

Challenges Among Teenage Student-Parents' in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Teenage pregnancy is still a big problem in public high schools all over the Philippines. Some students now have to be both learners and parents in classrooms meant to help them pursue their dreams and academic goals. In Gingoog City, the growing number of student-parents highlights the need to understand and address their challenges. This study examined the challenges faced by teenage student-parents in public secondary schools in the West 1 and West 3 districts of Gingoog City during the School Year 2024–2025. It aimed to describe their profiles, assess their perceived challenges, and determine the relationship between their challenges and demographic characteristics. A total of 154 student-parents were selected through universal sampling. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design using a researcher-made questionnaire, with frequency, mean, and standard deviation to describe data, and Pearson's r to analyze the data.

Findings revealed that respondents were mostly 18–19 years old, predominantly female, with varied student statuses, living arrangements, family incomes, and some belonging to indigenous communities. Home distances affected punctuality and energy levels. Personal challenges were highest, especially in time management, emotional stress, and balancing school and parenting, while teacher relationships were perceived as least challenging. Family, peer, and community influences varied, with supportive environments enhancing persistence, whereas strained relationships, stigma, and limited community support increased difficulties. Significant direct linear correlations were found between respondents' challenges and their demographic profiles, including age, gender, income, living arrangement, and tribal affiliation. The study concluded that teacher-student relationships provide the strongest support, fostering respect, guidance, and motivation that help student-parents overcome other challenges. It recommended creating inclusive support systems in schools and communities, such as family wellness programs, youth activities, and awareness initiatives, to recognize teenage student-parents, promote empathy, and provide safe, supportive spaces for their learning and participation.

Keywords: challenges, teenage student-parents

1. Introduction

Background of the Study

Teenage pregnancy remains a major issue in Philippine public high schools, forcing students to balance education and parenting. In Gingoog City, the 2023–2024 RMEA Report ranked it second-highest in Region 10, highlighting urgent need for support.

Nationwide, over 500 Filipino teens give birth daily, according to United Nations Population Fund, with higher cases in low-income areas lacking reproductive health services and education, as noted by Philippine Statistics Authority. Many young mothers struggle to continue schooling, while fathers often leave to work.

The Department of Education identifies teenage pregnancy as a key cause of school dropouts. Student-parents face childcare duties, stress, stigma, and weak academic performance, worsened by limited school support.

This study examines the challenges and support systems for student-parents in Gingoog City to guide inclusive programs like flexible learning, psychosocial services, childcare, and financial aid, aiming to reduce stigma and help them continue education.

Literature and Related Studies

This review presents key studies relevant to teenage student-parents, focusing on their profiles and challenges that affect academic outcomes.

Respondents' Profile

Socio-demographic factors such as age, sex, income, living conditions, and cultural background significantly influence students' behavior, stress, and school performance. Studies show that low income, unstable living environments, and long travel distance increase absenteeism, stress, and dropout rates. Cultural or tribal affiliation may also expose students to stigma and limited access to support.

Age and Sex

Younger teenage parents (13–16) experience greater emotional stress, low maturity, and difficulty balancing school and parenting, while older ones cope better but still face financial and childcare challenges. Sex differences also affect experiences—female students often face more stigma and emotional burden, while males show different behavioral responses—highlighting the need for gender-sensitive support.

Student Status and Distance

Working students struggle with time management, fatigue, and academic performance, while those living far from school have higher absenteeism. Flexible learning and accessible schooling help improve participation.

Other Socio-Demographic Factors

Living arrangements and family income strongly affect mental health, resilience, and school engagement. Students living with supportive families perform better, while low-income student-parents often prioritize work over education. Cultural background may also influence access to education and support services.

Teenage Student-Parent Challenges

Teenage parents face multiple interconnected challenges:

Personal: stress, identity struggles, mental health issues

Family: lack of support, conflict, or rejection

Teacher: supportive or discriminatory attitudes affecting motivation

Peer: bullying, stigma, and isolation

Community: limited childcare, financial aid, and social support

These factors contribute to poor academic performance and higher dropout rates.

Overall, the literature shows that teenage student-parents' experiences are shaped by both personal and socio-demographic factors. Strong support from family, teachers, peers, and the community is essential to help them balance education and parenting.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study were to determine the challenges among teenage student-parents in public secondary schools in the West 1 and West 3 districts of Gingoog City for the School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, this aimed to describe the respondents' profile; find out the respondents' assessment of their level of challenges; and determine the significant relationship between the respondents' assessed challenges and each of their profiles.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory explains that teenage student-parents are influenced by interconnected systems. Immediate environments (family, peers, teachers) directly affect their schooling, while broader factors like school–family coordination, government support, cultural norms, and life changes over time also shape their experiences. These influences determine whether they continue or drop out of school.

