

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SEX EDUCATION AND ADOLESCENT PERCEPTION OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY, BARANGAY DAO, TAGBILARAN CITY

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## ABSTRACT

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Sex education covers the principles and attitudes about sex and provides the skills needed to manage relationships and sexual health. Teenage pregnancy, a common issue, has significant economic, social, and health impacts on individuals and communities (World Health Organization, 2023). This study, conducted with 136 randomly selected teenagers from Barangay Dao Tagbilaran City, aimed to explore how parental involvement in sex education affects adolescents' views on teenage pregnancy. Findings showed that while parental involvement in sex

education was moderate, teenagers still had a strong understanding of teenage pregnancy. Using Spearman's Rank Correlation Test, the study found a



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significant link between adolescents' educational level and their perceptions of teenage pregnancy, as well as between parental involvement in sex education and these perceptions. This research suggests that parental involvement can shape teenagers' views on pregnancy, highlighting the need for effective sex education programs to help prevent teenage pregnancy in the community.

## INTRODUCTION

Parents need to be involved in their children's sexuality education in order to mold their children's attitudes and behaviors about sexuality. According to Planned Parenthood (2016), sexuality education comprises a wide variety of subjects that are associated with sexuality and sex, including the teaching of general ideas, attitudes, and skills for managing relationships. The phenomenon known as teen pregnancy, which is defined as pregnancy among women between the ages of 15 and 19, is a global problem that has significant implications for the economy, society, and health (World Health Organization, 2023; Triplett, 2022). According to the World Health Organization (2023), over 12 million unplanned conceptions among adolescents in low and middle-income countries result in births. Of these births, approximately 55% are ultimately terminated by abortions, which are associated with severe hazards. With an adolescent birth rate of 47 per 1,000 women aged 15-19, the Philippines has a higher rate than the global average of 44 and the ASEAN average of 33.5. This results in more than 500 births to teenagers every single day (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2020).

A lack of parental guidance, inadequate sexuality education, and cultural taboos surrounding the discussion of sexual health are all factors that contribute to the high incidence of adolescent pregnancy. When it comes to the topic of sexuality education, there are two primary points of view: one favors comprehensive sexuality education in order to lessen the negative connotations associated with it and to guarantee the safety of its recipients, while the other opposes it, stating that it promotes sexual behavior and ought to be the responsibility of the parents (Buben, 2021).

In the Philippines, cultural taboos and a lack of proper communication skills among parents contribute to the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Asia (Save the Children, 2019). According to Binti Abdullah, Muda, Mohd Zain, and Abdul Hamid's research from 2020, effective communication between parents and their children about sexuality might delay the onset of sexual activity and minimize the number of sexual partners among adolescents. In order to develop methods to avoid teenage pregnancy, it is essential to have a solid understanding of the impact that parental involvement in sexuality education has on the perspectives that adolescents have of the phenomenon. The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate the association between the engagement of parents in sexuality education and the attitudes of teenagers regarding the possibility of becoming pregnant as a teenager.

Aiming to shed light on how parental involvement influences these perceptions, we aim to inform evidence-based interventions to tackle this pressing public health issue in the Philippines.

**Related Literature.** There are major social, psychological, physical, and hormonal changes that occur during adolescence. These changes can shape the personalities and values of future adults. According to Fiedler, Araujo, and De Souza (2015), this phase, which includes the beginning of sexual experiences, is extremely important because it is during this time that adolescent pregnancy can lead to significant repercussions, such as dropping out of school, health concerns, and social prejudice. The frequency of teen pregnancy continues to be a problem on a global scale, particularly in third-world nations such as the Philippines, where conservative ideas frequently impede open conversations about sexuality (Ventanilla & Villaruel, 2022).

