Authors: Synthesis Center for Research and Education

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womenhomeworking

# Questionnaire Results

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# Introduction

The WHOW project focuses on young people, specifically young women who became mothers at a young age and had a pause in their education, training, or career path. This break has occasionally resulted in a knowledge and skills gap that requires completion or an update before returning to the job market.

The WHOW project addresses the following need: to play a facilitative role in these young mothers' transition period to ensure a return to training for a job in a home office. The need to work from home is a reality for many young mothers who want to return to work but need or want to stay with their young child or do not have access to childcare and would therefore prefer a job from home, in a transitory way until the child's schooling or until the child is old enough to attend an early childhood centre.

In addition to the desk research conducted regarding the situation of young mothers in each country, the partnership agreed it would also be a good idea to create a questionnaire for young mothers to answer and have their direct feedback. In total there were **nine** (9) responses from mothers, and these are the results of their answers to the questionnaire.

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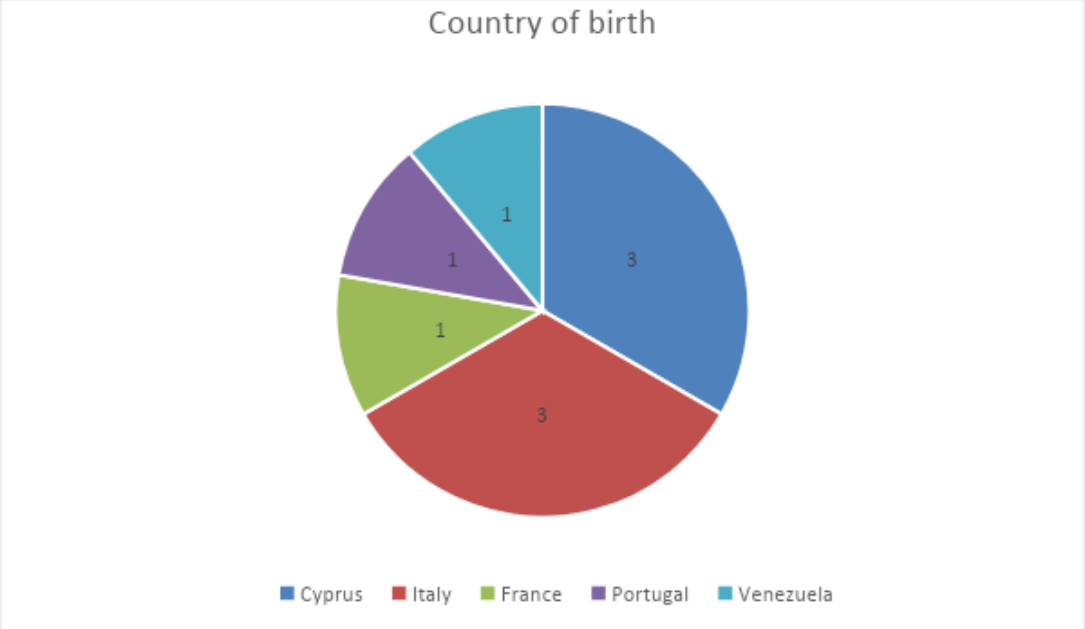
# Demographics

