

Lived Experiences of Pregnant Students Navigating Schooling Through the A.M.O.M.A. Program

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1 – Alabel National High School

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Abstract

This action research explored the lived experiences of pregnant students at Alabel National High School during the school year 2025–2026. Teenage pregnancy is a continuing issue in the Philippines, often affecting education because of emotional struggles, stigma, and the demands of motherhood. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, five pregnant students participated as key informants. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, allowing the voices of the learners to be heard and understood. Findings revealed that the students faced emotional burdens such as fear, anxiety, and fatigue while trying to balance schoolwork and motherhood. Despite these challenges, they showed resilience and determination to continue their studies for the sake of their children's future. Teacher encouragement, flexible learning assistance, and peer acceptance played a vital role in sustaining their motivation and helping them cope with their situation. These forms of school support served as sources of strength and hope, making education more inclusive and responsive. The study further introduced the AMOMA (Alang sa Maayong Obanan ug Matinabangong Atiman alang sa mga Nagmabdos) Program, an intervention aimed at providing supportive, accessible, flexible, and empathetic approaches for pregnant students. This highlights the importance of a caring school environment in ensuring that education remains a right for all, including young mothers.

Key words: *Teenage pregnancy, Pregnant students, Emotional struggles, School support system, AMOMA Program*

I. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Education is a vital right for all learners, regardless of their life circumstances. However, teenage pregnancy remains one of the leading causes of school dropout among female students in the Philippines. It disrupts learning, affects health and well-being, and exposes young girls to stigma and discrimination within and beyond the school environment.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2023), teenage pregnancy among Filipino girls aged 15 to 19 years declined from 8.6% in 2017 to 5.4% in 2022, based on the 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). While this decline is a positive trend, it still means that 1 in every 20 teenage girls in the country has experienced pregnancy, with the highest rates found in rural areas (6.1%) compared to urban areas (4.8%). Notably, the poorest youth and those with lower educational attainment are most at risk. Teenagers with only a primary education had the highest pregnancy rate at 19.1%, which significantly drops as educational attainment increases.

Regionally, Northern Mindanao (Region X) reported the highest rate of teenage pregnancy at 10.9%, followed by Davao Region (Region XI) at 8.2%. These figures highlight the urgent need for responsive, inclusive, and localized interventions, especially in rural and economically challenged communities where education can serve as a lifeline for young mothers.

In response to these challenges, the Department of Education (DepEd) has committed to promoting inclusive education through policies that support vulnerable learners, including pregnant students. This commitment is articulated in the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA, 2016, DepEd Order No. 29 s. 2016) under Theme 2: Child Protection, which encourages the development of evidence-based practices that ensure the safety and continued education of at-risk students.

At Alabel National High School, early pregnancy has become a recurring concern as every school year, several students become expectant mothers while still pursuing their studies. For the school year 2025–2026, five pregnant students are enrolled across different grade levels. This situation underscores the pressing need to understand how the school's support mechanisms address the needs of these learners. While the school principal and teaching staff extend support to allow these students to continue their education, there is limited research that examines how support systems are implemented, how effective they are, and how pregnant students themselves experience these interventions in a rural public high school setting.

To respond to this challenge, Alabel National High School has initiated programs that promote inclusivity and cater to the diverse needs of all learners, including pregnant students. This study seeks to examine the effects of school-based support systems on the experiences of pregnant students. It aims to investigate the lived experiences of pregnant students and how support systems can be improved to ensure their right to quality education is upheld.

II. Action Research Questions

Despite the importance of education, many pregnant students struggle to balance their academic responsibilities with the demands of pregnancy and impending motherhood. This action research aims to explore the lived experiences of pregnant students, identify their coping mechanisms and support systems, and develop a comprehensive support program to address their needs.

1. What are the challenges faced by pregnant students in Alabel National High School, and how can these challenges be addressed through a support program?
2. What are the pregnant students' coping mechanisms relative to these challenges considering the demands of pregnancy and academic responsibilities?
3. What school support system is extended to help the students overcome their challenges?
4. What are the major essential components of a comprehensive support program that can address the unique needs of pregnant students, enhance their well-being, and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment?

III. Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy

A.M.O.M.A Program

(Alang sa Maayong Obanan ug Matinabangong Atiman alang sa mga Nagmabdos)

To address the challenges faced by pregnant students, Alabel National High School developed the **A.M.O.M.A** (*Alang sa Maayong Obanan ug Matinabangong Atiman alang sa mga Nagmabdos*) Program. The program ensures academic continuity, provides emotional support, and strengthens collaboration between the school and community to create an inclusive and caring environment for expectant learners.

A. Introduction

The A.M.O.M.A Program is a school-based intervention that provides a safe, inclusive, and flexible learning environment for pregnant students. Guided by the results of this research, the program ensures that expectant learners receive not only academic assistance but also emotional and social support, reducing dropout risks.

B. Objectives

The program aims to:

1. Ensure that pregnant students continue their studies through flexible learning support.
2. Provide emotional and social care that reduces stress and feelings of isolation.
3. Help teachers practice empathy and inclusivity when dealing with pregnant learners.
4. Strengthen partnerships with parents/guardians to share responsibility in supporting students.

C. Methods / Implementation Plan

The implementation of the A.M.O.M.A Program followed these steps:

1. The school head and teachers introduced the program to students, parents, and the community, highlighting its purpose and activities.
2. Pregnant students were listed and profiled to determine their academic, health, and emotional needs.
3. Teachers provided take-home modules, adjusted schedules, and simplified tasks to ensure academic continuity.
4. The guidance counselor conducted monthly counseling, while peer groups met twice a month for sharing and encouragement.
5. Teachers underwent short training to enhance empathy and skills in handling expectant learners.
6. Monthly meetings involved parents in monitoring and supporting their children's education.
7. Class advisers, teachers, and the guidance counselor consistently tracked academic progress and emotional well-being.
- 8.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the A.M.O.M.A Program was monitored and evaluated with the use of these indicators and data analysis:

Evaluation Indicators:

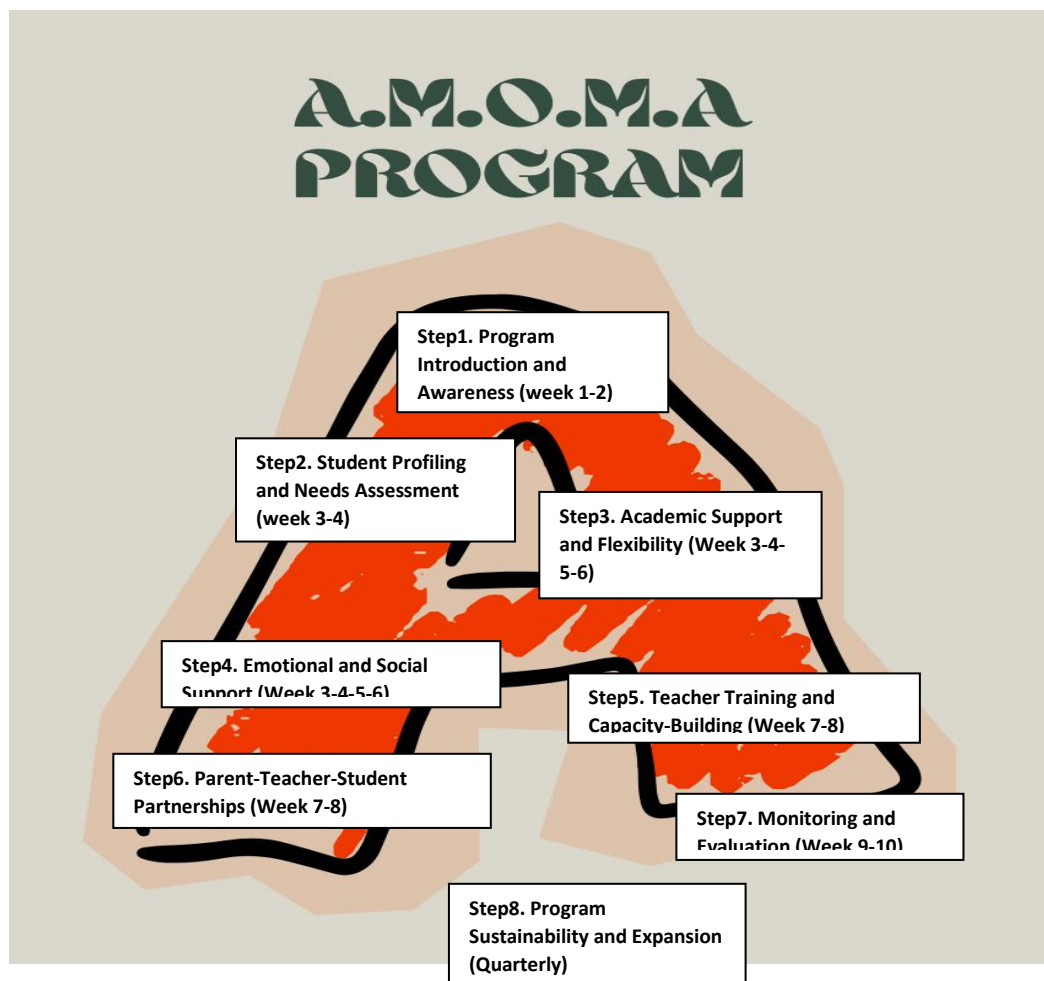
- Improved academic performance and attendance

- Enhanced emotional well-being and reduced stress
- Increased sense of support and inclusivity
- Improved teacher-student relationships and empathy
- Strengthened parent-teacher-student partnerships

Data Analysis:

- Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding and content analysis to identify patterns and themes while the following strategies were employed:
 1. **Weekly Progress Check-ins:** Class advisers and subject teachers will conduct weekly check-ins to assess student performance, engagement, and academic progress.
 2. **Counseling Reports and Feedback:** The guidance counselor will provide monthly reports on students' emotional well-being, participation in peer support groups, and progress in addressing emotional turmoil and anxiety.
 3. **Teacher Feedback Forms:** Teachers will submit feedback forms after sensitivity orientation sessions to assess changes in perspective and classroom strategies, focusing on inclusivity and empathy towards pregnant students.
 4. **Parent-Guardian Feedback:** Monthly consultation logs will gather feedback from parents/guardians on their involvement in supporting their children's education and the program's impact on their well-being.
 5. **Student Reflection Journals or Interviews:** Students will maintain reflection journals or participate in interviews to document their lived experiences, challenges, and improvements over time, highlighting the effectiveness of coping mechanisms and support systems.
 6. **Program Metrics:** The program will track metrics such as student attendance, academic performance, and dropout rates to evaluate its impact on academic continuity.
 7. **Quarterly Program Review:** The program team will conduct quarterly reviews to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and adjust strategies as needed.

E. Proposed Program Mechanism



A.M.O.M.A Program

The first two weeks (Week 1 and 2) would be the **Program Introduction and Awareness**, and during this period, the school head and teachers introduce the AMOMA Program to students, parents, and the community by highlighting the program's purpose, objectives, and activities, and identifying and listing pregnant students and obtain consent for program participation. In the next two weeks (Week 3 and 4), the program team shall do **Student Profiling and Needs Assessment** , where the members conduct individual interviews with pregnant students to determine their academic, health, and emotional needs, develop a student profile to inform support strategies, and identify students' coping mechanisms and support systems. In the next six months (on-going) which is the **Academic Support and Flexibility**, teaching, tutoring and mentoring shall take place, where teachers provide take-home modules, adjusted schedules, and simplified tasks to ensure academic continuity, class advisers and subject teachers conduct weekly progress check-ins to assess student performance and engagement, and shall also provide additional academic support as needed (e.g., tutoring,

mentoring). During this same period, **Emotional and Social Support** week, the guidance counselor conducts monthly counseling sessions with pregnant students, peer support groups meet twice a month for sharing and encouragement and students maintain reflection journals or participate in interviews to document their experiences and progress. For a month, just after the Emotional and Social Support session shall be the period for **Teacher Training and Capacity-Building** where the team shall conduct sensitivity orientation sessions for teachers to enhance empathy and skills in handling expectant learners, provide training on inclusive teaching practices and support strategies and encourage teachers to provide feedback on program effectiveness; while the session, which is the **Parent-Teacher-Student Partnerships**, shall be conducted on a monthly meeting with parents/guardians to involve them in monitoring and supporting their children's education, gather feedback from parents/guardians on program effectiveness and suggestions for improvement, and foster collaboration between parents, teachers, and students to ensure shared responsibility. On the same period, **Monitoring and Evaluation** shall be employed where the team tracks program metrics (e.g., attendance, academic performance, dropout rates), conducts quarterly program reviews to assess progress and identify areas for improvement, adjusts strategies as needed based on evaluation findings. And finally, the **Program Sustainability and Expansion** which is practised on a quarterly-basis, the program team shall review program effectiveness and identify opportunities for expansion or improvement, develop strategies for program sustainability and scalability, and engage stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, local government) to support program continuation and growth.