Conceptual Framework

The study focuses on challenges in five areas: personal, family, teacher, peer, and community. These are influenced by socio-demographic factors such as age, sex, student status, distance, culture, living arrangement, and income.

Guided by Department of Education policies, the study examines the relationship between:

Independent Variable: Profile

Dependent Variable: Level of challenges

It aims to understand teenage student-parents' experiences and support better interventions.

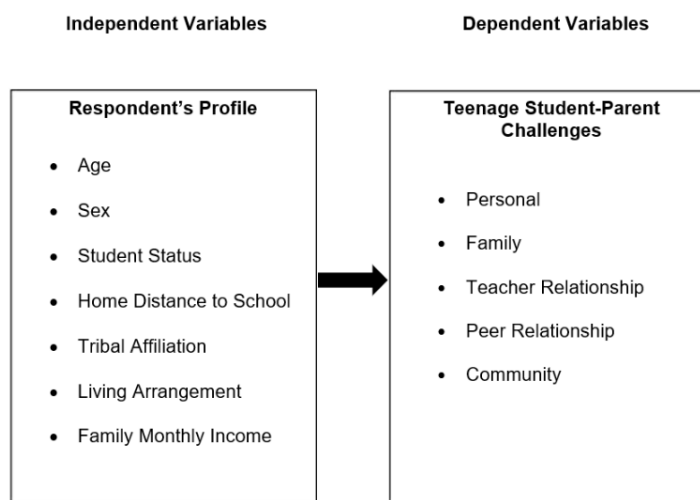


Fig 1. A Schematic Presentation showing the Relationship between the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the level of challenges among teenage student parents in public secondary schools in West 1 and 3 Districts, Division of Gingoog City, School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, student status, home distance to school, tribal affiliation, living status, and family monthly income?
2. How do the respondents assess their level of challenges based on personal, family, teacher relationship, peer relationship, and community?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' assessed challenges and each of their profiles?

Hypothesis

Problems 1 and 2 are hypothesis-free. Based on Problem 3, the null hypothesis was formulated and tested at a 0.05 significance level.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' assessed challenges and each of their profiles.

Significance of the Study

This study highlights the lived experiences of teenage student-parents and the challenges they face in personal, family, school, peer, and community settings. It aims to help schools create more flexible, supportive, and inclusive learning environments.

The findings may guide teachers, administrators, and policymakers in developing programs and policies that better support young parents, while also contributing to future research on teenage parenthood and education.

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on 154 teenage student-parents in public secondary schools in Gingoog City (West 1 and 3 Districts) during SY 2024–2025, including ALS, OHSP, and regular students.

It examines their profiles (age, sex, status, distance, culture, living arrangement, income) and challenges (personal, family, teacher, peer, community). The study excludes dropouts, private school students, and other perspectives (teachers, families). Data are self-reported and limited to one school year.

Despite these limits, the study provides insights to support inclusive policies and programs that help teenage parents continue their education.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methods used in the study, including the research design, setting, and procedures.

Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational design. It described the socio-demographic profile of teenage student-parents and assessed their challenges in personal, family, teacher, peer, and community areas. It also examined the relationship between these challenges and variables such as age, sex, student status, distance from school, cultural affiliation, living arrangement, and family income.

This design is appropriate because it explains current conditions and relationships without manipulating variables, providing insights that can guide school policies and support programs.

Study Setting

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in the West 1 and West 3 Districts of Gingoog City. These schools include students from diverse cultural and low-income backgrounds, many of whom face challenges such as limited finances, transportation issues, and lack of childcare.

The research examined how teenage parents balance school and parenting, including their access to support systems and programs of the Department of Education like ALS and ADM.

Overall, the study aims to identify challenges and support mechanisms to help develop inclusive and responsive educational programs for teenage student-parents.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the one hundred fifty-four (154) teenage student parents enrolled in public secondary schools under three educational programs: the Alternative Learning System (ALS), the Open High School Program (OHSP), and the regular high school program. ALS students left formal education due to parenthood and are now pursuing alternative learning. OHSP students follow a flexible, self-paced curriculum, while regular high school students continue in the traditional system despite parenting challenges. Including these groups provides a comprehensive view of their experiences, helping identify factors that influence their ability to stay in school and complete their education. Table A below shows the distribution of respondents.

