

## Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy in Early Adulthood: Meaning of Life and Psychological Well-Being

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**ABSTRACT:** Women experiencing out-of-wedlock pregnancies encountered challenges in determining the meaning of life and their psychological well-being. This study aimed to investigate the meaning of life and psychological well-being in women in this situation. The study employed a qualitative case study design. The researcher engaged three female informants experiencing pregnancies outside of marriage selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to delve into the informants' perspectives. The two main themes that emerged were the meaning of life and psychological well-being. The research findings highlighted that the meaning of life was a crucial aspect for women experiencing out-of-wedlock pregnancies in their quest for self-identity. Similarly, psychological well-being was vital for them. Common psychological challenges included stigma, but strategies such as intensive communication with family and the community helped overcome these issues. The experience of being pregnant outside of marriage brought awareness of past mistakes and a motivation to improve relationships with family and society. This study emphasized the urgent need for the meaning of life and psychological well-being to assist women with out-of-wedlock pregnancies in improving their futures.

**Keywords:** Out-of-wedlock pregnancy, Meaning of life, Psychological well-being

**ABSTRAK:** Perempuan yang mengalami kehamilan di luar nikah menghadapi tantangan dalam menentukan makna hidup dan kesejahteraan psikologis mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki makna hidup dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada perempuan dalam situasi ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Peneliti melibatkan tiga informan perempuan yang mengalami kehamilan di luar nikah yang dipilih secara purposive sampling. Wawancara semi-terstruktur dilakukan untuk menggali perspektif informan. Dua tema utama yang muncul adalah makna hidup dan kesejahteraan psikologis. Temuan penelitian menyoroti bahwa makna hidup merupakan aspek penting bagi perempuan yang mengalami kehamilan di luar nikah dalam pencarian identitas diri. Demikian pula, kesejahteraan psikologis sangat penting bagi mereka. Tantangan psikologis yang umum terjadi adalah stigma, tetapi strategi seperti komunikasi intensif dengan keluarga dan masyarakat membantu mengatasi masalah ini. Pengalaman hamil di luar nikah membawa kesadaran akan kesalahan di masa lalu dan motivasi untuk memperbaiki hubungan dengan keluarga dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menekankan kebutuhan mendesak akan makna hidup dan kesejahteraan psikologis untuk membantu perempuan yang hamil di luar nikah dalam memperbaiki masa depan mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** Kehamilan Di Luar Nikah, Makna Hidup, Kesejahteraan Psikologis

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage represents a physical and emotional connection between a man and a woman as husband and wife, aiming to a harmonious and enduring family unit, rooted in divine principles (Wibisana, 2016). It marks the commencement of a new life for two individuals who previously

lived independently before coming together (Malisi, 2022). The essence of marriage lies in fostering a peaceful marital life for spouses (Setiawan, 2020). One primary objective of marriage is to produce legitimate offspring for the continuity of future generations; thus, this is fundamental and must occur within the institution of legal marriage (Rohman, 2017). However, in current circumstances, several instances of marriages originate from pregnancies conceived outside of wedlock.

Marriages resulting from pregnancies outside of wedlock, commonly referred to as pregnant marriages, involve a woman becoming pregnant before the formal union, thus implying an initial act of adultery (Nengsih et al., 2023). This phenomenon, particularly prevalent among teenagers in Indonesia, is on the rise and poses significant risks. Adolescent pregnancies outside of marriage can lead to various adverse outcomes, including diverse psychological consequences such as depression and societal stigma (Glynn et al., 2018). Additionally, inadequate maturity during adolescence can result in reproductive health complications for girls (Alifah et al., 2022). Research findings reveal that adolescents experience a range of psychological impacts post-pregnancy, childbirth, and partner separation, including feelings of anxiety, shame, stress, and emotional instability (Tjolly & Soetjningsih, 2023).

Preliminary investigations indicate a critical need for assistance among individuals facing pregnancies outside of marriage (Sari, 2022), as a means to navigate the complexities surrounding their circumstances, seek renewal, and cultivate new family dynamics (Zebua, 2021). Prior research indicates several challenges faced by individuals conceiving outside of marriage, including physical crises such as childbirth difficulties, miscarriages, health issues, psychological disorders, and strained spousal relationships. Furthermore, individuals may encounter psychological crises affecting their social interactions, mental well-being, stress levels, and interpersonal dynamics, along with social challenges like societal exclusion, familial disregard, and the unborn child becoming susceptible to community ostracism and self-blame (Proboastiningrum, 2016). Research indicates that unintended pregnancies are frequently perceived negatively, leading to social isolation and a lack of support from peers and family, which in turn exacerbates feelings of stress and anxiety among young mothers (Moseson et al., 2019). This social stigma associated with unintended pregnancies can deter young women from seeking the necessary support, thereby complicating their psychological well-being (Moseson et al., 2019).

