

# The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Career Decision of Teenage Mothers in Butuan City Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of self-efficacy, including demographic information, such as the educational attainment of parents and family income, on the career decision-making of 124 teenage mothers who were identified through stratified proportionate sampling in the center region of Caraga. The data was collected through an online survey and was analyzed through descriptive and multiple linear regression analysis. The study findings show that teenage mothers' self-efficacy is at an average level and high level in career decision-making. Self-efficacy also affirms that it significantly influences the level of career decision-making. Further results also show that the educational background of mothers mostly influences career decision-making compared to the educational background of fathers of teenage mothers, while family income appears to have no significant influence on teenage mothers in their career decision-making. The insights from the results of this study have inferences for the design of targeted interventions and support programs intended to nurture and empower the self-efficacy of teenage mothers, thereby helping them to be more informed and confident as they take their challenges in their career decision-making for a clearer career path.

Keywords: : Influence, Self-efficacy, Career decision-making, Teenage Mothers

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## **1** Introduction

Adolescent pregnancy is a global public health problem. It is a pregnancy in girls between the ages of 10 and 19. Some 21 million girls aged 15–19 experience pregnancy in developing regions, and an estimated 12 million of them give birth. The adolescent birth rate (ABR) has experienced a drop, decreasing from 64.5 births per 1000 women (15–19 years) in 2000 to 41.3 births per 1000 women in 2023 on a global scale. Nevertheless, the pace of this decline varies across different regions, with the most significant reduction observed in Southern Asia (SA) and slower declines in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC). Despite improvements in all regions, LAC and SSA persist with the highest global rates, standing at 99.4 and 52.1 births per 1000 women, respectively, in 2022 (WHO, 2023). In the Philippines, 5.4 percent of women 15 to 19 years old have ever been pregnant, 0.4% have had a pregnancy loss, and about 1.6 percent of them are currently pregnant. In terms of area residence, the percentage of women 15 to 19 years old who have experienced pregnancy was slightly lower in urban areas (4.8%) compared to rural areas (6.1%). When considering different regions, Northern Mindanao had the highest prevalence of pregnancies among women aged 15 to 19 years (10.9%), with Davao Region (8.2%), Central Luzon (8.0%), and Caraga (7.7%) following the list. Conversely, the lowest percentages of teenage pregnancies were observed in the Ilocos Region (2.4%) and Bicol Region (Philippine Statistics Authority 2023).

The period of young adolescence, from 12 to 18 years, is crucial in the journey to construct their identity development (Erikson 1958, 1963). Adolescence is usually identified as the period when the process and development of career identity formation begin (Morsunbul & Meeus 2015). Navigating career decision-making is a complicated process that requires students to gain a deep understanding of themselves (Azhenov et al. 2023). Sampson et al. (2004), career decision-making involves a sequential and interconnected process that encompasses activities like gathering relevant information, choosing a career, pursuing education, and looking for employment after finishing an educational program (cited in Duro 2022). Choosing a career can pose one of life's most daunting challenges. Individuals frequently find themselves overwhelmed with information as they consider the myriad career paths available to them (Gati et al. 2019).

Cultivating a sense of ability in career decision-making is important to successfully engage in occupational and educational planning and decision-making (Chiesa et al. 2016). Selfefficacy plays a substantial positive role in career decision-making (Sandra & Mularsih 2021). Self-efficacy is people's belief in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their functioning and environmental events (Bandura 2001, as cited in Feist et al. 2018). Self-efficacy has a vital role in career decision-making since it denotes belief in oneself in engaging in activities related to career decisions (Duru 2022; Crişan & Turda 2015). Other than self-efficacy, the educational background of parents significantly impacts teenagers' career decisions. Parents who have higher educational backgrounds tend to demonstrate greater consistency and encounter fewer difficulties when making career choices (Mbagwu & Ajaegbu 2016). The study by Adikwu and Ereka (2022) also revealed educational background that parental and socioeconomic status influenced the students' career choices.