Table A
Distribution of Respondents

School Code	Respondents
A	94
B	30
C	14
D	16
Total	154

Sampling Technique

The study used a universal (take-all) sampling technique, including all teenage student-parents enrolled in public secondary schools in the West 1 and West 3 Districts of Gingoog City for SY 2024–2025. Respondents were grouped into ALS, OHSP, and regular high school programs.

This approach ensured that all eligible participants were included, eliminating sampling bias and providing a complete representation of teenage parents' experiences across different educational settings.

Research Instruments

The study used a researcher-made questionnaire with two parts:

Part I: Respondents' profile (age, sex, student status, distance from school, tribal affiliation, living arrangement, and family income).

Part II: Level of challenges in five areas—personal, family, teacher, peer, and community—based on Department of Education Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012). A 4-point Likert scale (Never to All the Time) was used.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was validated by experts, including a faculty member and research coordinators, to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with study objectives. Revisions were made based on their feedback.

A pilot test with 30 similar respondents was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86, indicating good reliability (≥ 0.70 standard).

These steps ensured that the instrument is valid, reliable, and appropriate for measuring the challenges of teenage student-parents.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured approval from PHINMA COC School of Graduate and Professional Studies, then from the Division Office of Gingoog City and selected schools. Teenage student-parents were identified with the help of school staff, oriented about the study, and given informed consent forms. Questionnaires were then distributed and answered voluntarily and confidentially.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, SD) were used for the profile and level of challenges. Pearson *r* was used to test the relationship between variables at a 0.05 significance level.

Ethical Considerations

The study ensured voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and no harm to participants. No identifying data were collected, and all responses were kept private and securely handled. Minors required parental consent, and participants could withdraw anytime.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the challenges among teenage student-parents in public secondary schools. The data were presented in tabular form for better appreciation.

Results

Problem 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, student status, home distance to school, tribal affiliation, living status, and family monthly income?

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage
20 years and above	14	9.09
18 – 19 years old	87	56.49
15 – 17 years old	53	34.42
12 – 14 years old	0	0.00
Total	154	100.00

Table 1 shows that most respondents belong to the 18–19 age group with 87 (56.49%), indicating that late adolescents make up the largest group of teenage student-parents who remain in school. This suggests they are more capable of handling both schooling and parenting due to greater emotional maturity, better decision-making, and improved time management.

Studies support this finding, showing that older teenage parents (17–19) demonstrate higher resilience, better emotional regulation, and greater use of support systems such as counseling and childcare assistance (Alampay & Jocson, 2021; Reyes & Mendoza, 2023). They are also more receptive to flexible teaching strategies that improve engagement and learning (Quiblat & Ubayubay, 2025).

In contrast, the 12–14 age group recorded 0 (0.00%), suggesting that very young adolescent parents are either less common or less likely to stay in school. This highlights greater vulnerability among younger parents due to emotional immaturity, financial dependence, and limited support systems. Research shows

they are more prone to stress, anxiety, and school dropout, emphasizing the need for early intervention and stronger support programs (Rivera & Santos, 2021; Cruz & Villanueva, 2022; Del Rosario & Ignacio, 2024).

Overall, the findings indicate that older teenage parents are more likely to persist in school, while younger ones require stronger protective and educational support systems.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	74	48.05
Female	80	51.95
Total	154	100.00

Table 2 shows that female student-parents slightly outnumber males, with 80 (51.95%) compared to 74 (48.05%). This means adolescent mothers are more represented and more likely to manage both schooling and caregiving roles.

This highlights the need for gender-sensitive support such as flexible learning, childcare, counseling, and financial assistance. Studies show that young mothers are highly motivated but face stress, stigma, and role strain (Villanueva, 2022; Lizada & Salazar, 2020).

Male student-parents are less visible and often prioritize work over schooling due to provider expectations. They also have limited access to support systems and are more likely to disengage from school (Kim & Cho, 2021; Rodriguez & Evans, 2023).

Overall, the results show the need for inclusive programs that support both male and female student-parents.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Student Status

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Full-time	122	79.22
Working	32	20.78
Total	154	100.00

Table 3 shows that most respondents are full-time students, with 122 (79.22%). This means that the majority of teenage student-parents continue their education despite parenting responsibilities. It implies strong determination and highlights the importance of education as a pathway to better opportunities. It also reflects the usefulness of flexible programs like ALS and OHSP in helping student-parents stay in school while managing their roles at home.