Despite the fact that parental involvement in sexuality education is essential for influencing teenagers' knowledge and attitudes toward sexual health, barriers such as taboos and discomfort in addressing sexual subjects continue to exist (Faudzi, 2020). According to Hyde (2013), research indicates that adolescents' understanding of sexual health improves when there is improved communication within the family and more parental monitoring. Nevertheless, the order of birth and the gender composition of siblings have a substantial impact on the quality of communication between parents and children. According to Pasqualini and De Rose's 2020 research, children born later and those with same-gender siblings are less likely to discuss personal topics with their parents. According to Ashcraft and Murray (2017), despite the fact that parents play an essential role in sexual education, many of them experience feelings of frustration and discomfort when discussing these topics, which frequently results in inadequate communication.

According to Hyde (2013), effective sexuality education for parents should include open communication and complete knowledge that goes beyond the use of condoms and basic methods of contraception. Research by Burrus (2012) and Maley and Powers (2014) demonstrates that programs that increase communication between parents and children and educate parents about reproductive health can improve adolescents' health outcomes. It is necessary to provide comprehensive sexuality education, to create supportive family circumstances, and to overcome cultural obstacles that prevent open discussion about sexual health in order to address the issue of teen pregnancy (Salvador, 2016).

**Related Studies.** Among 99 students between the ages of 17 and 25, Nugitz (2021) investigated the relationship between school-based sexuality education, parental messages, and sexual attitudes. He discovered that parental attitudes that were more permissive toward teen sexuality were correlated with more comfortable attitudes toward teen sexuality, but that these attitudes did not have an effect on either self-efficacy or satisfaction.

According to McAllister, Astle, and Vennum (2022), the necessity of effective communication between parents and children in the promotion of safe sexual practices was brought to light. Additionally, the authors emphasized the potential influence of parents' sexual ideals on the actions of their children. Inadequate parental communication competence was found to have a negative impact on teenagers' sexual risk-taking and attitudes, according to Holman and Kellas (2015).

Similarly, Holman and Koenig Kellas (2018) discovered that having in-depth conversations about sexuality was more effective in lowering permissive attitudes and lowering the amount of risk-taking that individuals engaged in. This study by Mgbokwere (2015) investigated the perspectives of Nigerian parents regarding the issue of teen pregnancy, highlighting the importance of providing young parents with empathy and support. In their study on the role of Malaysian parents in sexuality education, Binti Abdullah and colleagues (2020) found that the majority of parents had appropriate knowledge and practices, despite cultural sensitivities. Through the use of good communication, Otengah (2018) emphasized the significance of parental participation in the prevention of teen pregnancy. The authors Jackson, Rhodes, and Kotera (2022) highlighted that parents' levels of confidence in sexuality education conversations may vary widely, as well as the importance of cultivating a constructive educational setting. Naidoo and Taylor (2021) found a correlation between decreases in adolescent pregnancy rates and good communication, self-efficacy, and social factors. Inadequate parenting, poverty, and peer pressure were identified as the key causes of teen pregnancy in Ghana by Donkor (2017). He advocated for improved sexuality education as a means of mitigating these difficulties.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative correlational design, supported by two modified questionnaires, and employed random sampling to select respondents. The research findings were applied to the adolescent residents of Barangay Dao, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. The respondents in this study are 136 adolescents aged 13 to 19 out of 201 adolescents from Barangay Dao, encompassing both in-school and out-of-school youths who are permanent residents. Transient residents were excluded. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, securing informed consent and assent from respondents or their legal guardians. The sample size was determined with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval, adjusted to 4.69% based on recent demographic data indicating an adolescent population of 201. A modified instrument was used as the researchers slightly revised the questions from the original tool. The instrument comprised three parts: demographic profile, parental involvement in sex education, and adolescents' perception of teenage pregnancy. The first part collected data on age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and religion. The second part, adapted from Akokuwebe (2016), included 21 statements

divided into sections on “Influence of Parents’ Level of Education on Sexual Education” and “Parental Involvement in Sex Education,” with responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale to reduce response bias. The third part is a self-constructed tool that contained 12 questions on perceptions of teenage pregnancy, also measured on a 5-point Likert scale, as reflected below:

### Scale for Perceived Parental Involvement in Sex Education

The tool consists of twenty-one (21) statements, and respondents can choose the column that corresponds to their answer using the scale below.