Previous research indicates that self-efficacy

has garnered significant attention in the literature on career-related concerns, particularly among college and university populations. Still, there is not so much emphasis on teenage mothers. Hence, this paper focused on determining the level of selfefficacy and career decision-making of teenage mothers and examined the extent of influence of self-efficacy and demographic profile (parents' educational attainment and family income) on career decision-making.

The study findings could have a potentially significant impact, providing valuable insights into the factors that influence the career decision-making processes of teenage mothers. Understanding the roles of self-efficacy may empower teenage mothers by providing them with a clearer understanding of their capabilities in navigating career choices despite their unique challenges. This knowledge could contribute to developing targeted interventions and support systems, nurturing greater self-reliance and selfbelief among teenage mothers. Additionally, by exploring these dynamics within the specific context of teenage motherhood, the study enhances the broader body of knowledge in career psychology and career guidance. It improves understanding of how personal factors like self-efficacy can influence career decisions. This can guide future research in developing more effective interventions to support career development in diverse populations, especially those with additional challenges in life. Limitations of this study are also recognized, where various psychological factors like personality traits, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and other psychological resources of teenage mothers are yet to be explored associated with career decision-making.

## 2 Materials and Methods

## **Research Design**

The study employed a quantitative research design, particularly a descriptive-causal design, which further aided the researchers in collecting the data through a survey questionnaire of the identified sample size.

## Sample and Sampling Design

Out of 178 teenage mothers, the sample size was determined through stratified proportionate sampling from the identified barangays. This process yielded a sample of n=124 teenage mothers in the central region of Caraga.

#### Instruments Used

The first research instrument was the General Efficacy Scale (GSES), which comprises 10 questions, ranging from "not true at all" to "exactly true," using the 4-point Likert scale (1= Not all true, 2 = Hardly true, 3 = Moderately true, 4 = Exactly true). It assesses individuals' general beliefs about coping with life's challenges. It has no subscales and reverse-coded items, so the automatic score is a simple sum of ten answers. Its Cronbach's alpha is between .76 and .90 (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995).

The second research instrument was the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale - Short Form (CDMSES-SF). It aims to assess the confidence of an individual in making career-related decisions. The items measure accurate self-appraisal or assessment, gather professional information, select objectives, prepare decision-making plans, and solve problems (Betz et al. 1996). The results are measured by calculating the average number of its 25 items with a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = no confidence and 5 = complete confidence. Its Cronbach's alpha is .94 (Betz et al. 1996).

The range and descriptive equivalent or remark assigned on the level of self-efficacy and the level of career decision-making are shown below:

Range	Descriptive Equivalent or Remark	
1.00-1.49	Very Low	
1.50-2.249	Low	
2.50-3.49	Average	
3.50-4.49	High	
4.50-5.00	Very High	

#### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researchers first secured the approved letter from the City Population Office (CPO) of the center region of Caraga for the study to be conducted and the list of teenage mothers per barangay. A formal letter was also sent to the identified barangays to request the assistance of their respective barangay health workers in tracing the target teenage mothers. The data was collected online due to the stringent local health restrictions imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Embedded in the link for the online survey were the formal letter and informed consent and/or assent for their voluntary participation. The scales of self-efficacy and career decision-making followed this.

#### Data Analysis

The data were tallied, tabulated, processed, and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean to determine the level of selfefficacy and career decision-making. The study used multiple linear regression in examining the extent of influence of self-efficacy and demographic profile on the career decisions of teenage mothers.

#### 3 Results and Discussion

Most of the participants were aged between 17–19-year-olds, and 14-year-old were the youngest (Figure 1). Most participants were still in high school with 59.68%, while others were high school graduates and college level with 20.16% and 20.16%, respectively. Most of their parents were not college graduates, and most were classified as poor and low-income (not poor) as their social status according to their income cluster, with P5,000-P10,000 having 30.64% as the highest percentage. P10,000-15,000 follows this with 21.77% and P1,000-5,000 with 20.16%.