IV. Action Research Methods

a. Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, particularly the phenomenological approach, to explore the lived experiences of pregnant students in relation to school support and the creation of safe and inclusive learning spaces at Alabel National High School, Poblacion, Alabel, Sarangani Province, during the school year 2025–2026.

b. Participants

The participants of this study were five (5) pregnant students enrolled at Alabel National High School during the school year 2025–2026.

c. Data Gathering Methods

The researchers gathered data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with pregnant students of Alabel National High School, Poblacion, Alabel, Sarangani Province. The interviews

were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting to allow the participants to openly share their thoughts and feelings. Each interview was audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants, and later transcribed verbatim to preserve the accuracy of their responses. To enrich the data, field notes and simple observations were also recorded during the interview process. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed, and participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes. The gathered narratives served as the primary basis for the phenomenological analysis using Colaizzi's method. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was obtained from all five participants; for minors, parental consent was also secured. The purpose, scope, and procedures of the study were clearly explained, and participants were assured of the voluntary nature of their involvement, with the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. To protect privacy, pseudonyms were used, and no identifying details were included in the report. Interview recordings and transcripts were kept confidential and accessed only by the researchers. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines of the Department of Education (DepEd) and was conducted with full respect for the dignity, rights, and welfare of the participants.

d. Data Analysis Plan

The data gathered from five pregnant students through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis following Colaizzi's method. Each interview was transcribed with verbatim and reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy and familiarity with the responses. Significant statements were identified, coded, and clustered into categories to generate themes.

To elaborate, the researchers first made transcription of the recorded data and familiarized themselves with the gathered data through transcribing the audio-recorded interviews verbatim. The team also did review the transcripts and took note of the non-verbal cues as body language and tone of voice, from field notes and simple observations. Identification of significant statements was the next step through reading and re-reading the transcripts to identify significant statements that describe the participants' experiences. From here, coding the significant statements using a coding scheme was employed, and was ensured that it must be grounded in the data to reflect the participants' genuine perspective of the matter. Then, clustering and coding of significant statements to manifest similarities and differences were employed leading to the identification and development of a coding framework towards the organization of themes. Verbatim quotes from the participants' statements were also noted to support the emerging themes.

To validate the identified themes, reading and rereading was done religiously to check the participants' experience and its consistency; after which each theme was integrated into a cohesive narrative that describes the live experiences of the pregnant students. From this point, the researcher shall interpret that findings in line with the research questions and objectives.

Implications of the findings shall also be discussed for a possible policy input and for future research to be conducted.

Review the themes, codes and categories through constant reading and comparison method to maintain accuracy and consistency. Member-checking shall

shall also be employed for the validation of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Strict ethical standards were observed throughout the study to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants, obtain informed consent from participants and parents/guardians (for minors), use pseudonyms to protect participants' identities, and store data securely and limit access to authorized personnel only.

V. Results and Discussions

Key Participants

To support this study, the researcher presented the key participants as Ana, Mica, Moira, Charity, and Clara (not their real name) which stand for the pregnant students of Alabel National High School. The in-depth interview involved five (5) students who were purposively selected. They were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Their experiences were used to answer the research questions: (a) What are the challenges faced by pregnant students in Alabel National High School, and how can these challenges be addressed through a support program?; (b) What are the pregnant students' coping mechanisms relative to their challenges with the demands of pregnancy and academic responsibilities?; and (c) What are the essential components of a comprehensive support program that can address the unique needs of pregnant students, enhance their well-being, and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment?

To figure out the basic attributes of each participant, the next statements are their basic description:

Ana

Age: 15

Grade Level: Grade 10

Background: Ana is a young student who became pregnant unexpectedly. She is still navigating her teenage years while preparing for motherhood.

Mica

Age: 18

Grade Level: Grade 11

Background: Mica is an older student who is balancing her pregnancy with her academic responsibilities. She is determined to continue her studies despite the challenges.

Moira

Age: 19

Grade Level: Grade 12

Background: Moira is a senior student who is preparing to graduate while navigating her pregnancy. She is focused on her future and her child's well-being.

Charity Age: 16

Grade Level: Grade 9 Completer

Background: Charity became pregnant at a young age and had to adjust her academic plans. She is determined to continue her education and build a better future for herself and her child.

Clara Age: 18

Grade Level: Grade 11

Background: Clara is an 18-year-old student who is experiencing pregnancy while balancing her academic responsibilities. She is hopeful about her future and is seeking support from her school community.

These students have shared their stories, highlighting the challenges they face as pregnant students, their coping mechanisms and the importance of a supportive school environment. Their experiences will provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of pregnant students at Alabel National High School. Each of them has has own story to tell, and for pregnant students, their journey is filled with both struggles and hope. They experience judgment and difficulties, yet they also find comfort in the support extended by their school community.

Table 1 shows the *challenges* of the pregnant students of Alabel National High School.

Challenge refers to the difficulties and obstacles that pregnant students face in their academic and personal lives. These challenges can be emotional, social, physical, or related to uncertainty and unpreparedness, including transition and validation, and can impact their ability to continue their education and achieve their goals.

In the context of this study, challenge encompasses the various struggles that pregnant students experience, including (emotional challenges) emotional turmoil,self-doubt and inadequacy, fear and anxiety about the future; (social challenges) lack of support, stigma and shame; (physical challenge) physical discomfort; (security challenges) uncertainty and unpreparedness about the future, loss of control, transition to adulthood and (transition and validation challenges) challenges on support and validation. These challenges can be complex and interconnected, and can affect different aspects of a student's life.