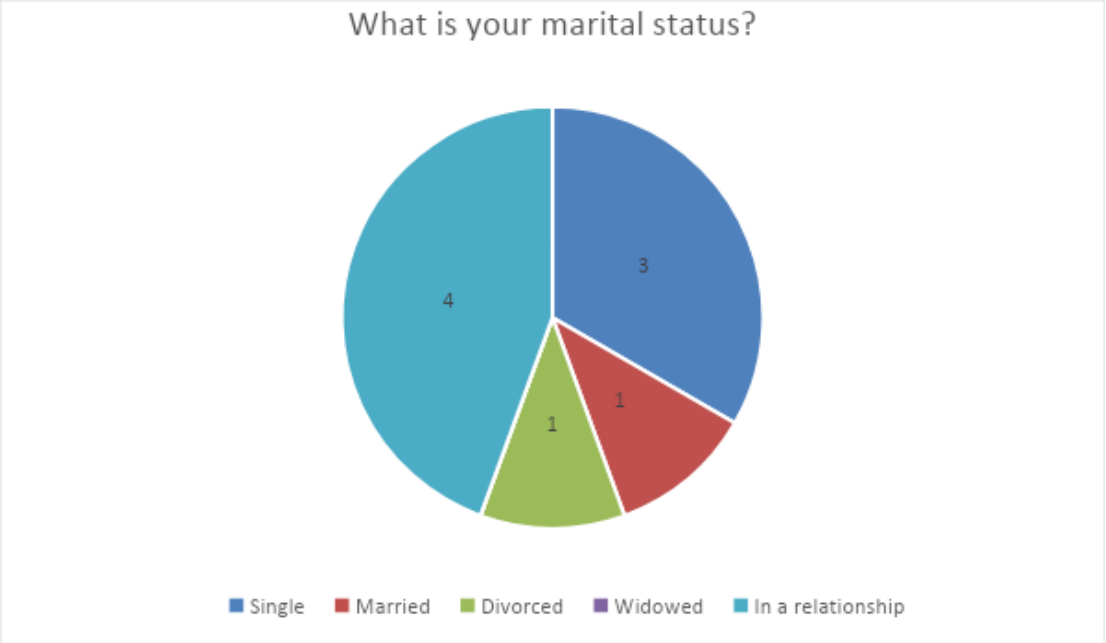
## Age

**Eight** (8) of the respondents were 21 years old and above. **One** (1) was between the ages of 17-18 years old.

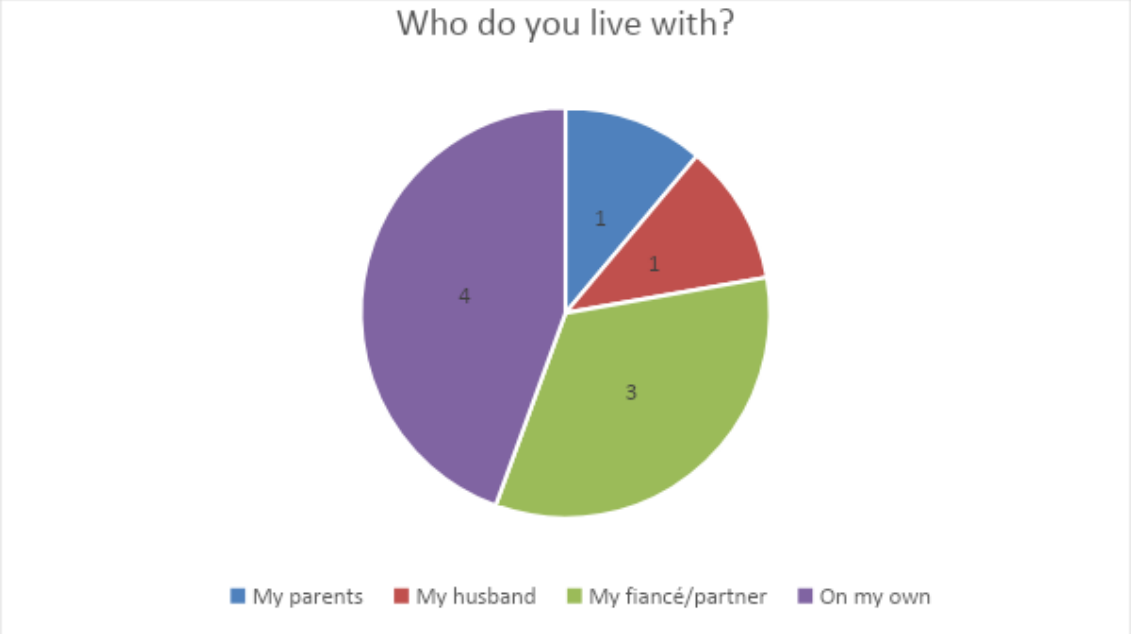
## Country of Birth



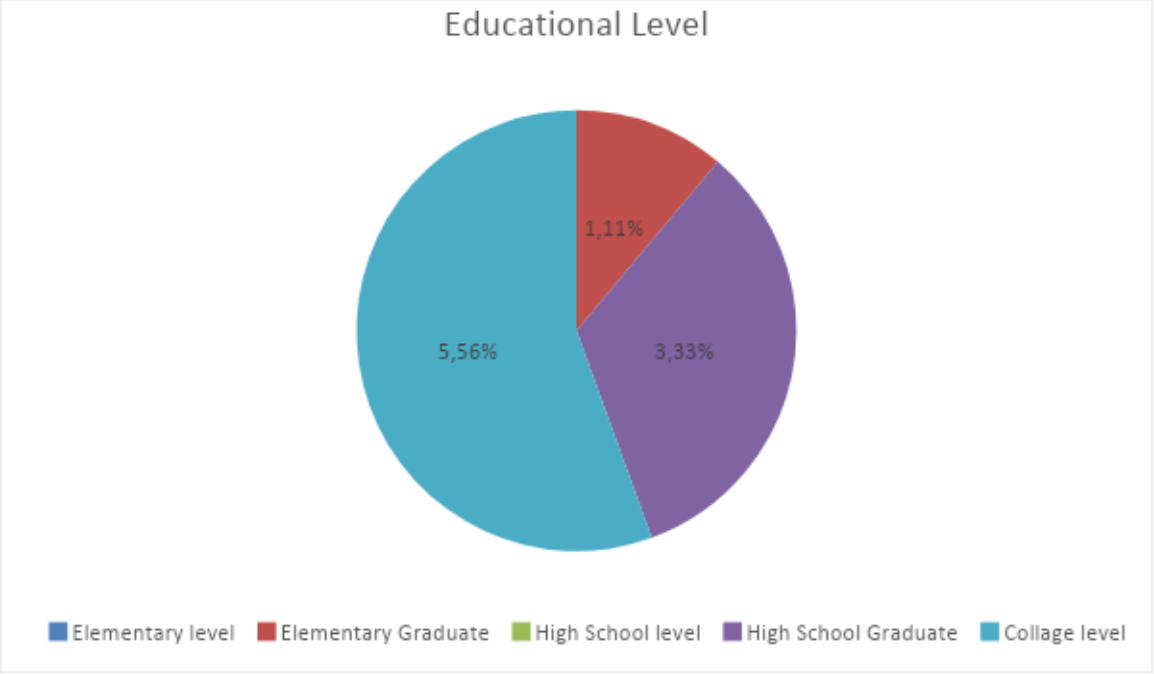

## Marital Status



## Permanent Home situation




## Education Level




## Employment

One (1) participant is a student, three (3) are unemployed, and five (5) are working. From those working, one (1) is working at an NGO, one (1) is an accountant, one (1) is a teacher, one (1) is a dentist assistant and one (1) has not defined the work they do.

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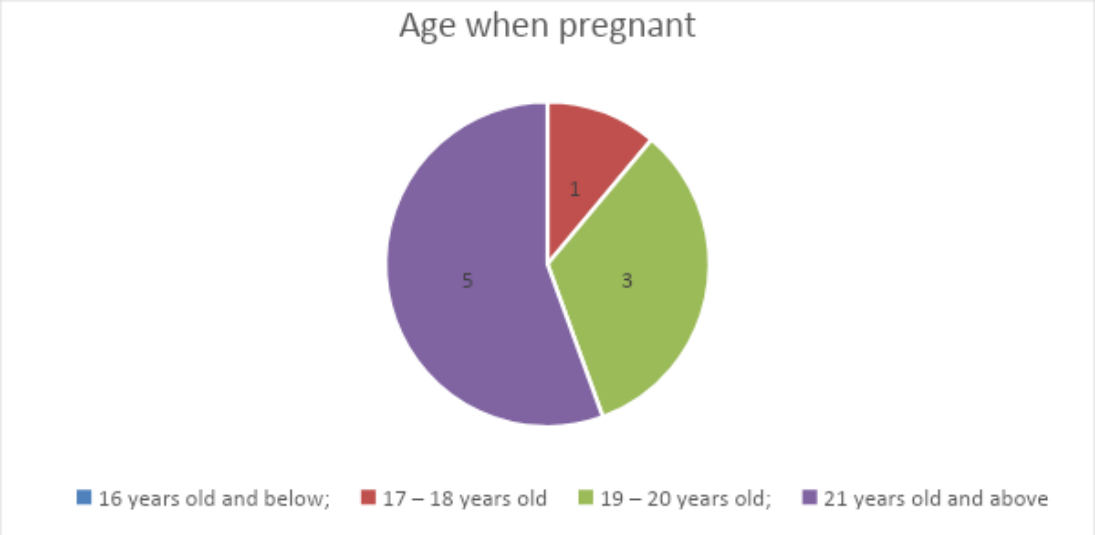
## Children and their ages

Six (6) of the mothers have one (1) child [and there ages are: 1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 16] two (2) mothers have two (2) kids [and their ages are: 8/11 and 8/15], and one (1) mother has three (3) kids [and their ages are 9/9/17].