Scale	Descriptive Value	Meaning	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree	Strongly disagree with the statement regarding parental involvement in sex education for teenage family members.	No parental involvement
2	Disagree	Disagrees with the statement regarding parents’ involvement in sex education for a teenage family member	Low level of parental involvement
3	Neutral	Neither agrees nor disagrees on the involvement of parents in sex education for teenage family members.	Ambivalent level of parental involvement
4	Agree	I agree with the statement, showing a somewhat positive perception of parental involvement towards teenage family members on sex education.	Moderate level of parental involvement
5	Strongly Agree	Strongly agrees with the statement regarding parental involvement towards teenage family members on sex education.	High level of parental involvement

The questionnaire did not contain statements that are considered negatively stated in terms of assessing the perceived parental involvement in sex education and adolescents’ perception of teenage pregnancy. Experts validated the modified instrument and pilot-tested it with 10 participants, demonstrating high reliability with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of .956 for parental involvement and .809 for adolescents’ perceptions of teenage pregnancy. Content validity was supported, and factor analysis identified significant and related factors.

### Scale for Perceptions on Teenage Pregnancy

The tool consists of twelve (12) statements, wherein the respondents can choose to check the column that corresponds to their answer using the scale

below.

Scale	Descriptive Value	Meaning	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree	The adolescent strongly disagrees with the statement regarding teenage pregnancy/sex education.	Very low level of perception regarding teenage pregnancy
2	Disagree	The adolescent disagrees with the statement regarding teenage pregnancy/sex education.	Low level of perception about adolescent pregnancy
3	Neutral	The adolescent neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement	Neutral stance regarding teenage pregnancy
4	Agree	adolescent agrees with the statement, showing a somewhat positive perception of teenage pregnancy/sex education	High level of perception about teenage pregnancy
5	Strongly Agree	The adolescent strongly agrees with the statement regarding teenage pregnancy/sex education.	A very high level of perception regarding adolescent pregnancy,

Researchers sought approval from the Dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Bohol and the Ethics Review Committee. Permission was also obtained from the Municipal Mayor of Tagbilaran City and Barangay Dao officials. After the permissions were granted, the researchers provided hard copies of the questionnaires and informed consent forms, translated into English and Cebuano, to respondents. The researchers clarified some terms for the respondents so they could answer the questionnaire with a full understanding of their responsibilities as subjects of the study. For ethical considerations, adhering to strict ethical standards, ensuring informed consent, and giving assent forms demonstrates a commitment to respect for the autonomy and dignity of young participants, confidentiality, and anonymity. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Bohol Research Ethics Committee. Respondents were provided with clear explanations of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks in their native language to ensure understanding and voluntary participation. The researchers have adhered to the "Do No Harm" principle throughout the study. All the information gathered was coded, and only the researchers know the code. The researchers will safeguard the information to preserve the respondents' confidentiality and privacy. The gathered data underwent a normality test to determine the appropriate statistical treatment. The Normality Test results revealed that the variables were skewed. Hence, nonparametric tests, such as Spearman's rank correlation, were used to analyze the relationship between the variables. To statistically treat the correlation between parental involvement in sex education and adolescents' perception of teenage pregnancy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Profile of the Respondents.** The demographic profile of young adolescents residing in Barangay Dao, Tagbilaran City, depicts that in terms of age, 37 (27.20%) of 136 respondents were 15 years old, 30 (22.10%) were 18 years old, and only 2 (1.5%) were 13 years old. More than half, represented by seventy-three (53.70%), were males, while only sixty-three (46.3%) were female, and all the respondents were single. Almost half of the respondents (62, or 45.60%) were high school graduates, while only 2 (1.5%) were elementary undergraduates. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted a significant issue regarding unintended pregnancies among teenagers aged 15-19 years, particularly in low and middle-income countries. As of 2019, approximately 12 million unintended pregnancies occurred in this demographic, with about 55% of them resulting in abortions. This alarming statistic underscores the importance of understanding and addressing reproductive health issues among adolescents, especially in vulnerable populations, to mitigate the associated risks and promote overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2023). In twelve Indonesian cities, 97% of junior high and high school students reported having seen pornography in 2017, and 5.6% of Indonesian students reported having been in close relationships, such as marriage or a partnership. One of the high school students in Metro City was expelled in August 2019 for engaging in premarital sexual behavior that resulted in her pregnancy (Fibrilla, Fairus, & Raifah, 2021).