The challenges faced by pregnant students can be categorized into five major areas, with those sub-areas mentioned above:

- A. Emotional Challenges
- B. Social Challenges
- C. Physical Challenges
- D. Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges
- E. Transition and Validation Challenges

Challenges	Codes	Themes
A. EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES	Feeling lost and alone	Emotional Turmoil
	Emotional turmoil and anxiety	
	Fear of judgment and rejection	
	Worry about future plans and goals	
	Feeling trapped or stuck	
	Emotional attachment to the baby	
	Feeling like I'm not good enough	Self-Doubt and Inadequacy
	Questioning one's ability to be a good parent	
	Fear of judgment and rejection	Fear and Anxiety about the Future
	Worry about future plans and goals	
	Fear of not being able to provide for the baby	
	Lack of support from family and partner	Lack of Support
	Difficulty navigating healthcare system	
	Sense of isolation and stigma	

B. SOCIAL CHALLENGES		
	Shame and guilt about the pregnancy	Stigma and Shame
	Feeling like a failure or disappointment	
	Struggling to cope with societal expectations	
	Hiding pregnancy from others	
	Shame and Stigma: Internalizing negative societal attitudes towards teen pregnancy	
C. PHYSICAL CHALLENGES	Physical changes and discomfort	Physical Discomfort
	Body image concerns and self-esteem issues	
	Fear of childbirth and labor	
	Unprepared for motherhood	Uncertainty and Unpreparedness About the Future
	Lack of knowledge about pregnancy and parenting	
	Worry about parenting skills and	

D. SECURITY CHALLENGES	abilities	
	Fear of not being able to provide for the baby	
	Fear of losing identity or freedom Pressure from family or partner to make a decision Feeling like one's life is no longer their own	Loss of Control
E. TRANSITION AND VALIDATION CHALLENGES	Sense of responsibility and maturity Re-evaluating relationships and priorities Transition to Adulthood: Taking on new responsibilities and roles	Transition to Adulthood
	Struggling to balance school and pregnancy" (implies seeking support) Concerns about financial stability" (implies seeking validation)	Support and Validation

A. On Emotional Challenges

A.1 Emotional Turmoil

These narratives capture the intense emotions and struggles that pregnant students face, highlighting the need for support and understanding.

Feeling Lost and Alone

"I feel like I'm navigating this pregnancy thing on my own. No one really understands what I'm going through, and it's scary." - Ana, 15

“Murag ako ra gyud ang nag-atubang ani nga pagbuntis. Wala gyud sila kasabot unsay akong giagian, ug makakulba kaayo.” – Ana, 15

Emotional Turmoil and Anxiety

"Some days I'm okay, then suddenly I'm crying for no reason. It's like my emotions are all over the place, and I don't know how to control them." - Mica, 18

“Naay mga adlaw nga okay ra ko, pero kalit lang gyud kog buhagay’g hilak bisag wa koy klarong rason. Murag naglibog na kaayo akong mga pagbati, nagdungan tanan, unya dili na ko kabalo unsaon pagdala niini.” – Mica, 18

Fear of Judgment and Rejection

"I'm afraid of what my family and friends will say when they find out I'm pregnant. What if they don't support me?" - Charity, 16

Nahadlok kaayo ko unsay isulti sa akong pamilya ug mga barkada kung makabalo sila nga nabuntis ko. Unsaon nalang kung dili sila musuporta nako?” – Charity, 16

Worry about Future Plans and Goals

"I had plans, you know? I wanted to finish school, get a good job... now I'm worried I'll have to put everything on hold." - Clara, 18

“Naay mga damgo unta ko ba. Gusto unta ko mahuman og eskwela, makapangita og tarong nga trabaho... pero karon nabalaka ko nga basin mapugos ko og undang sa tanan.” – Clara, 18

Feeling Trapped or Stuck

"I feel like my life is on pause because of this pregnancy. I'm not sure how to move forward." - Moira, 19

"Murag napahunong gyud akong kinabuhi tungod ani nga pagbuntis. Wa ko kabalo unsaon pagpadayon unya asa ko mosugod." – Moira, 19

Emotional Attachment to the Baby

"As weird as it sounds, I love this baby already, and the thought of anything happening to them is terrifying. It's like my heart is outside my body." - Ana, 15

"Bisag murag lain paminawon, nahigugma na gyud ko ani nga bata. Makahadlok kaayo hunahunaon nga basin naay mahitabo niya. Murag ang akong kasingkasing naa na sa gawas sa akong lawas." – Ana, 15

A.2 Self-Doubt and Inadequacy

These narratives capture the self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy that many pregnant students experience, highlighting their fears and uncertainties about becoming a parent.

Feeling like I'm not good enough

"I feel like I'm a total failure. I can't even take care of myself, how am I supposed to take care of a baby?" - Mica, 18

"Murag pildi na gyud ko tanan. Di gani ko kaatiman tarong sa akong kaugalingon, unya unsaon na lang kaha nako pag-atiman og bata?" – Mica, 18

Questioning one's ability to be a good parent

"Am I really ready to be a mom? I don't know if I have what it takes to be a good parent. What if I mess up?" - Charity, 16

"Andam na ba gyud ko mahimong mama? Dili ko sure kung naa ba gyud koy ikahatag para mahimong maayong ginikanan. Unsaon nalang kung masayop ko?" – Charity, 16

A.3 Fear and Anxiety About the Future

These narratives capture the fears and worries that pregnant students face, highlighting their concerns about social judgment, future plans, and providing for their baby.

Fear of judgment and rejection

"I'm scared of what people will think of me. What if my friends and family reject me?" - Ana, 15

Worry about future plans and goals

"I had big plans for college and my career. Now I'm worried I'll have to put everything on hold."
- Clara, 18

Fear of not being able to provide for the baby

"How am I gonna provide for this baby? I don't have a job, and I'm still in school."

- Moira, 19

Pregnant students experience intense emotional struggles, including feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and fear, which can impact their mental health and well-being (Hsu, 2022). Pregnant students often face inadequate support from family, partners, and healthcare providers, leading to feelings of isolation and stigma (Smith, 2022). Pregnant students face numerous challenges that can impact their emotional and psychological well-being. The lack of support and resources can exacerbate feelings of anxiety, fear, and inadequacy, highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems to promote their health and academic success.

B. On Social Challenges

B.1 Lack of Support

These narratives capture the feelings of isolation, confusion, and lack of support that pregnant students may experience, highlighting the challenges they face in navigating their pregnancy and accessing resources.

Lack of support from family and partner

"My family was really upset when I told them I'm pregnant. They don't want to help me, and it's like I'm on my own now." - Mica, 18

Difficulty navigating healthcare system

"I don't know how to get medical care for my pregnancy. The process is so confusing, and I feel lost." - Charity, 16

Sense of isolation and stigma

"I feel like I'm the only one going through this. It's like I'm hiding a secret, and I can't talk to anyone about it." - Ana, 15

B.2 Stigma and Shame

These narratives capture the feelings of shame, guilt, and inadequacy that pregnant students may experience due to societal expectations and stigma surrounding teen pregnancy.