## Was the first pregnancy planned?

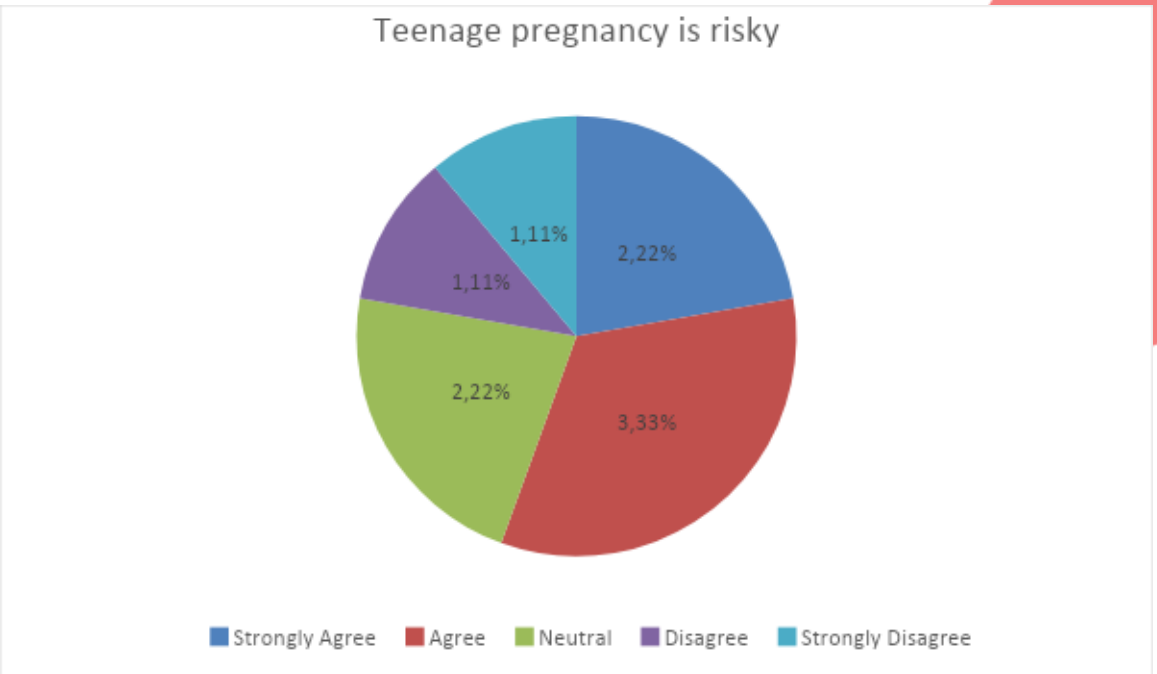
When asked if their first pregnancy was planned, **eight** (8) out of **nine** (9) participants said it was not.

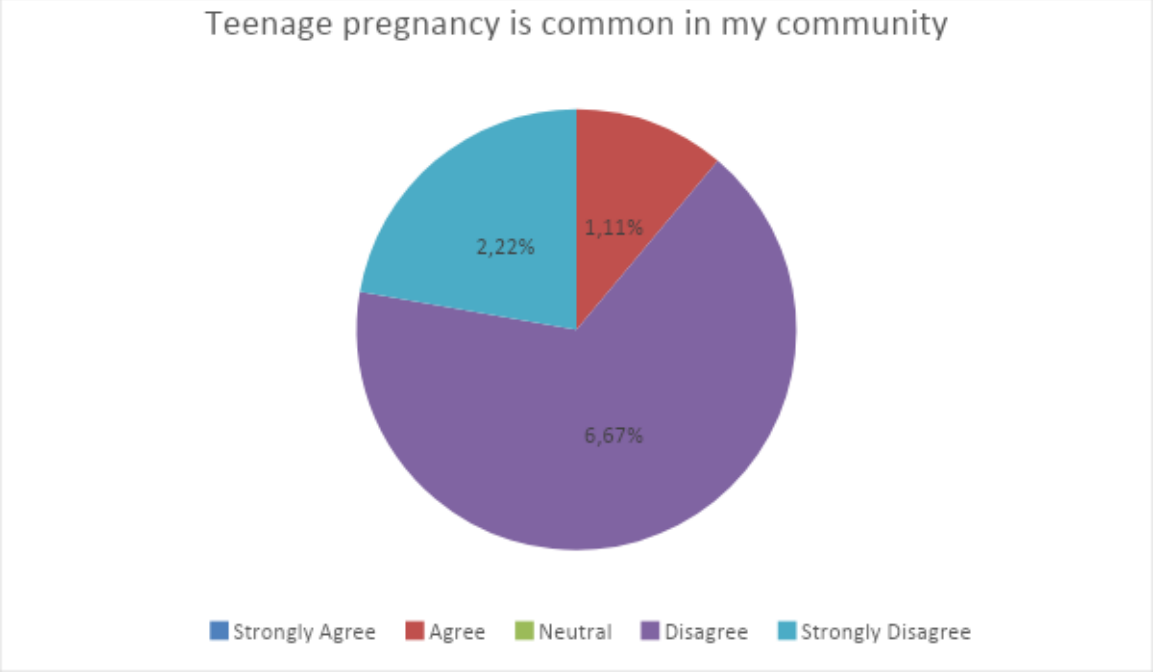
## Age when first got pregnant.



# Views on teenage pregnancy

The participants were asked a series of questions to get their views and opinions on teenage pregnancy.