As observed, many prioritize finishing their studies, showing how school support systems help them persist despite challenges.

Cena and Corpuz (2024) support this, noting that flexible learning improves engagement among non-traditional learners. Santos et al. (2022) also found that fewer external responsibilities lead to better academic performance.

Only 32 (20.78%) are working students. This indicates that few can balance work, school, and parenting due to financial pressure, childcare needs, and time constraints. These challenges often lead to stress, fatigue, and difficulty in sustaining studies.

As observed, these students face real struggles that require understanding and support from schools.

Dizon and Labrador (2021) found that working student-parents experience higher stress and lower engagement, while Pham and Nguyen (2020) noted that although work builds skills, it often reduces academic focus due to competing demands.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Distance from Home to School

Category	Frequency	Percentage
More than 6 kms	36	23.38
4–6 kms	64	41.56
1–3 kms	43	27.92
Less than 1 km	11	7.14
Total	154	100.00

Table 4 shows that most respondents (64 or 41.56%) live 4–6 km away from school. This means many teenage student-parents travel a moderate distance daily, which can still affect attendance and performance. Even this distance may cause fatigue, lateness, and absenteeism, especially for those balancing childcare, household duties, and studies.

It implies that transportation challenges in rural or low-resource areas increase the risk of academic disruption. The combined demands of distance, parenting, and possible work make schooling more difficult. This highlights the need for support such as transportation assistance, flexible schedules, and childcare services.

As observed, travel burdens add pressure to already struggling student-parents.

Bautista and Enriquez (2023) and related studies note that longer commutes are linked to higher absenteeism and lower performance, especially among disadvantaged learners.

Only 11 (7.14%) live less than 1 km from school. While proximity reduces travel time, it does not guarantee better attendance or performance. This implies that teenage parents still face barriers such as financial difficulties, childcare responsibilities, and emotional stress regardless of distance.

As observed, even nearby students struggle due to home and personal challenges. This shows that educational access depends not only on location but also on support systems.

Soriano (2021) and other studies emphasize that social, emotional, and economic factors often matter more than distance in affecting school participation among teenage parents.

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Tribal Affiliation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Indigenous	132	85.71
Indigenous	22	14.29
Total	154	100.00

Table 5 shows that most respondents do not belong to any indigenous group, with 132 (85.71%). This means indigenous teenage student-parents are underrepresented in the sample. It implies that indigenous learners may face greater barriers to education, and their experiences may be less visible in mainstream schooling. This highlights the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive educational practices that recognize diverse backgrounds and ensure equal participation.

As observed, schools should promote belonging for all learners by respecting cultural identity and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. Teachers need to consider different cultural experiences to better support student-parents from diverse backgrounds.

David and Ramos (2020), Sarmiento and Tuazon (2021), and Jover and Camingue (2023) emphasize that indigenous youth often face systemic barriers such as discrimination, poverty, and lack of culturally responsive education, which affect school participation and retention.

Only 22 (14.29%) of respondents identify as indigenous, indicating underrepresentation. This implies that indigenous teenage parents may face additional barriers such as language differences, cultural mismatch in schools, and limited institutional support, making it harder for them to continue schooling.

As observed, their low presence may reflect both access issues and possible exclusion. This shows the need for stronger cultural inclusion and community engagement in schools.

Garcia (2021), Delos Santos and Villanueva (2022), and Alonzo and Rivera (2023) stress that culturally responsive and community-based education improves engagement, belonging, and retention among indigenous learners, especially young parents.

Table 6
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Living Arrangement

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Living with both parents	36	23.38
Living with a single parent	57	37.01
Living with grandparents/relatives	46	29.87
Living with partner	15	9.74
Living independently	0	0.00
Total	154	100.00

Table 6 shows that most respondents (57 or 37.01%) live with a single parent. This means single-parent households are the most common family arrangement among teenage student-parents. It implies that single parents provide the main emotional and financial support, helping sustain the learners despite limited resources.

As observed, family support is crucial in helping student-parents manage school and parenting, though financial and household pressures may still affect their performance.

Valenzuela et al. (2021) and related studies emphasize that strong family support helps adolescent parents stay in school despite challenges.

Meanwhile, 0 (0%) live independently, implying that teenage parents cannot manage schooling and parenting alone and rely heavily on family support.

Sharma and Yadav (2020) and others highlight that lack of family support increases risks of stress, dropout, and instability, showing the importance of strong home support systems.