**Level of Parental Involvement in Sex Education.** As to the respective weighted mean, descriptive value, interpretation, and rank of each statement investigating the involvement of parents in the young adolescents' sex education, the statement **"My parents continually remind the adolescent members of the family to postpone parenthood until completing education and establishing a stable career"** had the highest weighted mean of 4.29, indicating a high level of parental involvement. According to Ashcraft & Murray (2017), parents emphasized the importance of instilling values such as parental respect, deeming it sufficient without the need for candid discussions about sexual topics. This sheds light on the research findings, revealing that the majority of Filipino parents place their trust in their children's respect and commitment, prioritizing their academic and professional pursuits to deter teenage pregnancy, rather than directly discussing sex education for this purpose.

On the other hand, cultural factors were perceived by the respondents as one of the factors that inhibit parents from discussing sex education with adolescent members, with the lowest weighted mean of 3.49, indicating a moderate level of parental involvement. This result is significant in light of Habito's (2021) assertion about the prevalence of conservative Catholic ideologies in Filipino social policies, norms, and legislation. These ideologies often demoralize the use of contraceptives and discourage discussions about

premarital sex, leaving Filipino youth vulnerable when navigating relationships and sexual activities. Despite the influence of cultural factors such as conservative Catholic ideologies, parents are still engaging in discussions about sex education with their adolescent children to some extent. It implies a level of resilience and adaptability among Filipino parents in navigating cultural norms while addressing important topics related to sexuality within the family unit.

The findings showcased an average score of 3.93, indicating a moderate level of parental involvement. This suggests that Filipino parents exert a balanced influence, neither overly restrictive nor overly permissive, when it comes to imparting sex education to their children. Binti Abdullah, Muda, Mohd Zain, and Abdul Hamid (2020) highlighted the significant role parents play in educating their children about sex. Their research revealed that the majority of Asian parents are engaged in promoting commendable practices when discussing sex education within their families. However, the interpretation of moderate parental involvement also acknowledges the potential impact of cultural factors on inhibiting more open and comprehensive discussions about sex within Filipino families. While some parents may feel comfortable discussing sex education with their children despite prevailing cultural attitudes, others may face greater barriers due to societal norms and values.

**Level of Perception on Teenage Pregnancy.** Findings revealed that the level of perception of teenage pregnancy of the young adolescents residing at Barangay Dao strongly agree that getting pregnant at an early age affects their studies, with a weighted mean of 4.32, and that teenage pregnancy is preventable through abstinence from having sex, with a weighted mean of 4.26. On the other hand, the least agreement was with the statement that parents should be held responsible for their children's pregnancies at a young age, which had the lowest weighted mean of 3.79. The composite mean of 4.11 indicates that the young adolescents have a high level of perception about teenage pregnancy. Adolescents possess a strong awareness and understanding of the issue of teenage pregnancy. It reflects positively on the effectiveness of efforts aimed at promoting sex education and teenage pregnancy prevention. Youth peer and teen counselors have taken proactive steps to educate and empower young individuals by establishing and training youth leaders in various communities. These leaders play a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge about sex education and teenage pregnancy prevention among their peers. Initiatives include engaging parents in discussions about sex education during parent meetings, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in addressing this issue. The Department of Health (DOH, 2013) recommends that young people with questions about teenage pregnancy should seek assistance from health centers, which are equipped with adolescent-friendly settings and staff members trained to provide accurate information and support. These concerted efforts highlight a comprehensive approach to addressing teenage pregnancy, fostering informed decision-making among adolescents, and promoting a

supportive environment where young individuals can access essential resources and guidance (Jaccard et al., 2002).