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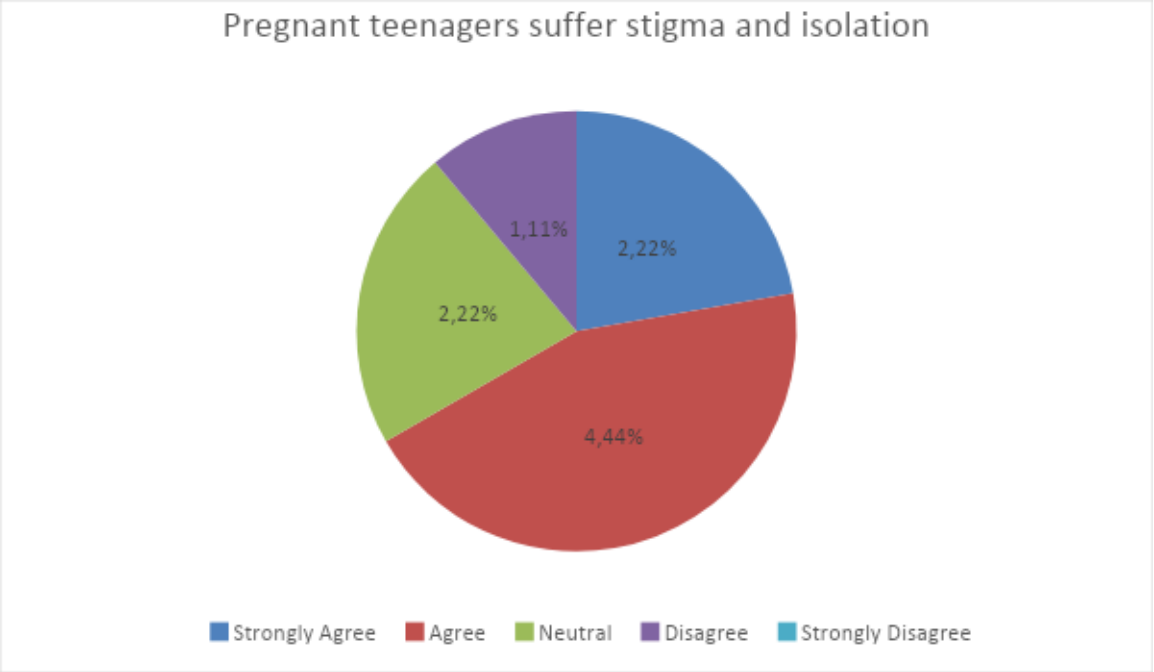
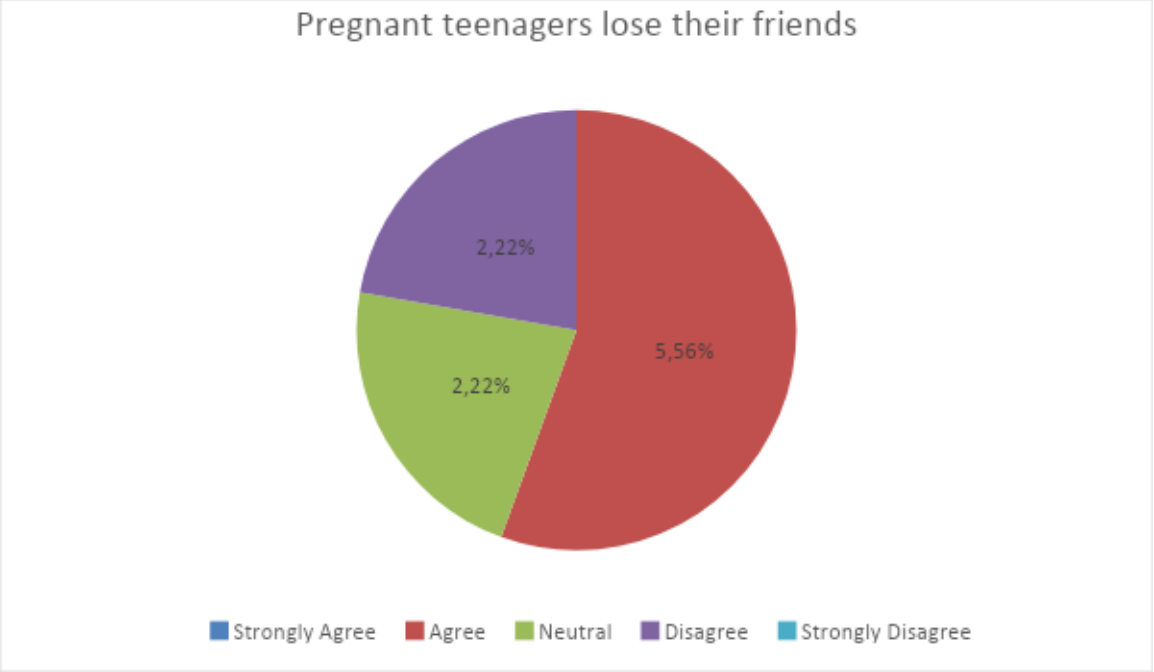
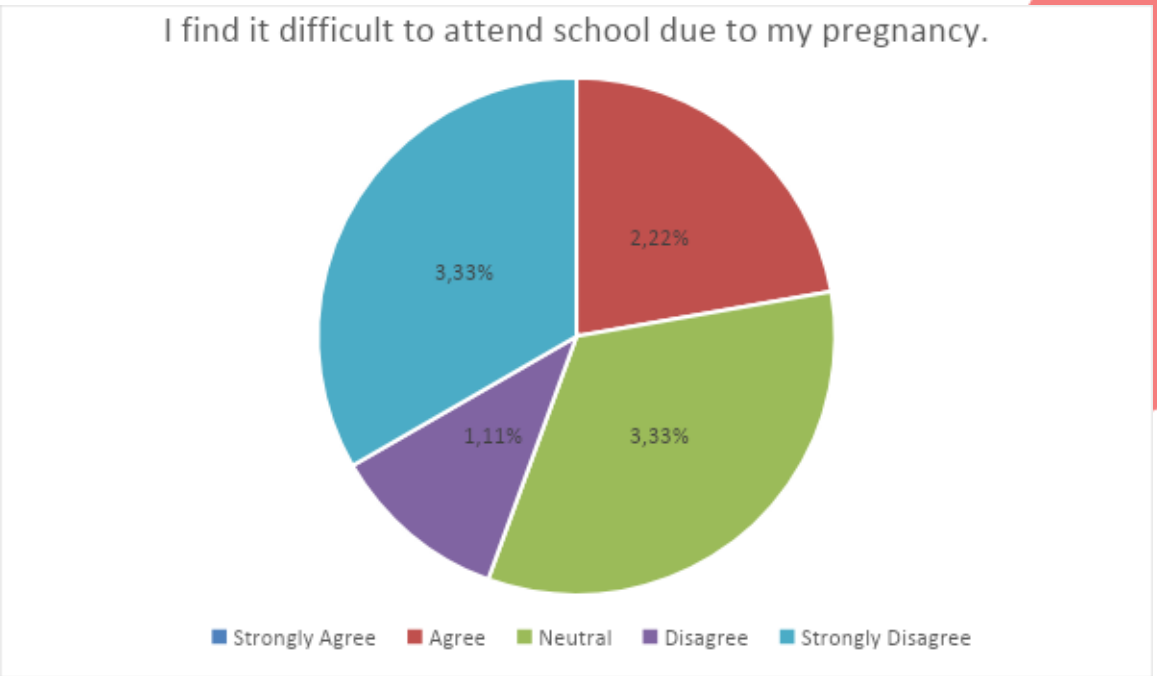


