a pregnancy, you will really have difficulty providing for the child because you don't have a stable income or profession.) – **IDI-P1**

The participant showed an emotional shift from sadness to dismay as the statement revealed the educational status of the teenage parents. It only magnifies the financial burden that will be passed to the families of both teenage parents. Furthermore, a participant stated:

Yeah, the whole situation that they are going through is not only mentally, physically, but also financially, and like how they're gonna raise. – **IDI-P2**

As the participant spoke, there was empathy, but it was overshadowed by helplessness, since they were already in the situation and could do nothing about it. The participant's statement is concerning, as the growth and maturity of teenage parents are more hurried, making it harder for them to manage the challenges effectively. Another participant expressed the same thought:

About adolescent pregnancy, it's about conceiving at a young age, where you're really not capable financially, emotionally, and physically. – **IDI-P3**

The participant's tone shifted from calm to irritated as he pointed out significant strains in raising a child. This only reflects that the inability to raise a child is not just about finances but a holistic issue, as parenting involves nurturing, supporting, and ensuring another individual's overall well-being.

Vulnerability to social stigma. During the interaction with the participants, they shared that understanding and acceptance eventually happen in some families. However, it does not take away the thought of being still a burden to the immediate families, as the feeling of embarrassment, disappointment, and unmet expectations, such as prioritizing education and future stability, still lingers. A participant shared this during an in-depth interview:

I know that some people or some of their parents may not support it or some may support it, pero it will really be a burden especially sa family nila 'cause they are pregnant at a very young age where things are unplanned yet. – **IDI-P1**

The participant's eagerness is evident in the desire to clearly point out that teenage pregnancy is a burden because it alters family dynamics. This statement only explains that it is not about the current tension between families, but about the perceived strain on families that contributes to the feeling of vulnerability among teenage parents. Another participant expressed:

Before, I would get like second-hand embarrassment or maybe be embarrassed about the situation. – **IDI-P2**

The participant expressed disgust, anger, and embarrassment. As the participant shared this statement, it suggests that teenage pregnancy may be viewed as undesirable, which makes teenage parents feel ashamed and experience social discomfort, which is even more saddening since this is happening in reality. A participant shared:

I have a batchmate from my previous school who recently gave birth to her child, and from what I've noticed, she was struggling with her social environment because there were lots of people talking about her situation, and she didn't get to finish high school. – **IDI-P4**

After hearing this statement, the participant is worried and sad since he is talking about the negative experience of his friend during pregnancy. The statement further implies that public scrutiny is difficult to manage and, somehow, unnecessary. It will add to the emotional baggage teenage mothers carry, especially during the transition and adjustment period. A participant from the focus group discussion shared:

Especially kanang mga older generations, ma'am, 'di ba if naa sila makita, i-judge lang. Mao na nga mabuntis... which makasakit personally, makasakit sa mental health sa person nga nabuntis. And then, although ma'am, eh, although kanang maka-apekto siya. (Especially among the older generations, ma'am — when they see something, they tend to judge right away. That's why getting pregnant can be personally painful and can hurt the mental health of the person who becomes pregnant. And although, ma'am, it really has an impact) – **FGD-P3**

Hearing this, the participant shared an unnecessary judgment that older generations make about pregnant teenagers. The statement further suggests that negative comments would make pregnant teenagers feel ashamed. This only highlights that, aside from physical difficulties, there are emotional strains from criticism, making it a social concern.

Teenage pregnancy becoming a societal concern. The participants highlighted the incidents of teenage pregnancy that keep increasing day by day, which need greater attention. Indeed, a participant expressed:

I think that teenage pregnancy is a type of social problem that should really be resolved and should really be taken care of, and kailangan talaga siyang tignan in a different perspective, 'cause it really has an effect, not just in the persons involved, but on the society as a whole. (I think that teenage pregnancy is a social problem that really needs to be resolved and properly addressed, and it should be viewed from a different perspective because it affects not only the individuals involved but society as a whole) – **IDI-P3**

In hearing this statement, the participant showed assertiveness in addressing the concern through comprehensive attention and appropriate intervention because a teenage pregnancy has broader effects beyond individuals. The participant is also willing to contribute to solving this kind of social issue. Another participant emphasized:

My beliefs come from my own understanding because it's not just that we don't have to be blind, but when we're facing reality, mostly it comes from social media, what we're seeing, especially in the news, that we're like, facing the crisis, the percentage is getting higher. – **IDI-P5**

The participant already knows what is really happening behind the increasing statistics of teenage pregnancy all over different platforms. The participant showed a shift in his facial reaction from being calm to assertive as he emphasized that teenage pregnancy is already a crisis that the public eye should dwell on. One participant shared:

I think that adolescent pregnancies are very common nowadays, and it is becoming very concerning. – **IDI-P4**

A participant expressed a concern, given that teenage pregnancy is very common now in our society. At the same time, there is a sense of hope because recognizing this issue would help address social concerns and emphasize collective accountability.

Taking accountability for one's choice. In a conversation with the participants, being accountable for your choice was one of the highlights since the decision is mutual among both genders. A participant shared:

Kuan Ma'am, alangan dapat mag take responsibility gyud siya, kay uhm, ano man it takes two people to make a child man gud. So, besides na nabuntis ang babae, ang lalaki man say hinungdan ana, so dapat kana mag-take responsibility siya as much as he can kung kaya niya kay maka-provide siya financially, tas dapat din ano emotionally present siya para sa babae. Ganon. (Of course, he really needs to take responsibility because it takes two people to make a child. So aside from the woman becoming pregnant, the man is also responsible for it.

Therefore, he should take responsibility as much as he can, if he is able, by providing financial support and also being emotionally present for the woman.) – **IDI-P1**

The participant expressed rage, explaining that shared responsibility should be present in pregnancy. This statement recognizes the importance of their role as the primary provider and source of emotional support, rather than disappearing from the situation and leaving teenage mothers to transition on their own. Similarly, a participant shared:

Males should be there to support the woman if ever they get pregnant because they're the ones who impregnated the woman naman. So, I think it's fair now they should also take responsibility for the child. – **IDI-P4**

The participants highlight that shared responsibility and fairness are important to both teenage parents. As young as they are, they understand the concept of stepping up and suggest that responsibility should be acknowledged for shared decisions made before pregnancy. One participant shared the same sentiments:

It's their choice to do that. So, if that's your choice, then you should be ready to accept whatever consequences it may bring, even if he, even if malaki yung responsibility. (It's their choice to do that. So, if that is your choice, then you should be ready to accept whatever consequences it may bring, even if it is a big responsibility) – **IDI-P3**

The statement emphasizes the importance of being accountable and accepting the consequences of one's decision, which further explains that readiness to assume parental and adult roles should be considered. A participant from the focus group discussion also shared:

Dapat buhaton sa lalaki, ano, if ever kanang mabuntis iyang ganang girlfriend ba, kay dapat i-comfort pa na i-reassure niya ba. (The man should do something if his girlfriend becomes pregnant; he should comfort her and reassure her.) – **FGD-P3**

The participant offered this advice, which shows his concern for pregnant women. He expressed the statement with conviction as his gestures shifted from one direction to another. This only reflects how responsible the participant is and emphasizes that being holistically present and responsible makes pregnancy bearable despite difficulties.

### **Parental Guidance of Family and Influence of Peers and Social Expectations**

In this theme, I discovered two sub-themes, namely: Feminization of Blame and Family-Peer Influence of Setting Priority.

Feminization of blame. The participants recognized a stigma that circles only around female adolescents. As male adolescents, they believe that teenage pregnancy should not point to one gender but rather to both genders. Indeed, a participant shared:

There's a lot of gossip here in the Philippines; mostly, if a young woman has a kid at an early age, there's a lot of criticism directed at her. So that's it, Ma'am. – **IDI-P5**

The participant expressed annoyance as he shared that there is a lot of gossip in the Philippines, and it shifted to being concerned since all of those criticisms are only directed at female adolescents, which makes the pregnancy even more difficult. The statement emphasizes that negative statements will affect the confidence and mental health of female adolescents. Another participant shared:

Sa adolescent pregnancy kay dili kaayo gina blame ang mga lalaki gani like alangan sila gud duha ang hinungdan ana pero at the same time murag mas ano ba, mas ma-blame ang babae kanang ma-scrutinize sila. (In adolescent pregnancy, the men are not blamed as much. Even though both of them are responsible, it seems that the woman is blamed more and is more scrutinized) – **IDI-P1**