Shame and guilt about the pregnancy

"I'm so ashamed of being pregnant at my age. I feel like I messed up big time." - Ana, 15

Feeling like a failure or disappointment

"I feel like I've disappointed everyone, especially my parents. I'm a total failure." - Mica, 18

Struggling to cope with societal expectations

"People keep telling me I shouldn't be having a baby so young. It's like they don't think I'm capable." - Charity, 16

Hiding pregnancy from others "I'm trying to hide my pregnancy from everyone at school. I don't want anyone to know." - Clara, 18

Shame and Stigma: Internalizing negative societal attitudes towards teen pregnancy

"I feel like I'm a bad person for getting pregnant young. Like, I'm irresponsible or something." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students often experience feelings of loneliness and disconnection due to lack of support and stigma surrounding teen pregnancy (Lee, 2022). Pregnant students internalize negative societal attitudes, leading to feelings of shame, guilt, and inadequacy (Gonzalez, 2023)

C. On Physical Challenges

C.1 Physical Discomfort

These narratives capture the physical and emotional struggles pregnant students face, including discomfort, body image issues, and fears about childbirth.

Physical changes and discomfort

"My body's changing so fast, and it's uncomfortable. I'm tired all the time, and my back hurts." - Ana, 15

Body image concerns and self-esteem issues

"I hate looking at myself pregnant. I feel so fat and ugly." - Mica, 18

Fear of childbirth and labor

"I'm terrified of giving birth. I've heard it's so painful, and what if something goes wrong?" - Charity, 16

Pregnant students experience a range of physical discomforts, including fatigue, pain, and bodily changes, which impact their daily lives (Patel, 2022). Pregnant students' body image concerns and fear of childbirth contribute to emotional struggles, affecting their self-esteem and mental well-being (Martinez, 2023).

D. Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges

These narratives capture the concerns and fears pregnant students have about becoming mothers, including feeling unprepared, lacking knowledge, and worrying about their abilities to care for their baby.

D.1 Uncertainty and Unpreparedness About the Future

Unprepared for motherhood

"I feel like I'm not ready to be a mom. I don't know how to take care of a baby." - Ana, 15

Lack of knowledge about pregnancy and parenting

"I didn't know what to expect during pregnancy. I'm learning as I go, but it's scary." - Mica, 18

Worry about parenting skills and abilities

"What if I'm not good at being a mom? What if I mess up?" - Charity, 16

Fear of not being able to provide for the baby

"How am I gonna provide for this baby? I don't have a job, and I'm still in school." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students experience uncertainty and self-doubt about their ability to mother, citing lack of knowledge and skills as major concerns (Reyes, 2022). Pregnant students anticipate future challenges, such as providing for their baby and navigating parenthood, leading to feelings of anxiety and fear (Santos, 2023).

D.2 Loss of Control

These narratives capture the feelings of loss, pressure, and change that pregnant students experience, highlighting the challenges they face in navigating their own desires and expectations with those of others.

Fear of losing identity or freedom

"I'm scared that having this baby means I'll lose myself. I won't be able to do the things I love anymore." - Clara, 18

Pressure from family or partner to make a decision

"My family wants me to keep the baby, but I'm not sure what I want. They keep pressuring me, and it's stressing me out." - Mica, 18

Feeling like one's life is no longer their own

"I feel like my life is not mine anymore. Everything's about this pregnancy and the baby now." - Ana, 15

Pregnant students experience a perceived loss of control over their lives, citing pressure from others and feelings of being consumed by the pregnancy (Garcia, 2022). Pregnant students struggle with the impact of pregnancy on their identity, expressing fears about losing their sense of self and autonomy (Lee, 2023).

E. Transition and Validation Challenges

E.1 Transition to Adulthood

These narratives capture the sense of growth, responsibility, and transition that pregnant students experience as they navigate becoming mothers and taking on new roles.

Sense of responsibility and maturity

"I feel like I'm growing up fast. I need to be responsible for this baby, and it's making me more mature." - Ana, 15

Re-evaluating relationships and priorities

"Being pregnant made me think about what's important. I'm focusing on myself and the baby now, and some friendships aren't as important." - Mica, 18

Transition to Adulthood: Taking on new responsibilities and roles

"I guess being a mom means I'm an adult now. I'm taking care of someone else, and it's a big change." - Charity, 16

Pregnant students experience a rapid shift towards adulthood, taking on new responsibilities and exhibiting increased maturity (Patel, 2022). Pregnant students re-evaluate their relationships and priorities, focusing on their new role as mothers and making intentional decisions about their lives (Hernandez, 2023).

E.2 Support and Validation

These narratives capture the struggles and concerns pregnant students face, implying a need for support and validation in managing their responsibilities and securing their financial future.

Struggling to balance school and pregnancy

"I'm trying to keep up with school, but it's hard with the pregnancy. I wish I had someone to help me manage everything." - Clara, 18

Concerns about financial stability

"How am I gonna afford everything for the baby? I don't have a job, and I'm worried about making ends meet. Do you think I'll be okay?" - Moira, 19

Pregnant students exhibit a desire for assistance in managing their academic and personal responsibilities, indicating a need for external support systems (Kim, 2022). Pregnant students experience significant concerns about their financial capacity to provide for their baby, seeking validation and reassurance about their future (Rodriguez, 2023).

Table 2 shows the *coping mechanisms* of the pregnant students of Alabel National High School.

Coping Mechanisms

Pregnant students face a unique set of challenges that can impact their academic, emotional, and physical well-being. To manage these challenges, they employ various coping mechanisms that help them regulate their emotions, seek support, and build resilience. This study identifies five key areas of challenge and corresponding coping mechanisms used by pregnant students:

- A. Coping Mechanism for Emotional Challenges (*Emotional Regulation and Support*)
- B. Coping Mechanism for Social Challenges (*Social Support and Advocacy*)
- C. Coping Mechanism for Physical Challenges (*Self-Care and Health Management*)
- D. Coping Mechanism for Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges (*Education and Preparation*)
- E. Coping Mechanism for Transition and Validation Challenges (*Empowerment and Self-Validation*)

These coping mechanisms enable pregnant students to address emotional turmoil, social stigma, physical discomfort, uncertainty, and transition-related challenges. By seeking support, practicing self-care, and focusing on personal growth, pregnant students can build strength, adapt to new circumstances, and continue to pursue their academic goals. Understanding these coping mechanisms can inform the development of targeted support programs and interventions to promote the well-being and success of pregnant students.