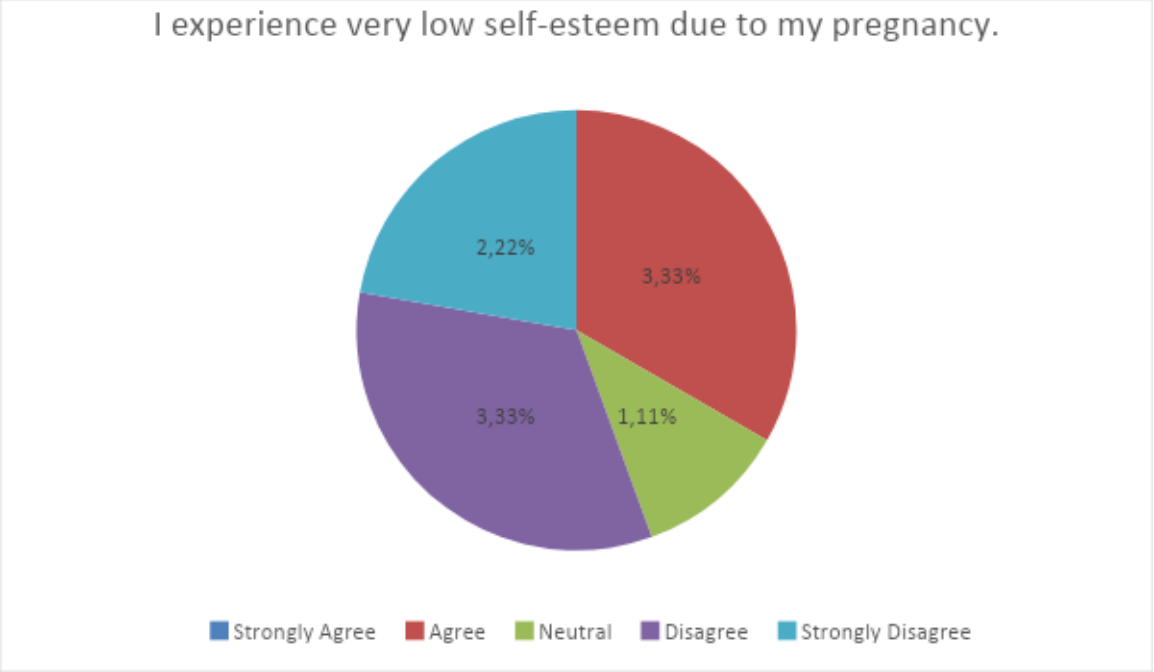




Looking at the answers given in this section, most of the mothers agree that a teenage pregnancy is a risky thing, and it is **not** a common phenomenon in their community, at least not from their perspective. The majority agrees that pregnant teenagers suffer from stigma and isolation, and they often lose their friends when they become pregnant. Looking at the results all gathered in a single location, it seems that having a community of support is highly important to young mothers, as there is a tendency for them to lose their friends, be isolated, and at the same time feel like their situation is not common in their community, meaning they probably do not have someone to socially interact with who can relate to their situation.

# The situation with their pregnancy

Next, the participants were asked to answer questions regarding their particular situation and their experiences with their pregnancy.

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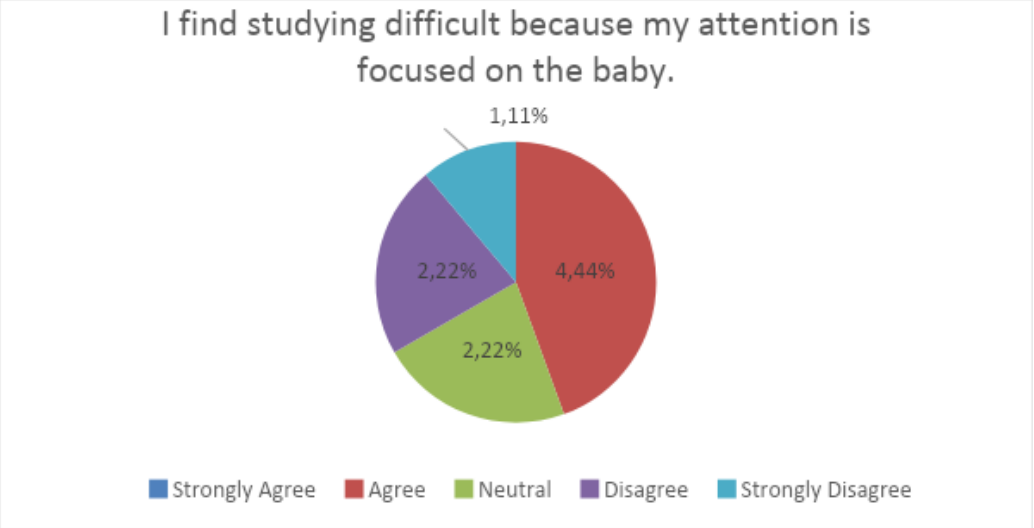