The participant explained that there is unequal accountability because female mothers are frequently the targets of blame and social scrutiny. Another participant added:

Sa kadaghan nakog nadunggan sa nang mabash na babae, wa koy nadunggan na nabash ang lalaki. (From the many cases I've heard where the woman gets bashed, I haven't heard of a man being bashed.) – **FGD-P4**

The participant raised his voice while sharing this statement, indicating that he is upset by the thought that female mothers are often bashed and that it has become normalized for both genders not to be held accountable. Conversations about accountability and responsibility should start within families and among peers.

Family-peer influence of setting priority. The participants highlighted the important role of family and peers in shaping beliefs, values, and priorities. The participants openly shared that the guidance they receive from their parents and interactions with peers serve as the foundation for instilling principles in their life goals, behavior, and mindset. One of the participants said:

The people around me, especially family and my friends, strongly influence my views, Ma'am. Because they think that they support the cause, it's just common sense that they usually emphasize. Avoiding early pregnancy and focusing on education first is one of the responsibilities that you should take first as a student. – **IDI-P5**

The statement above indicates that his parents share his views on teenage pregnancy, which means they can discuss this social issue openly and show that parents support their child's views rather than opposing them. A participant also shared:

My friends mentioned that it's kinda stupid to get into that situation because at this age, we know ourselves are not ready yet. So, we just assume that they're also not ready. Yeah, that's why they all find it kind of stupid. – **IDI-P4**

From the statement above, the participant believed they shared the same belief and situation, namely, not being ready to become a parent because they are still pursuing their studies. As he spoke these words, the participant expressed a strong feeling about it because they are in the same circle that influences each other's behavior and attitudes. A participant also expressed:

I think, unsa, ang impact nila is the friends around me are, unsa sad sila ma'am, kanang cautious about their decisions, and they talk about unsa kana, they-- dili kay siya problem ang adolescent pregnancy sa amoang nga circle of friends because I, I know my friends nga cautious jud sila ma'am, mga kabalo, ga isip jud sila ma'am before they act. (I think the impact on my friends is that they become more cautious about their decisions, and they talk about it. Adolescent pregnancy is not really a problem within our circle of friends because I know that my friends are truly cautious, ma'am—they are aware and really think carefully before they act.) – **IDI-P1**

The statement above highlights that the participant takes pride in his group of friends and emphasizes that they share the same belief: being careful in their decisions at all times. The participant further expressed that his peers positively influence his decision-making and behavior, especially because they openly discuss this social issue. And, being a teenage parent is not one of their priorities nowadays, as they have learned the risks and consequences of early pregnancy.

### **Learning the Consequences of Early Pregnancy**

In this theme, the participants shared their realizations. I have identified two sub-themes, namely: Realizing the Difficulty of Raising a Child and Social Institutions as Moral Regulators of Youth Sexuality.

Realizing the difficulty of raising a child. While we are nearing the end of my interview with the participants, they expressed their realizations about teenage pregnancy. One of the participants shared:

Naa koy na observe actually, nga naa gyuy mga people na willing gani mag risk og kanang dako kaayo para ma save nila ang baby ba kay like somehow gud ma romanticize nila having a family, even though kanang bata pa sila kaayo, pero ang dili nila ma realize kay kanang unsa kalisud mag raise og child ba especially na ing-ana,

kanang bata pa kaayo ka, like di pa kaayo built imong stability gyud in life. (I've actually observed that there are people who are willing to take very big risks just to save the baby because they somehow romanticize having a family, even though they are still very young. What they don't realize is how difficult it is to raise a child, especially when you are still very young, and your stability in life is not yet fully established.) – **IDI-P1**

The participant expressed worry and, at the same time, was irritable because of what he observed in his surroundings related to teenage pregnancy. The statements emphasized that most teenage parents today may romanticize raising a child as a “walk in the park,” which is concerning because the realities of doing so without sufficient stability are very different. Similarly, a participant shared:

I have known people who experience adolescent pregnancy, and they were more into like since in their schooling pa so, napa stop talaga sila, and, you know, it has really moved me in a way na that I have to secure myself and I have to focus on what's important, such as education. (I have known people who experienced adolescent pregnancy, and since they were still in school, they had to stop studying. It really affected me in a way that made me realize I need to secure my future and focus on what is important, such as my education.) – **IDI-P2**

The participant emphasized the importance of prioritizing long-term goals, especially pursuing education. This reflects motivation to avoid the outcomes that teenage parents are experiencing, as observed by the participant. After that, the participant demonstrates responsible thinking and eagerness to build a stable life before committing to responsibilities. Another participant shared:

I've seen classmates of my ate, she dropped out of school because of adolescence pregnancy. Like, watching her and her story, the hard, like how hard their lives become really affected. – **IDI-P5**

The participant shared the statement with heaviness in his words, reflecting the reality of teenage pregnancy, which is not an easy responsibility and, at some point, will make your life hard, especially if you are not stable enough to sustain another human being. One participant from the focus group discussion added:

One thing na na-shape ako, uh, this incident happened when I was in grade 10. So kani kay close na ko siya na barkada. She's a female, tapos, uh, suddenly nanabuntis siya sa iyang, like, sa iyang BF. Unya last, uh, last December 27, gi-visit nako siya sa ilaha because kani close mi, tapos nakita nako, isa na nakita nako is struggling jud siya. (One experience that shaped me happened when I was in Grade 10. She was a close friend of mine. She's female, and she suddenly became pregnant by her boyfriend. Then last December 27, I visited her at their home because we're close, and one thing I saw was that she was really struggling.) – **FGD-P1**

The participants also expressed concern for their friend, given the observed struggles. Even though he felt that way, he knew that nothing would change because it was already there. The participants emphasized the struggles of being a teenage parent and the lessons it teaches, especially when social institutions reinforce these struggles.

Social institutions as moral regulators of youth sexuality. It takes a village to raise a child, which means that social institutions, particularly family, school, and religion, play an important role in shaping values, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions. One participant shared:

The school discussion, social media, what I observe in my community, and mostly, teachers and parents often talk about the consequences as well. – **IDI-P5**

The aforementioned statement highlights how social institutions work together to address this issue, such as raising awareness and emphasizing the potential risks and consequences that a teenage pregnancy may bring. A participant shared the same sentiment:

For me, on my end, my family just tells me to be careful with what I do. In the end, it's up to me to make that decision. – **IDI-P4**

The participant highlighted that, even though his parents are giving him the freedom of choice, he understands that this freedom entails living with limitations. This reflects confidence in his decision-making skills, which made me even prouder. Similarly, a participant added:

Mostly Ma'am, gina discourage man gyud na sa amoa nga naa nay sexual relations ba unya wala pa ka gikasal. Kay kuan sad, Christian man gud mi, so kung naa man mi ing-ana, i-indulge namo ang sarili namo sa ana, besides sa mag-disobey mi sa among parents, disobey sad mi sa Ginoo. (Mostly, ma'am, we are really discouraged from having sexual relations before marriage. We are Christians, so if we indulge ourselves in that, aside from disobeying our parents, we would also be disobeying God.) – **IDI-P1**

The participant expressed pride, noting that his parents shaped his moral compass and religious beliefs, which underscores the solid foundation he has in responsibility and awareness.

### **Making Rational Decisions**

In this theme, I have identified two sub-themes, namely: Thoughtful Decision-Making and Being Mature in Relationships.

**Thoughtful Decision Making.** Thinking critically and making responsible decisions become strongly evident in their narratives. It emphasizes being logical most of the time, being responsible, and being aware of teenage pregnancy. One of the participants shared:

So, I think my realization, is that when you're still young, don't don't rush things. Don't go into things that you are not capable of. You are not responsible yet because those things may come not on the earlier stage of life, but maybe later. – **IDI-P3**

The participant highlights the idea of taking things slowly, emphasizing patience and readiness in decision-making, especially when a decision significantly affects one's life. Another participant shared:

It just really shaped my perspective about, uh, adolescent pregnancy. Knowing na, "Hala, pag buhaton diay na ako ni, it's either mabutang ko ani nga situation or mao lang jud ang akoang masulod nga situation." So like, that thing, it shaped me very well jud, ma'am, na dili sa mag-employ ana nga butang pag dili nimo kaya ang responsibility. Dapat dili lang i-satisfy ang sarili, but knowing unsa ang next nga responsibility after that incident. (It really shaped my perspective about adolescent pregnancy. Realizing that if I were to do that, I might end up in the same situation, and that could be the reality I would face. That experience shaped me well, ma'am, to avoid engaging in something like that if you are not ready for the responsibility. It shouldn't just be about satisfying oneself, but about understanding the responsibilities that come after such an incident.) – **FGD-P1**

The participant expressed underscores the very essence of being a responsible adolescent. This only reflects that the participant is standing firm in his beliefs and mindset, which led to his meaningful thoughts, realizations, and improved behavior.

**Being mature in relationships.** The participant emphasized the importance of being mature in handling relationships in the future to foster better attitudes and behaviors towards teenage pregnancy. A participant shared:

For me, it just educates me about it, and it makes me feel more mature about handling relationships in the future. – **IDI-P4**

The participant expressed that understanding the outcome and the consequence promotes better behavior. The participant also emphasized that it makes him more mature in relationships, which will help develop strong boundaries and a better mindset in understanding adolescent relationships.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

1. **Adolescent Pregnancy as a Burdened Responsibility:** Teenage pregnancy is perceived as a burdened responsibility for both teenage parents and their families, particularly in terms of financial and emotional demands. Teenage pregnancy is a life-altering condition that affects overall well-being due to a lack of readiness and vulnerability. Male adolescents further view teenage pregnancy as a broader social issue rather than an individual concern.

2. **Parental Guidance of Family and Influence of Peers and Social Expectations:** Family upbringing, peer perspectives, and social expectations affect how male adolescents shape perceptions and understanding towards teenage pregnancy. It also emphasizes the importance of parental guidance in forming values related to prioritization of education, responsibility, and decision-making. Openness in discussing teenage pregnancy also contributes to the development of principles that guide adolescents in understanding social responsibilities and feedback.
3. **Learning the Consequences of Early Pregnancy:** The findings highlight the realization among male adolescents and emphasize the collective efforts of social institutions, such as family, education, and religion, in shaping values, beliefs, and opinions, as well as in guiding behaviors and attitudes related to teenage pregnancy.
4. **Making Rational Decisions:** The dynamic interaction of personal thoughts and understanding, observing situations in the community and media exposure, and parental and peer influences results in the development of human behavior towards teenage pregnancy. It also emphasizes the importance of thoughtful decision-making and maturity in relationships, so that lessons are not learned at the hardest consequences of life.