Pregnancy outside of marriage often occurs due to promiscuity between partners, leading to a situation where, once the woman becomes pregnant, the relationship is typically sanctioned by both families. Alternatively, pregnancy outside of marriage may result from rape or irresponsible behavior by the man involved (Millah, 2017). Many unmarried women are victimized by men who refuse to take responsibility, causing these women to experience severe depression as they navigate the pressures of their relationships. This distress can sometimes lead them to consider abortion (Alifah et al., 2022). The complexities surrounding pregnancy outside of marriage are significant, particularly for those directly involved. Such pregnancies are frequently met with social scorn, as they are seen as morally unacceptable and contrary to societal norms in Indonesia.

The challenges faced by women who become pregnant outside of marriage can negatively impact their sense of life's meaning (Sahertian & Huwae, 2023). Life meaningfulness can be conceptualized as a state in which individuals live with purpose, displaying enthusiasm, optimism, and clear life goals. Their actions are directed, intentional, and adaptive to their environment, allowing them to endure hardships while recognizing the potential for growth and love (Iwasaki et al., 2018). Life meaningfulness also encompasses the ability to manage one's life, identify important issues, make difficult decisions, and utilize creative means to achieve personal goals (Martela et al., 2018).

The meaningfulness of life for women who become pregnant outside of marriage is predicted to significantly influence their psychological well-being (Sujadi et al., 2016; Zika &

Chamberlain, 1992). Psychological well-being refers to an individual's ability to achieve self-acceptance, build positive relationships with others, maintain autonomy, navigate their external environment effectively, and pursue personal growth (Prabowo, 2016; Saaduddin et al., 2023). This well-being is crucial for women experiencing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, as it is linked to happiness, life satisfaction, and problem-free living (Ardianti et al., 2016; Sujadi & Ahmad, 2023). The psychological well-being of these women includes emotional, mental, and social conditions, all of which are profoundly affected by the circumstances of their pregnancy. These conditions can be complex and are often influenced by multiple interrelated factors. The psychological impact of pregnancy outside of marriage may manifest as fear, pressure, guilt, disappointment, stress, despair, and persistent feelings of shame (Sari, 2022). Research indicates that women who become pregnant out of wedlock frequently experience heightened anxiety and depression, largely due to the stigma associated with their situation and the lack of social support. For instance, a study on university students in South Africa highlighted the significant emotional, instrumental, and informational support needs of those pregnant out of wedlock, emphasizing that the absence of social support is a critical risk factor for antenatal and postnatal depression and anxiety (Msipu Phiri et al., 2023).

Based on the above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the experiences of early adult women who become pregnant out of wedlock, with a particular focus on life meaningfulness and psychological well-being. Although previous studies have analyzed this topic, they often concentrate on negative aspects such as social stigma, mental distress, and economic challenges, while rarely addressing how individuals in this situation find or construct meaning in their lives. This gap in the literature highlights the need for research on how life meaningfulness is maintained or achieved in such challenging circumstances. The findings from this study can inform the development of more effective interventions or support programs for early adult women who become pregnant out of wedlock, particularly programs that emphasize enhancing life meaningfulness as a means of improving psychological well-being.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Pregnancy Outside of Marriage**

Pregnancy outside of marriage is a sexual behavior that is carried out before there is an official bond from religion and government (akad). Pregnancy that occurs before an official bond (akad) can be categorized as free sex or adultery. Sociological perspective according to Emile Durkheim, premarital sex is considered a form of natural thing, this is in accordance with Organic Solidarity where sex is something that requires mutual need between individuals and other individuals. Humans generally have the instinct to have sex this is considered a natural form of thing because they want to both feel sex for the satisfaction of each individual. The culture of premarital sex among teenagers makes problems that are not new.