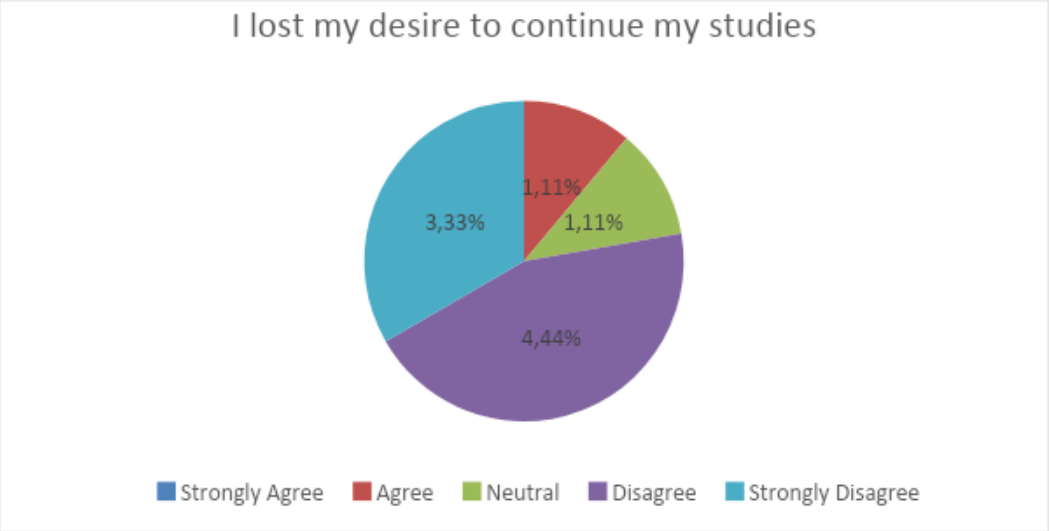

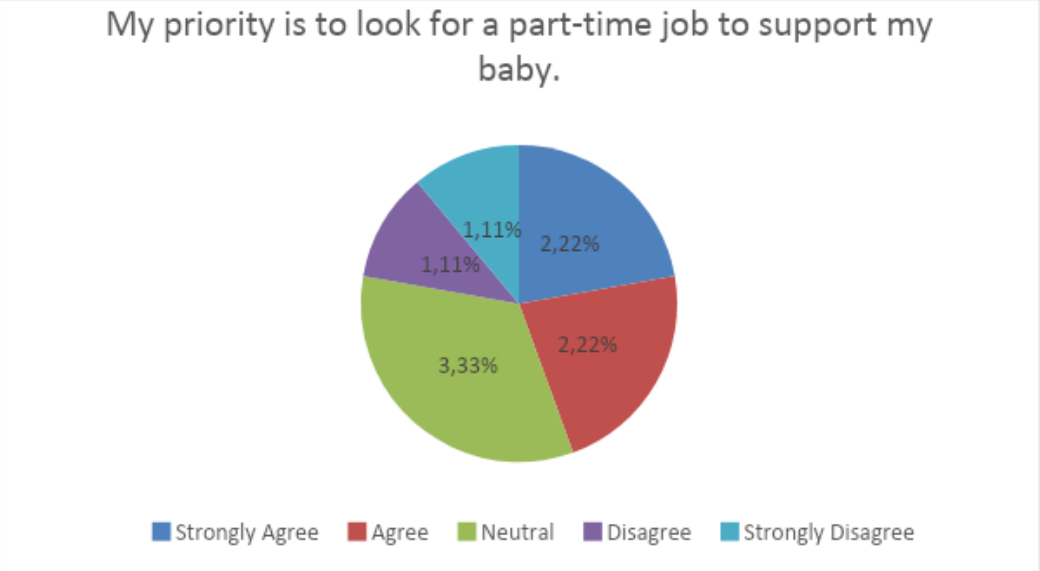


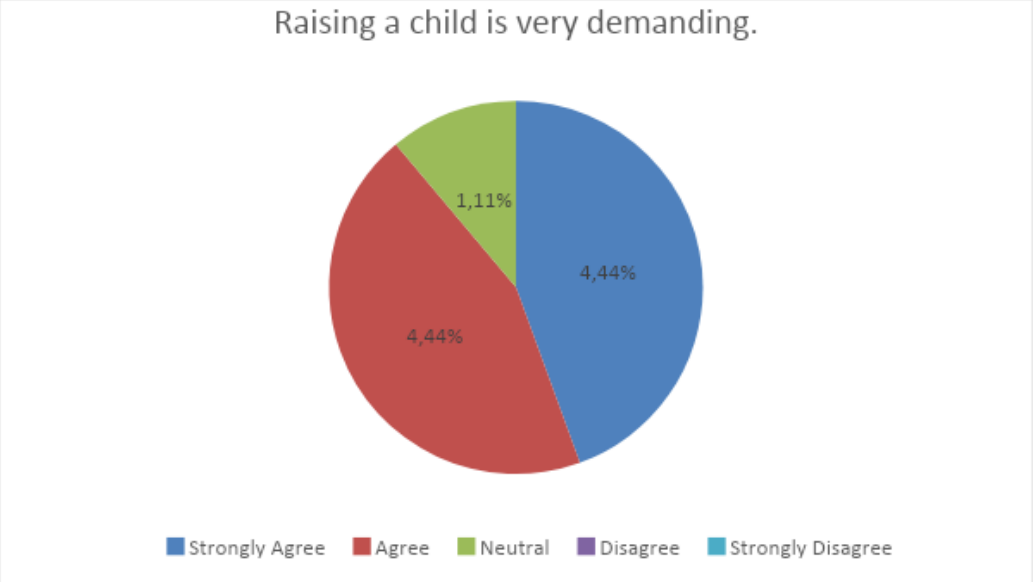


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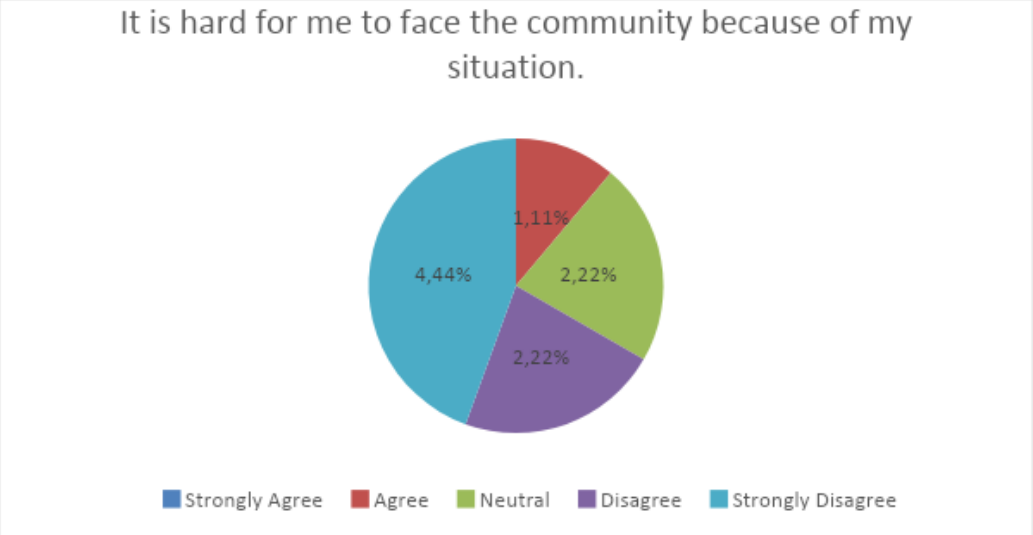