### Modified Paradigm

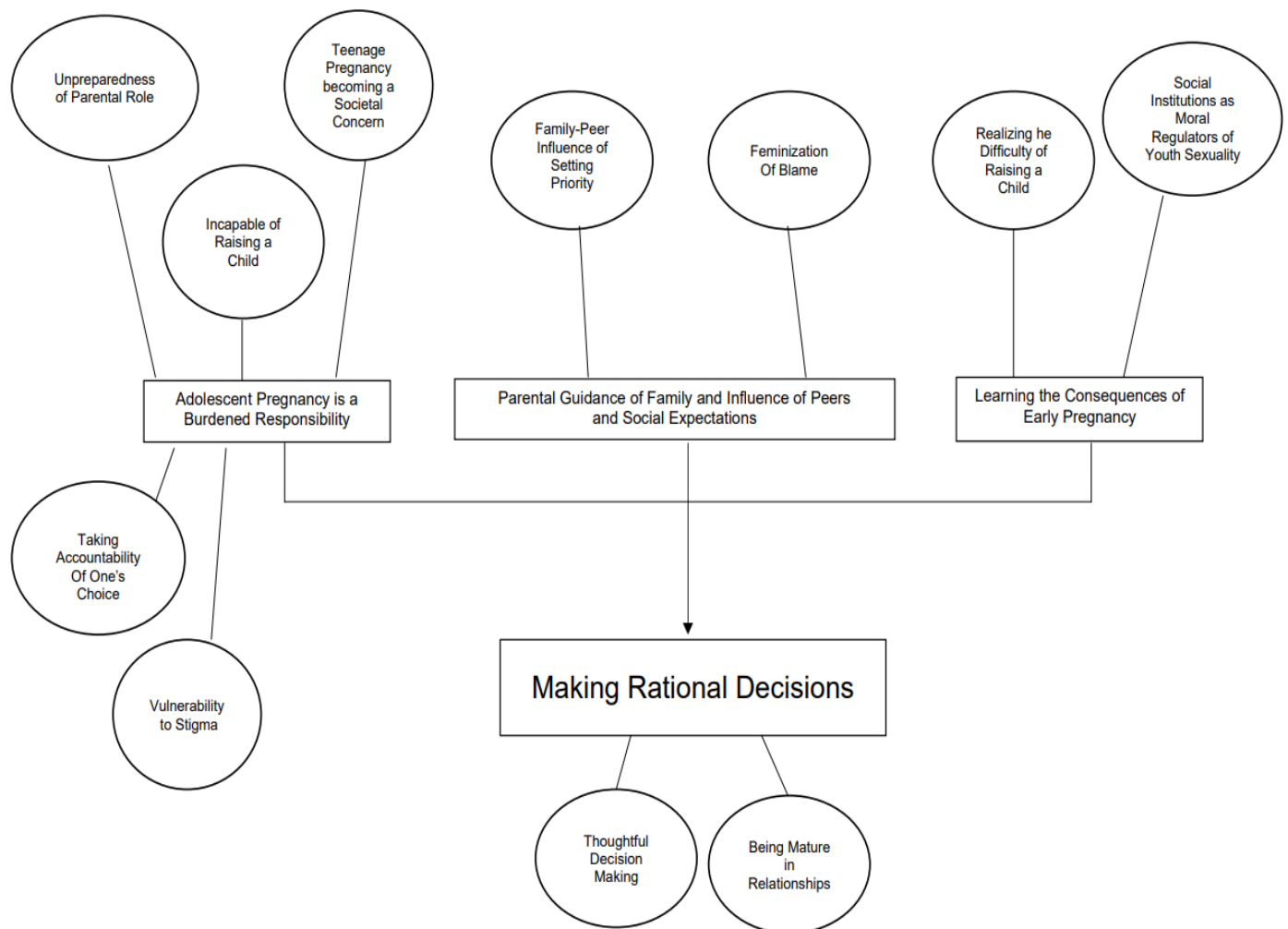


Figure 2. Modified Paradigm of the Study

## DISCUSSION

This section presents the discussion of the findings. From the responses of male adolescents, four (4) themes have emerged, namely: Adolescent Pregnancy as a Burdened Responsibility, Parental Guidance of Family and

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Influence of Peers and Social Expectations, Learning the Consequences of Early Pregnancy, and Making Rational Decisions.

### **Adolescent Pregnancy as a Burdened Responsibility**

The findings indicate that teenage pregnancy is perceived as a social issue that affects society as a whole, where unpreparedness, financial instability, and emotional and social consequences are evident. This perception positions teenage pregnancy as a burdened responsibility that affects not only the individuals involved but also their families and communities. This finding is consistent with Abdolalipour et al. (2025), who highlighted that teenage pregnancy disrupts well-being due to emotional stress, unpreparedness, and overwhelming responsibilities. Similarly, the findings of Xiao et al. (2023) emphasized that teenage pregnancy is often perceived as occurring at an inappropriate time and being influenced by societal and peer influences. These converging findings suggest that adolescents recognize the multidimensional challenges associated with early parenthood.

On the contrary, the findings of this study contradict those of Amalia et al. (2021), which involved eight adolescent participants who perceived teenage pregnancy in a neutral or even positive light, such as a source of motivation or personal growth. The divergence may be attributed to differences in sociocultural contexts or participant experiences. Overall, the present study reinforces the dominant view of teenage pregnancy as a significant social concern associated with emotional and financial strain.

The findings of this study can be further explained by Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that individuals develop perceptions by observing their social environment. The perception of teenage pregnancy as a burdened responsibility stems from the observation of the consequences experienced by other adolescents.