Coping Mechanisms	Codes	Themes
A. COPING MECHANISM FOR EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES	Seeking emotional support from friends or family members	Emotional Regulation and Support
	Practicing relaxation techniques (e.g., meditation, deep breathing)	
	Engaging in enjoyable activities (e.g.,	

	hobbies, exercise) Journaling or expressing emotions through creative outlets Seeking professional counseling or therapy	
B. COPING MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL CHALLENGES	Seeking support from trusted friends or family members Joining a support group for pregnant teens or young mothers Educating others about teen pregnancy and stigma Setting boundaries with negative or unsupportive individuals Seeking help from school counselors or social workers	Social Support and Advocacy
C.COPING MECHANISM FOR PHYSICAL CHALLENGES	Practicing healthy habits (e.g., nutrition, exercise) Engaging in relaxation techniques (e.g., prenatal massage, yoga) Seeking medical care and following	Self-Care and Health Management

	treatment plans Prioritizing rest and sleep Using positive self-talk to manage body image concerns	
D.COPING MECHANISM FOR SECURITY	Seeking information about pregnancy and parenting Attending prenatal classes or parenting workshops Preparing a birth plan and contingency plans Building a support network of experienced parents or mentors Focusing on the present moment and taking things one step at a time	Education and Preparation
E.COPING MECHANISM FOR TRANSITION AND VALIDATION CHALLENGES	Re-framing negative thoughts and focusing on strengths Celebrating small victories and accomplishments Seeking validation from supportive others	Empowerment and Self-Validation

	Engaging in activities that promote self-esteem and confidence	
	Focusing on the future and setting goals for personal grow	

A. Coping Mechanism for Emotional Challenges

A.1 Emotional Regulation and Support

These narratives capture the various ways pregnant students cope with their emotions and stress, seeking support and engaging in activities that promote well-being.

Seeking emotional support from friends or family members

"I talk to my best friend about everything, and she helps me feel better when I'm stressed about the pregnancy." - Ana, 15

Practicing relaxation techniques (e.g., meditation, deep breathing)

"I do deep breathing exercises when I feel anxious about the baby. It helps me calm down." - Mica, 18

Engaging in enjoyable activities (e.g., hobbies, exercise)

"I love painting, and it helps me forget about the stress of being pregnant. I try to paint at least once a week." - Clara, 18

Journaling or expressing emotions through creative outlets

"I write in my journal every night. It helps me process everything I'm feeling about the pregnancy and being a mom." - Charity, 16

Seeking professional counseling or therapy

"I'm seeing a counselor at school because I was feeling really overwhelmed. She's helping me figure things out." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students employ various coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support and practicing relaxation techniques, to manage their emotions and stress (Lee, 2022). Pregnant students engage in activities that promote well-being, including creative expression and self-care, to navigate the challenges of pregnancy and motherhood (Garcia, 2023).

B. Coping Mechanism for Social Challenges

B.1 Social Support and Advocacy

These narratives capture the ways pregnant students seek support, manage relationships, and navigate their situations.

Seeking support from trusted friends or family members

"I talk to my mom about everything. She's super supportive and helps me figure things out." - Ana, 15

Joining a support group for pregnant teens or young mothers

"I joined a support group for pregnant teens, and it's been a game-changer. We share our experiences and support each other." - Mica, 18

Educating others about teen pregnancy and stigma

"I want to talk about teen pregnancy more openly, so people don't judge others for it. I want to help reduce the stigma." - Clara, 18

Setting boundaries with negative or unsupportive individuals

"I had to distance myself from friends who weren't supportive about the pregnancy. I need people who are positive around me." - Charity, 16

Seeking help from school counselors or social

"I talked to my school counselor about my concerns, and she helped me get resources for the baby and me." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students actively seek and utilize support from trusted individuals and groups, promoting emotional resilience and coping (Patel, 2022). Pregnant students employ strategies like setting boundaries and seeking professional help, demonstrating agency in managing their relationships and situations (Santos, 2023).

C. Coping Mechanism for Physical Challenges

C.1 Self-Care and Health Management)

These narratives capture the ways pregnant students prioritize their physical and emotional well-being.

Practicing healthy habits (e.g., nutrition, exercise)

"I'm trying to eat healthier and walk more since I'm pregnant. I want to do what's best for the baby." - Ana, 15

Engaging in relaxation techniques (e.g., prenatal massage, yoga)

"I do prenatal yoga sometimes. It helps me relax and feel more comfortable with my body." - Mica, 18

Seeking medical care and following treatment plans

"I go to all my prenatal check-ups and follow what the doctor says. I want to make sure the baby's healthy." - Clara, 18

Prioritizing rest and sleep

"I try to sleep early now. I feel like I need more rest since I'm pregnant." - Charity, 16

Using positive self-talk to manage body image concerns

"I tell myself it's okay to look different now. My body's doing something amazing." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students engage in proactive health behaviors, such as nutrition and exercise, to promote their well-being and that of their baby (Lee, 2022). Pregnant students employ adaptive strategies like positive self-talk to manage body image concerns and foster emotional well-being (Garcia, 2023).

D. Coping Mechanism for Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges

D.1 Education and Preparation

These narratives capture the ways pregnant students prepare for motherhood and navigate their journey.

Attending prenatal classes or parenting workshops

"I'm going to prenatal classes to learn more about labor and taking care of the baby. I want to feel more prepared." - Ana, 15

Preparing a birth plan and contingency plans

"I made a birth plan with my partner, but we're also thinking about what if things don't go as planned." - Mica, 18

Building a support network of experienced parents or mentors

"I talked to my aunt who's a mom, and she's giving me lots of advice and support. She's like a mentor now." - Clara, 18

Focusing on the present moment and taking things one step at a time

"I try not to think too much about the future. I just take things one day at a time and focus on now." - Charity, 16

Pregnant students engage in preparatory activities like prenatal classes and birth planning, demonstrating a proactive approach to motherhood (Patel, 2022). Pregnant students employ strategies like focusing on the present and building support networks, promoting emotional resilience and navigation of their journey (Santos, 2023).

E. Coping Mechanism for Transition and Validation Challenges

E.1 Empowerment and Self-Validation

These narratives capture the ways pregnant students promote their self-esteem, cope with challenges, and focus on growth.