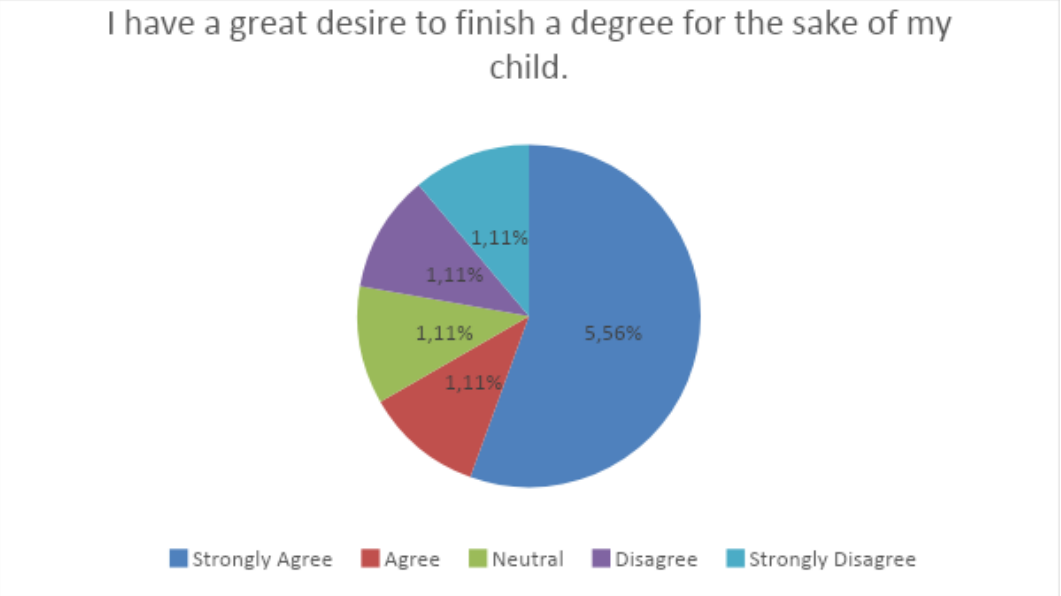

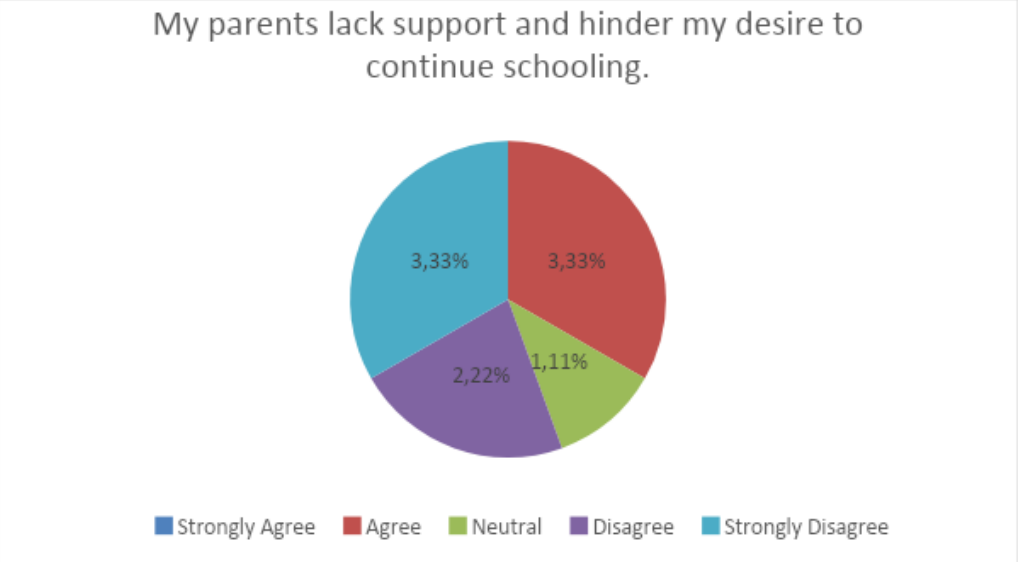


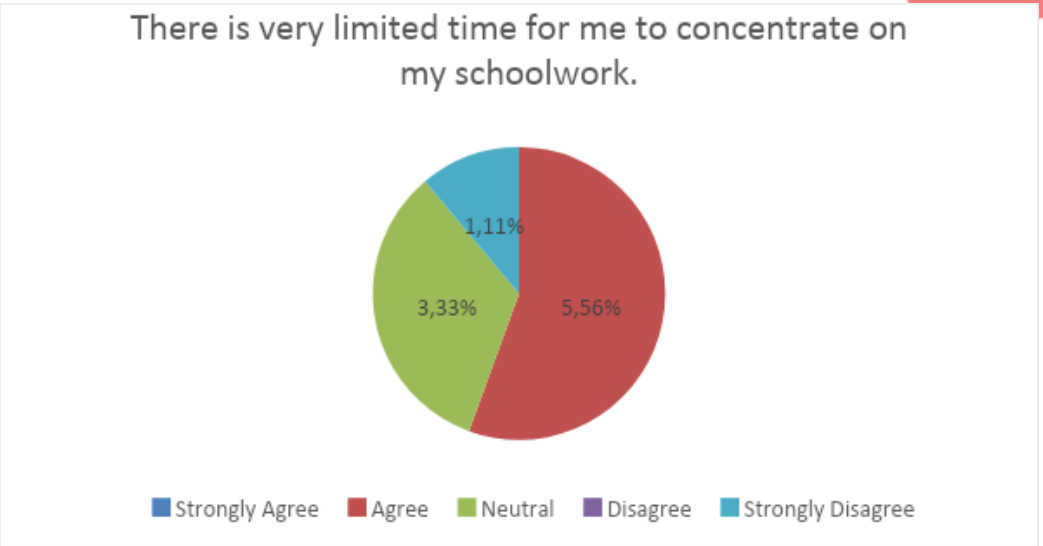


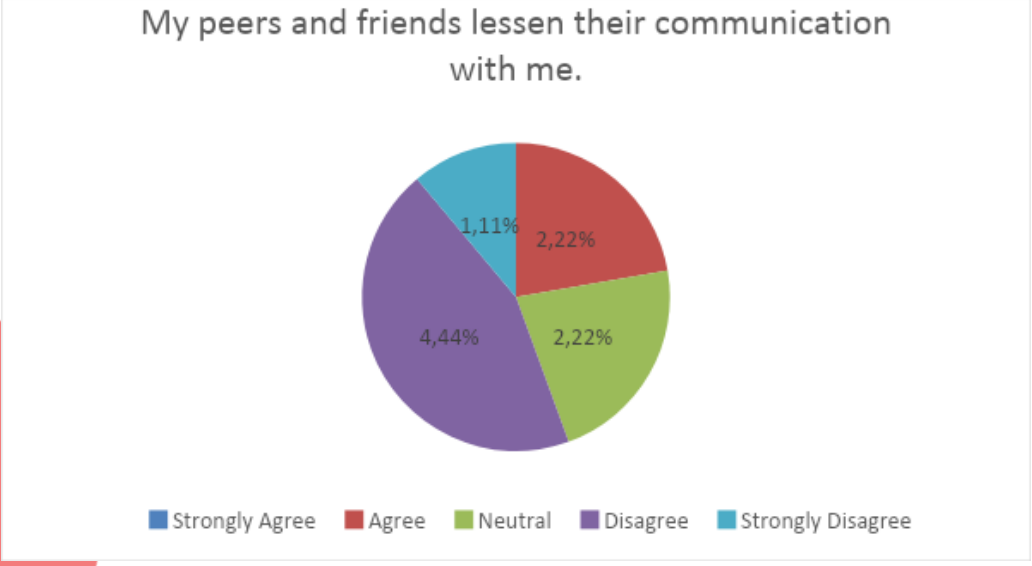


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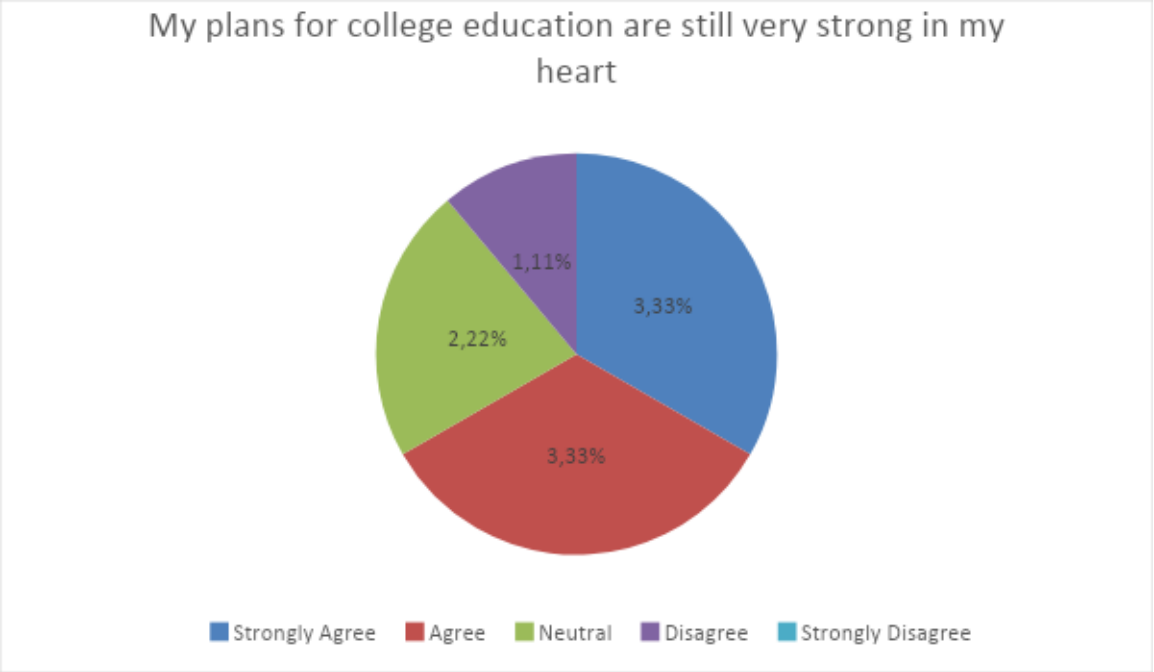



When asked if they had to pause their education, training, or career path due to their pregnancy, four (4) women said they did not stop their studies, but most of them faced some difficulties and delays. There were answers such as, had to repeat a year, and interrupted education for 6 months. Four (4) women had to interrupt their studies because of their pregnancy, and financial difficulties and the need to get a job so they can support their child. One (1) woman had to stop her career because at first, she could not find a job, and eventually she found a part time job so she could spend time with her child. She also had to retake her final exams as her university would not give her an extension on her finals since she had to go give birth, and she received no additional support when retaking her exams in September.