#### The Level of Self-Efficacy of Teenage Mothers

The overall weighted mean of self-efficacy among teenage mothers was average (M = 3.15, SD = 0.633) (Table 1). Similar results among Filipino adolescent mothers also demonstrated a moderate level of self-efficacy (Mira et al. 2017). This means that teenage mothers have a fair set of beliefs that they could averagely and passably perform their tasks and plans of action related to career decision-making in prospective situations. Hence, it is crucial to nurture the self-efficacy of teenage mothers to increase their self-efficacy from an average level to a high level so that they can thrive better and succeed when pursuing any career-related decision-making.

The study by Valizadeh (2021) showed that students with good-to-high levels of self-efficacy beliefs demonstrate confidence and assertiveness in their academic achievements and performance. Career indecision and career uncertainty are linked to individuals' low self-efficacy, accentuating the crucial role of self-efficacy in shaping career decision-making (Sandra & Mularsih 2021). The



self-efficacy of students correlates significantly with their academic motivation, thereby enhancing the academic achievement of graduating Filipino college students (Yapo et al. 2021).

## The Level of Career Decision-Making of Teenage Mothers

The overall career decision-making among teenage mothers yielded a high-level result (M=3.60, SD = 1.015). A high level of career decision-making suggests that individuals possess a substantial level of confidence in managing tasks related to career decision-making, particularly in self-appraisal for identifying influential resources and planning for their careers (Xing & Rojewski 2018). Individuals with higher scores in career decision-making are more adept at handling challenges and are less prone to encountering psychological barriers when making career decisions. It is associated with positive career

attitudes, high self-esteem, and distinct vocational identity (Jiang & Jiang 2015). Meanwhile, low levels of career decision-making are usually associated with difficulties in career decisionmaking, often leading to career indecision (Gati et al. 2011). In this study, the high level of career decision-making of teenage mothers indicates that they exhibit enhanced abilities to navigate challenges and reduce the likelihood of encountering difficulties when making career decisions.

For each subscale of career decision-making, occupational informational gathering showed a high-level remark (M= 3.92, SD = 0.607) (Table 2). Occupational information gathering involves collecting important details about occupational and educational opportunities. Comprehensive occupational or career information encompasses details, including information in practice resources, career news, career policy, and career evaluation.

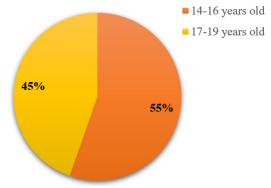


Figure 1. Age Distribution of Teenage Mothers

Table 1 Level	of Self-Efficacy	v of Teenage	Mothers
Table L. Level	of Self-Lineac	y of feenage	withdis

Indicators	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Remark
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	3.25	0.833	Average
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	2.79	1.142	Average
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	3.02	0.937	Average
I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.	3.25	0.772	Average
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	3.50	0.577	High
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	3.34	0.731	Average
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	2.62	0.976	Average
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	3.20	0.732	Average
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	3.12	0.728	Average
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	3.40	0.583	Average
Over-all Self-Efficacy	3.15	0.633	Average