### **Parental Guidance of Family and Influence of Peers and Social Expectations**

The findings highlight that family upbringing, peer perspectives, and social expectations affect how male adolescents shape perceptions and understanding towards teenage pregnancy. Parental guidance, particularly in promoting values such as responsibility, education, and decision-making, appears to be a key influence. Additionally, open communication within the family contributes to adolescents' understanding of social responsibilities. The findings of this study affirm those of Esan et al. (2022), who emphasized that communication within families and societal norms play important roles in shaping adolescents' values, decision-making, and awareness. Likewise, this finding aligns with the study by Alex-Ojei et al. (2023), which highlighted the importance of parental support, family influence, and sociocultural expectations in shaping adolescents' sense of responsibility and life choices regarding teenage pregnancy.

Conversely, the findings of this study contradict those of Agha and Rind (2025), which involved fewer than 10 participants and found that teenage pregnancy was shaped more by personal acceptance and internal beliefs, further suggesting that understanding teenage pregnancy can develop independently. Given the limited number of in-depth analyses of participants, this strengthens the transferability of my findings, making them more comprehensive and reliable.

This finding aligns with the Social Cognitive Theory, in which behavior and understanding are shaped through social interactions and observational learning. Parental communication and peer interactions are the primary modeled behaviors shaping adolescents' perceptions.

### **Learning the Consequences of Early Pregnancy**

The findings further reveal that male adolescents developed their understanding of teenage pregnancy through the collective efforts of social institutions such as family, education, and religion in shaping values, beliefs, and opinions, and in guiding behaviors and attitudes related to teenage pregnancy. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Fernández-Medina et al. (2023), who emphasized that social institutions such as family, school, peers, and social environments guide adolescents' understanding, decision-making, and attitudes. Similarly, the study of Xiao et al. (2023) showed that adolescents develop awareness about teenage pregnancy through interactions with family, school, and community.

On the other hand, the findings disagree with the study of Agha and Rind (2025) that few participants engage positively in teenage pregnancy through cultural acceptance and personal beliefs, only with limited awareness of broader social and psychological consequences. This contrast suggests that the depth of adolescents' understanding may depend on the level of engagement with social institutions and access to guided learning experiences.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, learning occurs through interactions with social institutions, which serve as sources of reinforcement shaping adolescents' awareness and attitudes toward teenage pregnancy.

### **Making Rational Decisions**

The findings suggest that the dynamic interaction of internal and external factors shapes adolescent decision

-making regarding teenage pregnancy. These include personal understanding, community observations, media exposure, and influences from family and peers. This highlights the importance of informed and reflective decision-making in navigating relationships and sexual behavior. It also emphasizes the importance of thoughtful decision-making and maturity in relationships, so that lessons are not learned at the hardest consequences of life. This finding supports the study of Fernández-Medina et al. (2023), where participants described that their sexual perceptions and behavior, understanding, and decision-making related to sexual health are being influenced by family, school, peer groups, and media exposure. Similarly, this finding affirms the study by Park and Yang (2024), which highlighted that both internal influences, such as personal understanding, and external influences, including family dynamics, community expectations, peers, cultural norms, and media exposure, shape adolescents' choices about sexual activity.

On the contrary, my study refutes the findings of Lipi et al. (2024), where seven adolescents involved emphasized that external crisis and socio-economic stressors often drive their decisions toward teenage pregnancy rather than being shaped by personal understanding, community observation, and parental and peer influence. This suggests that decision-making pathways may vary depending on contextual factors, highlighting the complexity of adolescent behavior.

This finding supports the Social Cognitive Theory, as it highlights the dynamic interaction of personal factors, environmental influences, and observational learning. Through the interaction of observed experiences and internal cognitive processes, adolescents developed the ability to make rational decisions.

### **Implications for Practice**

Aligned with my study's paradigm, adolescents, educators, parents, and peers are encouraged to collaboratively promote awareness that teenage pregnancy is a burdened responsibility influenced by social factors and consequences, through informed decision-making, open communication, and inclusive educational initiatives. This study suggests mainly to policymakers that developing adolescent-focused programs and community-based interventions may enhance awareness, while making policies that strengthen comprehensive and inclusive reproductive health education may reduce the risks associated with teenage pregnancy and solve the core problem of the issue sustainably.

### **Future Directions**

This study suggests future research through exploratory factor analysis, multiple linear regression, and case studies on teenage pregnancy to examine further and strengthen the understanding of adolescent decision-making and behaviors related to teenage pregnancy.

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