Table 7
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Family Monthly Income

Category	Frequency	Percentage
P20,001 and above	30	19.48
P10,001 – P20,000	68	44.16
P5,001 – P10,000	41	26.62

P5,000 and below	15	9.74
Total	154	100.00

Table 7 shows that most respondents (68 or 44.16%) have a family income of ₱10,001–₱20,000. This means many teenage student-parents come from low-to-middle income households. It implies they are not in extreme poverty but still struggle with school-related expenses like transportation, childcare, and school materials, which affect their studies.

As observed, financial stress affects their focus, motivation, and school participation even if basic needs are met.

Tan and Lopez (2023) and related studies show that even moderate income levels can still create financial strain that affects attendance and performance.

Meanwhile, 15 (9.74%) earn ₱5,000 or less, representing the poorest group. This implies severe financial hardship, often forcing students to prioritize work and basic survival over education.

As observed, poverty leads to fatigue, absenteeism, and emotional stress that affect learning.

Rodriguez and Fernandez (2021) and others confirm that poverty increases dropout risk and reduces academic performance among teenage parents.

Problem 2. How do the respondents assess their level of challenges based on personal, family, teacher relationship, peer relationship, and community?

Table 8
Distribution of Respondents’ Assessment of their Level of Challenges based on Personal

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I manage my time effectively between school and parenting.	3.13	0.84	Agree
I handle both academic and parenting responsibilities with confidence.	3.09	0.82	Agree
I submit school requirements despite my parenting duties.	3.00	0.80	Agree
I cope well with emotional stress related to school and family life.	3.28	0.89	Strongly Agree
I stay focused on schoolwork even with parenting tasks.	3.10	0.83	Agree
I balance academic and parental tasks without feeling too overwhelmed.	3.08	0.82	Agree
I find time for self-care despite childcare responsibilities.	3.16	0.86	Agree
I remain optimistic about finishing my education.	3.03	0.81	Agree
I stay physically active and alert in school despite being a parent.	3.01	0.81	Agree
I am determined to continue my education despite my responsibilities.	2.99	0.79	Agree
Overall	3.09	0.83	Agree

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged
2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly Challenged

Table 8 shows that respondents are slightly challenged in personal aspects ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.83$), meaning they struggle with balancing school and parenting, affecting them emotionally, physically, and mentally. This highlights the need for counseling, stress management, and flexible school support.

As observed, many arrive at school already exhausted but continue attending due to their responsibility to their children.

Studies (Thulien et al., 2020; Gatbonton, 2021; Lim & De Guzman, 2022) confirm that teenage parents experience stress and need psychosocial support. The highest item, coping with emotional stress ($M = 3.28$), shows they are emotionally resilient, especially with support from teachers and peers.

The lowest item, determination to continue education ($M = 2.99$), shows motivation is slightly challenged and depends on encouragement and support.

As observed, simple encouragement helps them regain motivation and persist in school. Research (Rodriguez & Fernandez, 2021; Villarin & Santos, 2022; Cruz & Navarro, 2023) emphasizes that emotional support and mentorship are key to sustaining their education.

Table 9
Distribution of Respondents' Assessment of their Level of Challenges based on Family

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I receive strong support from my family in pursuing my studies.	3.03	0.81	Agree
I maintain a peaceful relationship with my family while studying.	3.23	0.86	Agree
I receive financial help from my family for school expenses.	3.19	0.84	Agree
I feel encouraged by my family to continue my education.	3.30	0.88	Strongly Agree
I feel understood by my family regarding my situation.	3.05	0.82	Agree
I receive positive motivation from my family about staying in school.	3.17	0.83	Agree
I get help from family members in taking care of my child.	3.27	0.87	Strongly Agree
I feel respected by my family in my role as both student and parent.	3.53	0.92	Strongly Agree
I feel that my family values both my role as a parent and as a learner.	3.30	0.90	Strongly Agree
I am able to attend school without family issues interfering.	3.38	0.94	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.23	0.87	Agree

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged

2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged
Challenged

1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly

Table 9 shows that family-related challenges have an overall mean of 3.23 (SD = 0.87), interpreted as Slightly Challenged. This means student-parents often experience family issues that affect their schooling, showing that home environment strongly influences their academic life. It implies the need for family counseling and school–family support programs.

As observed, families can either support or pressure student-parents, affecting their motivation and emotional stability.

Studies (Perez & Manlapaz, 2020; Bautista & Cruz, 2021; Moreno & Santos, 2022) confirm that family conflict hinders school participation, while support improves persistence.