1.00-1.49= Very Low; 1.50-2.249= Low; 2.50-3.49= Average; 3.50-4.49= High



Table 2. Level of Career-Decision of Teenage Mothers

Indicators	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Remark
Occupational Information Gathering		0.607	High
• Find Information about occupations you are interested in.	4.69	0.691	Very High
• Find out the employment trends for an occupation over the next ten years.	2.61	1.287	Average
• Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation.	4.61	0.708	Very High
• Talk with a person already employed in a field you are interested in joining or switching.	4.05	0.863	High
• Find information about graduate or professional schools in line with your career goals.	3.63	1.032	High
Goal Selection	3.51	0.795	High
Select one major from a list of potential majors you are considering.	3.56	1.092	High
• Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering joining or switching.	3.50	1.016	High
Choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle.	2.57	1.191	Average
Make a career decision, and then do not worry about whether it was wrong or right.	4.73	0.543	Very High
Choose a major or career that will fit your interests.	3.19	1.194	Average
Planning	3.82	0.753	High
Make a plan of your goals for the next five years.	4.02	1.000	High
Determine the steps you need to take to complete your chosen major successfully.	4.33	0.762	High
• Prepare a good resume.	3.85	0.837	High
• Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your career possibilities/progression.	3.01	1.158	Average
Successfully manage the job interview process.	3.90	0.932	High
Problem-Solving	3.33	0.901	Average
• Determine the steps you take if you are having academic trouble with an aspect of your chosen major.	3.77	1.081	High
· Persistently work at your major or career goal even when you get frustrated.	3.80	0.937	High
Change majors if you do not like your first choice.	2.49	1.165	Low
· Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your career possibilities/progression.	3.92	0.889	High
• Identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice.	2.67	1.261	Average
Self-Appraisal	3.40	0.868	Average
Accurately assess your abilities.	3.23	1.188	Average
Determine what your ideal job would be.	3.82	0.914	High
Decide what you value most in an occupation.	3.11	1.042	Average
• Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.	3.23	1.045	Average
Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live.	3.64		High
Over-all Self-Efficacy	3.60	1.015	High

1.00-1.49= Very Low; 1.50-2.249= Low; 2.50-3.49= Average; 3.50-4.49= High; 4.50-5.00= Very High

In the development of the internet and global communication in a modern technology-driven world, occupational or career information is crucial as it helps individuals navigate the rapidly changing job market, understand emerging career opportunities, and acquire the necessary skills and education. It empowers informed decision-making, increases employability, and supports continuous professional development in an evolving digital landscape. Hence, it is important in the career guidance process (Cai 2020). The goal selection subscale yielded a high-level remark (M = 3.51, SD = 0.795). The selection of career

goals is rudimentary, directly controls and guides individuals' behavior goals, and serves as a foundational motivational mechanism for explaining individual behavior. Through the specific mechanism of setting career goals, the focus on personal competence and the direction of action becomes clear and defined (Jung 2022). The planning subscale also showed a high-level remark (M = 3.51, SD = 0.753). Career planning is preparing career development direction, reflecting the potential to predict the future, real-world conditions, and the capacity to influence factors. It encompasses activities and strategies individuals

undertake to achieve practical goals related to their career aspirations (Song 2015). Meanwhile, problem-solving yielded an average level remark (M = 3.33, SD = 0.901). Problem-solving involves the cognitive process of identifying ways to achieve specific targets and intentions (Mefoh et al. 2017); it is an advanced cognitive skill that involves identifying the nature of a problem, breaking it down, and devising an effective set of actions to tackle its associated challenges (Abazov 2016; Oliveri et al. 2017). Self-appraisal also showed an average remark (M = 3.40, SD = 0.868). Self-appraisal or self-evaluation is critical to career decision-making (Jiang & Jiang 2015) and highlighted its significance in the process of career decision-making (Udayar et al. 2020).

# The Influence of Self-Efficacy and Demographic Characteristics on Career Decision-Making of Teenage Mothers

The findings revealed that in terms of demographic characteristics such as age and educational attainment of teenage mothers generated VIFs greater than 5 and tolerance less than .02, which suggests that these variables add multicollinearity. They are highly correlated to the other independent variables used in the model. In modeling, the condition of independent variables should be highly correlated. Thus, these variables should be removed from the model.

Further, it also revealed that self-efficacy consistently had a significant influence on career decision-making across all five subscales, along with the mothers' level of educational attainment. Self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.635$ , p < 0.001) and mothers' educational attainment - college level ( $\beta = 0.517$ , p = 0.046) demonstrating significant influences on occupational information gathering. These independent variables (self-efficacy and mothers' educational attainment - college level) contributed to 60.7% of the variations of the dependent variable (occupational information gathering) based on the generated R<sup>2</sup> = 0.607 of the model.

Self-efficacy ( $\beta$ =0.736, p<0.001) and all levels of mothers' educational attainment ( $\beta$  = 0.613, p = 0.006;  $\beta$  = 0.682, p = 0.003;  $\beta$  = 0.939, p = <.001; $\beta$ =1.223,p=<.001) demonstrating significant influences on goal selection. These independent variables (self-efficacy and various levels of mothers' educational attainment) collectively accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable (goal selection), explaining 70.5% of the variability based on the generated  $R^2 = 0.795$  of the model.