Re-framing negative thoughts and focusing on strengths

"I used to think I wasn't gonna be a good mom, but now I think about all the things I'm doing right. I'm strong." - Ana, 15

Celebrating small victories and accomplishments

"I made it through a tough week, and I got a good grade on a test. I'm proud of myself!" - Mica, 18

Seeking validation from supportive others

"I talk to my best friend, and she always tells me I'm gonna be a great mom. It makes me feel better." - Clara, 18

Engaging in activities that promote self-esteem and confidence

"I started drawing again, and it's making me feel more confident about myself and being a mom." - Charity, 16

Focusing on the future and setting goals for personal growth

"I want to finish school and have a good life for my baby. I'm gonna work hard for us." - Moira, 19

Pregnant students employ adaptive strategies like re-framing negative thoughts, promoting self-esteem and coping with challenges (Lee, 2022). Pregnant students focus on personal growth, celebrating achievements, and seeking validation, demonstrating resilience and motivation (Garcia, 2023).

Table 3 shows the *school support system* of Alabel National High School offered for their pregnant students students.

The school recognizes the unique challenges faced by pregnant students and is committed to providing a comprehensive support system to help them succeed academically and personally. This support system encompasses five key components:

- A. Teacher Encouragement and Support
- B. Flexible Learning Assistance
- C. Peer Acceptance and Care

- D. Counseling and Mental Health Services
- E. Parenting and Life Skills Support.

These components address the emotional, social, physical, and uncertainty-related challenges faced by pregnant students, and support coping mechanisms such as emotional regulation, self-care, social support, and empowerment. By providing a nurturing and inclusive environment, the school aims to empower pregnant students to manage their challenges, build resilience, and achieve their academic and personal goals. The support system is designed to foster a sense of belonging, promote academic success, and equip pregnant students with the skills and resources needed for a healthy and fulfilling life.

School Support System	Objective	Themes Addressed (Challenges and Coping Mechanism)
A.Teacher Encouragement and Support	Provide emotional support and encouragement to pregnant students	*Challenges Emotional Challenges, Uncertainty and Security Challenge/ Unpreparedness Challenges *Coping mechanism Emotional Regulation and Support, Seeking Support from Others
	Offer flexible learning arrangements (e.g., deadline extensions, alternative tasks)	
	Connect students with resources and services (e.g., counseling, healthcare)	
	Offer online or distance learning options	*Challenges Physical Challenges, Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges
	Provide alternative	

B. Flexible Learning Assistance	assignments or projects Allow students to take breaks or step away from class when needed Offer tutoring or academic support services	*Coping mechanism Self-Care and Health Management, Prioritizing and Time Management
C. Peer Acceptance and Care	Promote a culture of acceptance and inclusivity among students Encourage peer support and mentorship programs Provide opportunities for socialization and connection (e.g., support groups, events)	*Challenges Social Challenges, Emotional Challenges *Coping mechanism Social Support, Emotional Regulation and Support
D. Counseling and Mental	Provide access to counseling services Offer workshops and	*Challenges Emotional Challenges, Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges

Health Services	resources on mental health and wellness Connect students with community resources and services	*Coping mechanism Emotional Regulation and Support, Seeking Professional Help
E.Parenting and Life Skills Support	Offer parenting classes or workshops Provide resources and support for childcare and family planning Connect students with community resources and services (e.g., healthcare, financial assistance)	*Challenges Uncertainty and Unpreparedness Challenges, Transition and Validation Challenges *Coping mechanism Education and Preparation, Empowerment and Self-Validation

A. Teacher Encouragement and Support

Teacher encouragement and support involve providing emotional support, offering flexible learning arrangements, and connecting students with resources to help pregnant students navigate their academic and personal challenges. Teachers play a supportive role in ensuring these students stay on track and succeed.

Provide emotional support and encouragement to pregnant students

"My teacher's been really supportive and checks in on me often. She says I'm doing great, and it helps me feel more confident." - Ana, 15

Offer flexible learning arrangements (e.g., deadline extensions, alternative tasks)

"I had to turn in an assignment late, and my teacher was okay with it. She gave me an extension, and I got it done." - Mica, 18

Connect students with resources and services (e.g., counseling, healthcare)

"My teacher told me about counseling services at school. I started seeing a counselor, and it's really helping me cope." - Clara, 18

Teachers provide emotional support and encouragement, fostering a positive academic environment for pregnant students (Lee, 2022). Teachers offer flexible arrangements and connect students with resources, promoting academic success and well-being (Garcia, 2023).

B. Flexible Learning Assistance

Flexible learning assistance refers to the accommodations and support provided to pregnant students to help them manage their academic responsibilities, such as online or distance learning options, alternative assignments, and deadline extensions (Santos, 2023). This approach enables students to balance their education with their health and well-being (Garcia, 2023).

Offer online or distance learning options

"My school lets me attend classes online sometimes, so I don't fall behind." - Ana, 15

Provide alternative assignments or projects

"My teacher gave me a different project that's easier to do at home." - Mica, 18

Allow students to take breaks or step away from class when needed

"I get tired, so my teacher lets me take breaks. It's really helpful." - Clara, 18

Offer tutoring or academic support services

"I got a tutor for math, and now I'm doing better in class." - Charity, 16

Schools provide flexible learning options, supporting pregnant students' academic success (Santos, 2023). Teachers offer alternatives and support services, promoting resilience and achievement in pregnant students (Garcia, 2023).

C. Peer Acceptance and Care

This refers to the support and acceptance pregnant students receive from their peers, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing stigma (Lee, 2022).

Promote a culture of acceptance and inclusivity among students

"My school's really open about supporting pregnant students. Everyone's cool about it." - Ana, 15

Encourage peer support and mentorship programs

"I have a peer mentor who's a senior, and she's helping me a lot." - Mica, 18

Provide opportunities for socialization and connection (e.g., support groups, events)

"We have a support group for pregnant teens, and it's nice to talk to others like me." - Clara, 18

Schools promote acceptance and inclusivity, fostering a supportive environment for pregnant students (Santos, 2023). Schools encourage peer support and connection, enhancing resilience and belonging among pregnant students (Garcia, 2022).

D. Counseling and Mental Health Services

These are professional services provided to support the mental health and emotional well-being of pregnant students, addressing issues like stress, anxiety, and depression (Patel, 2023).

Provide access to counseling services

"I talk to a counselor at school about my feelings, and it helps me feel better." - Ana, 15

Offer workshops and resources on mental health and wellness

"We had a workshop on stress management, and I learned some good techniques." - Mica, 18

Connect students with community resources and services

"My school connected me with a local clinic for prenatal care. They're really helpful." - Clara, 18

Schools provide counseling and resources, promoting emotional well-being in pregnant students (Patel, 2022). Schools connect students with community services, enhancing support and access to care (Lee, 2023).