The highest item, feeling respected by family (M = 3.53), shows respondents feel valued at home, which strengthens their confidence and resilience. The lowest item, receiving strong family support for studies (M = 3.03), shows only moderate practical and financial support, despite emotional acceptance.

As observed, lack of consistent family support and financial struggles often affect their focus and motivation.

Research (Rodriguez & Fernandez, 2021; Mendoza & Cruz, 2022; Lee & Bautista, 2023) highlights that stronger family involvement improves retention, while weak support increases dropout risk.

Table 10
Distribution of Respondents’ Assessment of their Level of Challenges based on Teacher Relationship

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I feel treated fairly by my teachers despite being a young parent.	3.46	0.96	Strongly Agree
I am supported academically by my teachers when I need help.	3.35	0.92	Strongly Agree
I can comfortably talk to my teachers about my situation.	3.40	0.94	Strongly Agree
I am given flexible deadlines when I explain my circumstances.	3.24	0.86	Agree
I receive words of encouragement from my teachers.	3.30	0.91	Strongly Agree
I feel confident asking for help from my teachers.	3.32	0.90	Strongly Agree
I feel that my teachers understand my challenges as a teenage parent.	3.50	0.98	Strongly Agree
I get advice from teachers on how to manage school and parenting.	3.10	0.83	Agree
I feel comfortable expressing my concerns to my teachers.	3.41	0.95	Strongly Agree

I believe my teachers are committed to helping me succeed.	3.39	0.93	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.35	0.92	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged
 2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly Challenged

Table 10 shows an overall mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.92), interpreted as *Not Challenged*. This means student-parents generally receive strong support and understanding from teachers, helping them stay engaged in school. As observed, teacher empathy, patience, and flexibility reduce stress and increase student-parents’ confidence and motivation.

Studies (Moore & McArthur, 2023; Alvarado & Santos, 2021; Brown & Johnson, 2022) confirm that supportive and inclusive teaching improves persistence and reduces dropout risk. The highest item, *teachers understand my challenges* (M = 3.50), shows strong empathy, making students feel valued and motivated.

The lowest item, *receiving advice on managing school and parenting* (M = 3.10), shows only moderate practical guidance, meaning students still need help with time management and balancing responsibilities.

Santos (2021) and Villanueva & Reyes (2022) emphasize the need for mentoring and counseling programs to better support adolescent parents.

Table 11
Distribution of Respondents’ Assessment of their Level of Challenges based on Peer Relationship

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I feel respected by my classmates despite being a parent.	3.23	0.87	Agree
I maintain positive friendships with my classmates.	3.11	0.84	Agree
I feel accepted by my peers in school.	3.00	0.80	Agree
I enjoy participating in group activities with classmates.	3.27	0.90	Strongly Agree
I feel encouraged by my friends to stay in school.	3.17	0.85	Agree
I find support from classmates even though I am a young parent.	3.30	0.92	Strongly Agree
I am included in school activities by my peers.	2.90	0.78	Agree
I feel that my classmates value me as part of the group.	3.16	0.85	Agree
I maintain meaningful friendships despite my responsibilities.	3.21	0.86	Agree
I participate in school events with the support of my peers.	3.26	0.89	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.16	0.86	Agree

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged
 2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly Challenged

Table 11 shows an overall mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.86), interpreted as Slightly Challenged. This means student-parents often experience difficulties in peer relationships, affecting their sense of belonging in school.

As observed, some feel excluded or judged, while others gain confidence through supportive classmates. Studies (Johnson & Brooks, 2021; Ramos & Bautista, 2022) confirm that peer support improves resilience and school engagement among teenage parents.

The highest item, support from classmates (M = 3.30), shows that peer encouragement is present and helps boost motivation.

The lowest item, inclusion in school activities (M = 2.90), shows slight exclusion from group work and school activities.

As observed, small acts of inclusion greatly improve their confidence and participation.

De Guzman & Uy (2022) and Moore & McArthur (2023) emphasize that peer acceptance and inclusive school practices are essential to reduce isolation and improve persistence.