Self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.799$ , p < 0.001) and all levels of mothers' educational attainment ( $\beta = 0.666$ , p = <.001;  $\beta = 0.907$ , p = <0.001;  $\beta = 1.114$ , p = <.001;  $\beta = 1.211$ , p = <.001), which also includes the fathers' educational attainment in terms of HS graduate and college level ( $\beta = -.765$ , p = 0.040;  $\beta = -0.903$ , p = 0.021) respectively demonstrating significant influences on planning. These independent variables (self-efficacy and various mothers' educational attainment and some levels of the father's educational attainment) contributed to 75.3% of the variations of the dependent variable (planning) based on the generated R<sup>2</sup> = 0.753 of the model.

Self-efficacy ( $\beta$ =1.042, p<0.001) and all levels of mothers' educational attainment ( $\beta$ =0.915, p = <0.001,  $\beta$ =0.656, p=0.005;  $\beta$ =0.871, p=.002;  $\beta$ = 1.065, p=.002) demonstrating significant influences on goal selection. These independent variables (self-efficacy and various levels of mothers' educational attainment) collectively accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable (problem-solving), explaining 79.5% of the variability based on the generated R<sup>2</sup> = 0.795 of the model.

Self-efficacy ( $\beta = .955$ , p < 0.001) and all levels of mothers' educational attainment ( $\beta = 0.740$ , p =<0.001;  $\beta = 0.595$ , p = .006;  $\beta = 0.932$ , p = <0.00;  $\beta =$ 1.097, p = <.001) are also demonstrating significant influences on self-appraisal. These independent variables (self-efficacy and various levels of mothers' educational attainment) collectively accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable (self-appraisal), explaining 86.8% of the variability based on the generated  $R^2 = 0.868$  of the model.

These results imply that self-efficacy played a predictive factor in shaping the career decisionmaking process among teenage mothers. In support, Ogutu et al. (2017) examined the impact of self-efficacy on career decision-making among secondary school students. Their findings indicated that factors within the self-efficacy variable played a significant role in shaping the connection between self-efficacy and career decision-making. Hence, self-efficacy influences career decisionmaking. As highlighted by Rodinda and Eva (2023), there is a significant favorable influence between self-efficacy and career decision-making. Higher levels of self-efficacy correspond to greater certainty in the career decision-making process among students. Additionally, self-efficacy influences career choices among undergraduate students (Njiku et al. 2022).

The study by Fouad et al. (2015) and Humayon et al. (2018) presented that family influence is a key factor in career-related decisions. These influences could be in different forms like family structural variables that reflected family members' socioeconomic status and family process-oriented variables, especially parental career-related behaviors (Xing & Rojewski 2018), including parents' educational and occupational attainment, family income, and finances-related concerns (Adikwu & Ereka 2022). However, in this study, family income consistently demonstrated no significant influence on career decision-making among teenage mothers, which reverses some research literature that indicates that family income or socioeconomic status significantly influences choice decision-making and career among students (Adikwu & Ereka 2022).

## 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, teenage mothers possess an average level of self-efficacy. This indicates that they only have adequate confidence in their ability to exert a degree of influence over their environmental occurrences and functioning, but it still significantly affects their career decision-making. Thus, the study concluded that it is vital to strengthen and cultivate their self-efficacy beyond the typical level so that teenage mothers would not execute their tasks and plans in a mediocre manner but teach a great sense of certainty, confidence, and assurance, particularly regarding life challenges and career decisionmaking.

To enhance the self-efficacy of teenage mothers, it is recommended that this be achieved through targeted interventions aimed at bolstering self-efficacy among teenage mothers, like mentorship programs and self-management, to be integrated into career guidance programs in schools and the community. These programs should provide information about the importance of self-efficacy, various career paths, educational opportunities, and skill development, empowering teenage mothers to be informed about their future career decisions.

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### **5** Statement of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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