When asked about how long they had to be out of education, training, or the workforce the answers ranged from a few months [six (6) and nine (9) months) to a few years (two (2) and three (3) years] depending on the situation of each mother. An interesting note here, is that a mother describes how even today, years after giving birth, she struggles to find a job that understands her position and special needs as a mother, and she isn't getting any help to improve her skills and develop further professionally.

Lastly, in this section, women were asked about the difficulties they faced when returning to education or the workforce. Here there was more of a variety in the answers, and it is worth looking into them. The list of challenges they faced were:

- Time to take care of their child/ren.
- Lack of energy, not enough time to do all that is needed.
- To organize and manage, work, university, and family needs.
- An issue with working hours and absence due an illness of the child
- Settling for any kind of work

The need for an income, and a lack of time or the need for a more flexible schedule, seem to drive most of these challenges, and this highlights why it is important to help these women have either more time, or better income so they can pay for services and have the time needed to do all they want to do. As it is

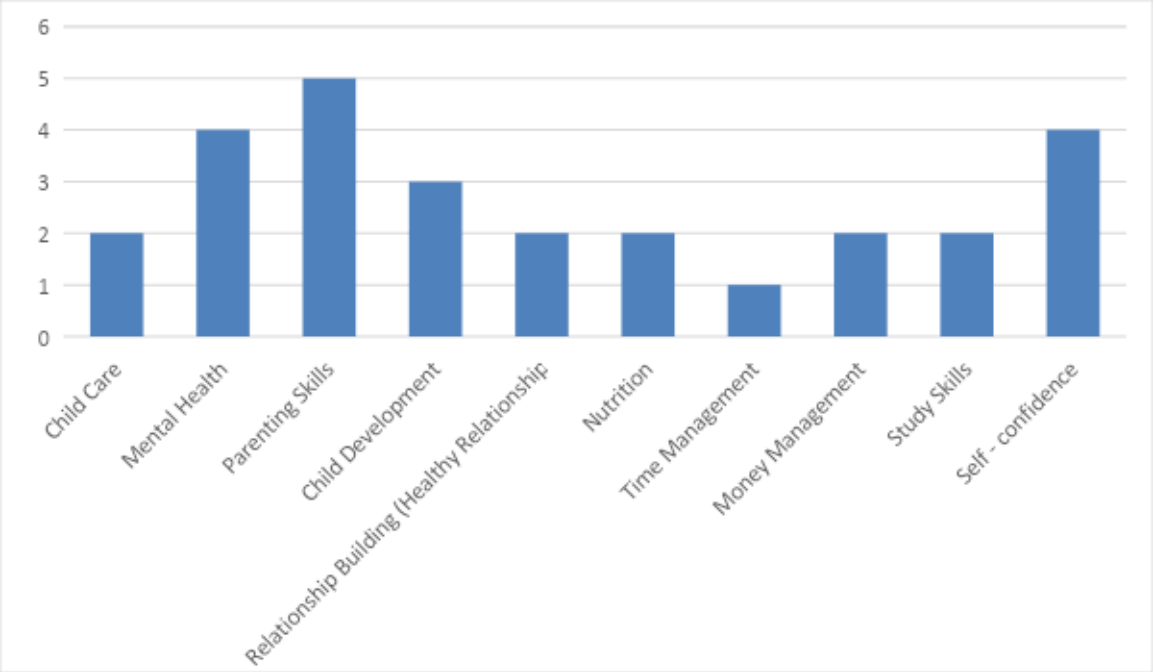
evident from the questions answered above, many of them want to study, or work, and the issue is they do not have the time or resources as they try to raise their children as well.

# Support going forward

Next, the women were asked what kind of support they might need, in order to return to their education or workforce. Most of the answers were about economic support, babysitting or parental support, and one answer was about employers who understand the needs and responsibilities of a single mother and allow her to work without compromising the care of her child. It seems the biggest obstacle is either having someone to look after the child, or earning enough to pay someone to look after the child while they are away at work or school.

When asked if they ever considered any alternative methods of education or training, such as part-time study or online learning, and all participants said yes, showing their willingness to engage in different work and education modalities that will better suit their current situation.

Next the women were asked if they would be interested in learning more about a variety of subject areas and were asked to pick all the subject that interested them. These were the results.




These interests seem to align with the view so far that they face a lot of difficulties due to the pressure of trying to do it all without having any support. The top three interests are parenting skills, mental health, and self-confidence.

Lastly the women were asked what advice they would give to other young mothers who might be considering the idea of pausing their education, training, or career path. Here the answers show the determination of these mothers and how willing they are to work hard and raise their children. It also highlights this sense of community that can be developed among these young mothers to support and

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help each other. The main idea promoted through their comments is that mothers should take a break if they feel they need to, but to understand that they are more capable than they think, and ultimately, they should not neglect their education, work, or career. It is mentioned that it will be a difficult time for the mothers, but they can overcome it with hard work. Below are all the answers given.

**What advice would you give other young mothers considering pausing their education, training, or career path?**

- I say to all mothers facing this challenge, see this as a short break, children grow up and you will be able to continue.
- It is understandable but you need to try to give all you have for the best of your child.
- Never stop.
- Not to stop, everything can be done if you want to
- Not to give up completely, just put it on hold if necessary.
- Training and education are crucial for their future and that of their children.
- For no reason should the mother's education be secondary to the child's upbringing. A healthy and happy mother raises happy and mentally healthy children. There will always be difficulties as well as solutions. Believe in yourself, you can do more than you can imagine.
- Never give up! With determination and support from friends (choose wisely) and family, you can achieve all your goals. Also, always put yourself first in order to be the greatest mom. Don't let yourself be behind as a woman as this is the number one to help you be a better person and better parent.
- Pause for a year after the baby's birth.

# Conclusion

The answers collected through this questionnaire suggest that these mothers are determined to succeed, can benefit greatly from a community that will support them, and all they require are the tools that enable them to go after what they require. Whether that is more time with their kids, or ways through which they can continue their education or career, all they require is the right training tools, flexibility, and a bit of understanding from others around them.

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