Table 12
Distribution of Respondents’ Assessment of their Level of Challenges based on Community

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I feel accepted and supported by my community.	2.47	0.56	Disagree
I benefit from programs in my community that support young parents.	2.57	0.71	Agree
I feel confident attending community events as a teenage parent.	2.37	0.69	Disagree
I am encouraged by people in my community to finish school.	3.05	0.82	Agree
I am aware of local organizations that support young parents like me.	3.27	0.87	Strongly Agree
I feel welcome in school-related community activities.	3.10	0.83	Agree
I feel that community members see value in my education.	3.34	0.91	Strongly Agree
I know where to seek help in my community when I need support.	3.20	0.86	Agree
I feel secure and respected in my community.	3.17	0.84	Agree
I continue school without feeling discouraged by community attitudes.	3.30	0.90	Strongly Agree
Overall	2.98	0.80	Agree

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged
 2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly Challenged

Table 12 shows a slightly challenged level of community-related difficulties (M=2.98, SD=0.80). This means teenage parents often experience stigma, limited support, and social barriers in their communities, which affect their school engagement. While some communities recognize the value of their education (highest M=3.34), many still lack consistent support, leading to isolation and reduced confidence. The lowest result shows they feel uncomfortable joining community activities (M=2.37) due to fear of judgment and discrimination. Overall, community attitudes strongly influence their motivation, suggesting the need for inclusive, supportive, and stigma-free local programs to help them stay in school.

Table 13
Summary Distribution of Level of Challenges among
Teenage Student-Parents

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Personal	3.09	0.83	Slightly Challenged
Family	3.23	0.87	Slightly Challenged
Teacher Relationship	3.35	0.92	Not Challenged
Peer Relationship	3.16	0.86	Slightly Challenged
Community	2.98	0.80	Slightly Challenged
Overall	3.16	0.86	Slightly Challenged

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree / Not Challenged 1.76-2.50 Disagree / Challenged
 2.51-3.25 Agree / Slightly Challenged 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree / Highly Challenged

Table 13 shows an overall mean of 3.16 (SD=0.86), interpreted as Slightly Challenged. This means teenage student-parents experience recurring, moderate difficulties in balancing school and parenting across personal, family, school, peer, and community contexts. Their challenges are systemic rather than isolated, indicating that their struggles are shaped by both personal circumstances and their environment.

The results suggest that while they can still cope, their success depends heavily on the level of support they receive from home, school, peers, and the community. The teacher relationship was the strongest support system (M=3.35), showing students generally feel understood and encouraged by teachers. In contrast, the community scored lowest (M=2.98), reflecting ongoing stigma and limited social support.

Overall, this implies that improving the experiences of teenage student-parents requires coordinated support systems, not isolated interventions—especially stronger community acceptance and consistent school-based support.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ assessed challenges and each of their profiles?

Table 14

Result of the Test on the Relationship Between the Respondents’ Assessed Challenges and each of their Profiles

Respondent’s Profile	Level of Challenges Among Teenage Student Parents						Overall
	Persona l	Famil y	Teacher - Relationship	Peer - Relationshi p	Communi ty		
Age	<i>r-value</i>	0.90	0.70	0.77	0.98	0.80	0.83
	<i>p-value</i>	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sex	<i>r-value</i>	0.70	0.61	0.51	0.73	0.67	0.64
	<i>p-value</i>	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	NS	S
Student Status	<i>r-value</i>	0.70	0.71	0.74	0.70	0.50	0.70
	<i>p-value</i>	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.07	0.04
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	NS	S
Home Distance to School	<i>r-value</i>	0.91	0.803	0.7380	0.9367	0.4098	0.7597
	<i>p-value</i>	0.01	1	0.0302	0.0201	0.0600	0.0304
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	0.0308	S	S	NS	S
Tribal Affiliation	<i>r-value</i>	0.73	0.60	0.90	0.60	0.98	0.76
	<i>p-value</i>	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.03
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	S	S
Living Status	<i>r-value</i>	0.81	0.90	0.60	0.51	0.86	0.74
	<i>p-value</i>	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	S	S
Family Monthly Income	<i>r-value</i>	0.61	0.99	0.91	0.98	0.89	0.88
	<i>p-value</i>	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	<i>Interpretation</i>	S	S	S	S	S	S

*Legend:**S – Significant**NS – Not Significant*

Table 14 shows that all major socio-demographic factors are significantly related to the challenges of teenage student-parents (most p-values < 0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that their difficulties are shaped by variables such as age, sex, student status, tribal affiliation, living situation, and family income.

Overall, the results indicate that adolescent parents are not a uniform group—their experiences differ depending on their background. Age, income, employment, and living conditions strongly influence how they manage school and parenting, while cultural identity and gender also shape specific struggles. These findings highlight that challenges are systemic and context-based, not individual alone.