**Correlation between Perceived Parental Involvement in Sex Education and Adolescents' Perception of Teenage Pregnancy.** Table 1 presents the Correlation between Perceived Parental Involvement in Sex Education and Adolescent Perception of Teenage Pregnancy. Using Spearman's Rank Correlation Test, the resulting test value is 0.581, and the P value is 0.000. The obtained P value is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant correlation between Parental Involvement in Sex Education and Perception of Teenage Pregnancy. The assertion of a significant correlation between Parental Involvement in Sex Education and Perception of Teenage Pregnancy finds support in the ongoing debate on sex education. One argument highlights the importance of teenagers learning sex education to combat the negative stigma surrounding sex and to ensure their safety and health, while opposing views express concerns about potential encouragement of sexual activity or advocate for parental exclusivity in sex education (Buben, 2021). These perspectives collectively underscore the significance of parental involvement in sex education and its impact on adolescents' perceptions of teenage pregnancy.

**Table 1.** *Correlation between Perceived Parental Involvement in Sex Education and Adolescents' Perception of Teenage Pregnancy (overall)*  
*n = 136*

Variables		Statistical Test Used	Test Value	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Parental Involvement in Sex Education	Perception of Teenage Pregnancy	Spearman's Rank Correlation Test	.581	.000	Reject the null hypothesis	There is a significant relationship between the variables.

## CONCLUSIONS

The young adolescents of Dao district, Tagbilaran City, have high awareness and perceptions regarding teenage pregnancy despite the moderate involvement of their parents in sex education. Family Communication Theory highlights how different family communication patterns influence adolescents' attitudes and behaviors. The observed moderate parental involvement may be due to varying comfort levels and styles when discussing sexuality, with some parents engaging openly and others feeling hesitant. According to Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, adolescence is a period of identity exploration and increasing autonomy, which may explain the moderate parental involvement as adolescents seek greater independence. The Health Belief Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior

underscore the significant role of perceptions, attitudes, and social norms in health-related behaviors. The high awareness among adolescents about the risks and prevention of teenage pregnancy reflects their informed perspectives. However, the lack of significant relationships with factors such as age, sex, and religion suggests that other influences, such as cultural beliefs, family dynamics, and media exposure, are at play.

Higher educational attainment may correlate with a better understanding and access to information, thereby enhancing awareness of the implications of teenage pregnancy. Increased parental involvement in sex education can help adolescents develop informed views on the risks, consequences, and responsibilities associated with early parenthood. Parental involvement in sex education serves as a protective factor against teenage pregnancy by providing adolescents with guidance, support, and accurate information about contraception and reproductive health. Ultimately, young adolescents who receive higher levels of parental involvement in their sex education are more likely to develop informed and responsible views regarding the risks and responsibilities associated with early parenthood. Encouraging parents to engage in sex education actively can significantly contribute to reducing teenage pregnancy rates by equipping adolescents with the necessary knowledge and support to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the University of Bohol College of Nursing, should organize an external symposium focusing on the Perception of Teenage Pregnancy, inviting stakeholders such as educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to participate and contribute their insights.
2. The Department of Health, in partnership with the University of Bohol College of Nursing, should assign nursing students the task of extending community outreach programs aimed at raising awareness about Parental Involvement in Sex Education to prevent Teenage Pregnancy. This initiative could involve workshops or seminars in collaboration with barangay health centers and local government units.
3. The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officials, with support from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), should initiate sessions on Comprehensive Sex Education within their respective communities. These sessions should aim to provide accurate information on sexual health, be facilitated by trained professionals, and be supported by educational materials from government health agencies.
4. Parents of young adolescents should be provided with the resources, information, and support needed to initiate and sustain conversations

- about sex-related topics with their adolescents.
5. The nursing students, in collaboration with the barangay officials, must help the young adolescents and their parents have open communication or even counseling if needed.
  6. Further research may be needed to explore these additional factors and their impact on parental involvement in young adolescents' sex education and the adolescents' perception of teenage pregnancy.

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