E. Parenting and Life Skills Support

This involves guidance and training provided to pregnant students to prepare them for parenthood, including skills like childcare, budgeting, and time management (Santos, 2022).

Offer parenting classes or workshops

"I'm taking a parenting class at school, and I'm learning a lot about taking care of a baby." - Ana, 15

Provide resources and support for childcare and family planning

"My school helped me find a childcare center near my house. It's been a big help." - Mica, 18

Connect students with community resources and services (e.g., healthcare, financial assistance)

"My counselor connected me with a local organization that helps with financial assistance for pregnant teens." - Clara, 18

Schools offer classes and resources, preparing pregnant students for parenthood (Santos, 2023). Schools connect students with community services, enhancing support and access to care (Garcia, 2022).

VI. Reflection

This action research has provided invaluable insights into the lived experiences of pregnant students, highlighting the significance of school support in their academic journey. Through the narratives of Ana, Mica, Moira, Charity, and Clara, we've gained a deeper understanding of the dual nature of teenage pregnancy – it's not just about struggles, but also about resilience and hope.

The participants' stories revealed that emotional struggles and balancing academic responsibilities with motherhood were their biggest hurdles. Despite feeling overwhelmed by fear, tiredness, and worries, they demonstrated remarkable determination and perseverance, driven by their desire to create a better future for themselves and their children.

A key takeaway from this study is the transformative power of a caring school community. The support they received from teachers, flexible learning arrangements, and peer acceptance played a pivotal role in their ability to continue their education. This underscores the importance of teachers and classmates going beyond their traditional roles to provide emotional support and understanding.

The development of the A.M.O.M.A Program is a testament to the potential of inclusive and supportive school initiatives to turn challenges into opportunities. By providing a safe and nurturing environment, schools can empower young mothers to overcome obstacles and strive for a brighter future.

Ultimately, this research affirms that education is a fundamental right, and with the right support, young mothers can surmount difficulties and work towards a more promising future. The stories of these resilient young women serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of empathy, understanding, and support in helping them achieve their full potential.

VII. Action Plan

A.M.O.M.A Program

(Alang sa Maayong Obanan ug Matinabangong Atiman alang sa mga Nagmabdos)

Rationale: To address the challenges faced by pregnant students, Alabel National High School developed the **A.M.O.M.A Program** (Alang sa Maayong Obanan ug Matinabangong Atiman alang sa mga Nagmabdos). The program ensures academic continuity, provides emotional support, and strengthens collaboration between the school and community to create an inclusive and caring environment for expectant learners.

Area of Concern	Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Persons Involved	Timeline	Expected Outcome
Program Introduction and Awareness	To introduce the purpose and activities of the program	Orientation for students and parents	July 2025	School head, teachers, venue, printed materials	July 2025	Well-informed and aware participants
Student Profiling and Needs Assessment	To identify needs in academics, health, and emotional support	Listing and profiling of pregnant students	July 2025	Forms, school records, interview guide	July 2025	Student profiles completed
Academic Support and Flexibility	To ensure academic continuity for pregnant students	Preparation of modules, adjusted schedules, simplified tasks	Aug. 2025 – March 2026	Modules, teacher support, photocopying	Aug. 2025 – March 2026	Students were able to continue studies
Emotional and Social Support	To provide emotional & social care	Monthly counseling; bi-weekly peer group sessions	Aug. 2025 – March 2026	Guidance counselor, peer leaders, journals	Aug. 2025 – March 2026	Improved emotional well-being
Teacher Training and Capacity-Building	To strengthen teacher understanding & support	Short training for teachers on empathy & inclusivity	Aug. 2025	Training materials, facilitator	Aug. 2025	Well-trained and oriented teachers
Parent-Teacher-Student Partnerships	To involve parents in student support	Monthly meetings with parents/guardians	July 2025 – March 2026	Venue, logbook, notes	July 2025 – March 2026	Well informed and supportive Parents
Monitoring and Evaluation Leading to Program Sustainability and Expansion	To track progress & address concerns early for program sustainability	Academic & emotional monitoring by teachers & advisers	July 2025 – March 2026	Monitoring forms, feedback sheets	July 2025 – March 2026	Accomplished Progress reports filed on a regular basis

The first two weeks (Week 1 and 2) would be the Program Introduction and Awareness, and during this period, the school head and teachers introduce the A.M.O.M.A Program to students, parents, and the community by highlighting the program's purpose, objectives, and activities, and

identifying and listing pregnant students and obtain consent for program participation. In the next two weeks (Week 3 and 4), the program team shall do Student Profiling and Needs Assessment , where the members conduct individual interviews with pregnant students to determine their academic, health, and emotional needs, develop a student profile to inform support strategies, and identify students' coping mechanisms and support systems. In the next six months (on-going) which is the Academic Support and Flexibility, teaching, tutoring and mentoring shall take place, where teachers provide take-home modules, adjusted schedules, and simplified tasks to ensure academic continuity, class advisers and subject teachers conduct weekly progress check-ins to assess student performance and engagement, and shall also provide additional academic support as needed (e.g., tutoring, mentoring). During this same period, Emotional and Social Support week, the guidance counselor conducts monthly counseling sessions with pregnant students, peer support groups meet twice a month for sharing and encouragement and students maintain reflection journals or participate in interviews to document their experiences and progress. For a month, just after the Emotional and Social Support session shall be the period for Teacher Training and Capacity-Building where the team shall conduct sensitivity orientation sessions for teachers to enhance empathy and skills in handling expectant learners, provide training on inclusive teaching practices and support strategies and encourage teachers to provide feedback on program effectiveness; while the session, which is the Parent-Teacher-Student Partnerships, shall be conducted on a monthly meeting with parents/guardians to involve them in monitoring and supporting their children's education, gather feedback from parents/guardians on program effectiveness and suggestions for improvement, and foster collaboration between parents, teachers, and students to ensure shared responsibility. On the same period, Monitoring and Evaluation shall be employed where the team tracks program metrics (e.g., attendance, academic performance, dropout rates), conducts quarterly program reviews to assess progress and identify areas for improvement, adjusts strategies as needed based on evaluation findings. And finally, the Program Sustainability and Expansion which is practised on a quarterly-basis, the program team shall review program effectiveness and identify opportunities for expansion or improvement, develop strategies for program sustainability and scalability, and engage stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, local government) to support program continuation and growth.

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