In summary, teenage student-parents need targeted and flexible support systems, including financial aid, counseling, transportation support, and culturally responsive programs, to address their diverse needs and improve educational equity.

Discussion

The study revealed that the challenges of teenage student-parents are shaped by intersecting personal, familial, institutional, and societal factors, closely tied to their socio-demographic profiles. Most respondents were aged 18–19, indicating that many are at the cusp of adulthood, with greater maturity but also heavier parental and academic responsibilities. Female student-parents predominated, reflecting the visibility of adolescent motherhood, while male counterparts, though fewer, remain less supported and less recognized in school policies and practices.

Across domains, personal challenges were most evident, particularly in time management, emotional exhaustion, and balancing school and childcare. These internal struggles are compounded by family challenges, where respondents either benefit from supportive households or suffer from strained relationships and disapproval. Peer-related difficulties also emerged, with many experiencing stigma and exclusion that further weakened their sense of belonging. Meanwhile, teacher and community-related challenges, though slightly lower, remain influential in shaping academic persistence.

Moreover, significant associations were found between the level of challenges and students' profiles, such as status, home distance, living arrangement, and family income. Working student-parents face compounded stress, while those traveling long distances to school encounter logistical barriers that heighten fatigue and absenteeism. Respondents in unstable living arrangements or from low-income households reported heightened stress, underscoring the impact of economic and environmental constraints on their capacity to remain engaged in school. Tribal affiliation was also significant across domains, reflecting how cultural identity intersects with systemic inequities to influence experiences of discrimination and resource access.

These findings highlight the interconnected nature of challenges: academic persistence is not shaped by a single factor but by the combined effects of age, gender, work status, financial condition, cultural background, and family support. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, teenage parents' realities are embedded in multiple layers of influence from personal coping capacities and household support to peer acceptance, school practices, and community attitudes.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, the teacher relationship domain recorded the highest mean across all areas, indicating that it was not challenged, highlighting a strong and supportive connection between educators

and teenage student-parents. This positive result suggests that, in general, student-parents feel respected, guided, and encouraged by their teachers, which serves as an important protective factor for their academic success. While the study also revealed differences in challenges based on socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, student status, and tribal affiliation, the strength of teacher-student relationships provides a solid foundation for supporting students through these differences. This underscores the value of maintaining and further enhancing empathetic, inclusive, and responsive teaching practices. By continuing to strengthen teacher awareness on gender sensitivity and the unique needs of adolescent parents, schools can build on this positive dynamic to empower teenage student-parents to remain engaged, confident, and successful in their education.

Recommendations

Given these findings, the following recommendations are proposed for the individuals and stakeholders involved in the study:

1. Barangay officials should help teenage student-parents feel more supported by creating programs that include everyone in the community. One way is to hold family wellness sessions where parents and young people can learn about communication, managing stress, and building healthy relationships. Since these sessions are open to all families, teenage parents can join without feeling judged or singled out. The barangay can also offer livelihood and financial literacy programs that teach basic skills such as budgeting, small business ideas, and simple income-generating opportunities. These activities should welcome all residents so that teenage parents can participate naturally and gain skills that can help them in school and at home.
2. The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) should actively encourage teenage student-parents to take part in youth programs that support their growth and involvement in the community. One way to do this is by collaborating with the school by setting up community learning and study hubs that offer a safe and quiet place with tables, Wi-Fi, and basic school materials where students can work on assignments or modules. The SK can also lead inclusive community events and youth activities such as clean-up drives, cultural celebrations, or sports festivals, where teenage parents are warmly welcomed and given the chance to participate or even serve as youth leaders. Through these opportunities, young parents can build friendships, access potential scholarship or livelihood programs, and boost their confidence by being part of meaningful community activities and youth decision-making, all without feeling judged or excluded.
3. The school should implement regular awareness programs that promote understanding and support for all students, including those who are teenage parents. The school head and guidance counselor can facilitate quarterly forums or workshops where the challenges, experiences, and achievements of student-parents are shared in a positive and respectful way, ensuring participation is voluntary. Annual orientations for new students and parents can also include discussions about inclusivity, empathy, and creating a welcoming environment for everyone. To reinforce these messages, the school can use posters, brochures, and short videos that celebrate the accomplishments of students in general, including student-parents, and share them through school spaces and social media. These initiatives aim to reduce stigma, build empathy, and foster a school culture where teenage parents feel safe, respected, and supported, without feeling singled out or judged.

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