This research is in line with the results of research by Nurul Kotosi, 2018 with the title parenting patterns of pregnant teenagers outside of marriage showing that children who are pregnant outside of marriage are very lacking in affection from their parents. (Dani et al., 2023) The results of this study are also in accordance with the research of Alfiana Rahma Afifah, 2022 with the title the role of parents towards children who are pregnant outside of marriage from the perspective of Islamic law. Getting pregnant outside of marriage is something that is difficult for the local community to accept, besides that it will also cause shame for the family and will certainly damage the good name of the family. Meanwhile, there are many environments that are very attractive to teenagers, which they think have their own charm. One environment that is very risky for adolescents is sexual intercourse without marriage. (Elminah et al., 2022)

The causes of pregnancy outside of marriage due to, Lack of Faith and Lack of Religious Education (Lack of introduction of religious values has an impact on relationships and causes teenagers to easily have sex outside of marriage and will cause unwanted pregnancies so that teenagers do not have readiness in households), Environmental Factors (Environmental factors can be the cause of teenagers wanting to have sex outside of marriage. If in the surrounding environment there are already many people who do this, then it is not surprising that teenagers will also follow in these footsteps), Excessive Curiosity (Half knowledge about sex will increase sexual arousal so that it cannot be prevented. This will increase the risk of negative impacts, in a situation where parents are not open about this sexual issue, adolescents will find out or find sources of information through peers, books, magazines, the internet, even blue movies. They themselves cannot choose which ones are good and which ones need to be avoided) (Elminah et al., 2022; Syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021)

### **The Meaning of Life**

The meaning of life according to Frankl is the meaning hidden in every situation that a person faces throughout his life. The meaning of life is an awareness of the possibility to realize what is being done at that time, which then if successfully fulfilled will result in a happy appreciation. The characteristics of the meaning of life are uniquely personal, special, specific, and different from other people and change from time to time, it can be found in daily life experiences, as well as providing guidance and direction for activities carried out to challenge individuals to be responsible for carrying it out. Each human being has a unique meaning of life with a different appreciation so that the therapist does not give a particular meaning of life therapy to his client, the therapist only helps clients to find the meaning of life and realize the responsibility of each of their life goals. With this, the pain of sadness becomes commonplace, because it is the meaning of life that nurtures life. This is what leads humans to be optimistic in the face of suffering in life. Many humans experience cases of mental illness because they are unable to find the meaning of life.

Meaning in life promotes effective coping (Steger: 2012), growth in the face of adversity (Triplett et al. 2016), decreased psychopathology (Steger: 2012), and improved physical health (Czekierda et al. 2017). In turn, meaning in life has been associated with less stress in general (Park & Baumeister: 2017). Several studies have confirmed that meaning in life is a psychological construct that provides people with motivation and behavioral direction for the future, and reduces negative emotions while increasing psychological resilience, happiness, and life satisfaction (Yek et al. 2017). People with a high meaning of life are better able to handle threats (Fischer: 2020). In addition, a high meaning of life will encourage people to look to the future and seek positive meaning, rather than dwelling on current negative events, an attribute that leads to recovery from negative experiences and despair George & Park (2017). Therefore, meaning in life may also be a cognitive protective factor to promote recovery from hopelessness.

### **Psychological Wellbeing**

Psychological well-being is one form of well-being that is quite important for the adolescent development stage. The well-being felt by adolescents makes adolescents have more positive emotions and can foster a sense of life satisfaction and happiness, thereby reducing negative behavior and reducing feelings of depression. When an individual is in adolescence (Aryono & Dani, 2019), there are many obstacles experienced by an individual, it is not uncommon for an individual in adolescence to become depressed. This is because they are very indecisive when implementing or making decisions. Thus, a person who is in adolescence really needs guidance or direction to maximize his potential and form a responsible individual (Ramadhani et al., 2016).

Psychological well being can help individuals to foster positive emotions, feel life satisfaction and happiness, reduce their tendency to behave negatively, can control emotions easily

(Prihartini et al., 2023). Individuals who have high psychological well being are individuals who feel satisfied with their lives, positive emotional conditions, are able to go through bad experiences that can produce negative emotional conditions, have positive relationships with others, are able to determine their own destiny without depending on others, control environmental conditions, have clear life goals, and are able to develop themselves (Simanjuntak et al., 2021).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the psychological well-being and sense of meaningfulness in life among early adult women who are experiencing pregnancy outside of marriage. To achieve these objectives, the researcher utilized a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative case study research is a method that aims to understand specific phenomena in depth within a real context. In this approach, researchers investigate one or more specific cases (such as individuals, groups, organizations, or events) to explore relevant experiences, perspectives, and interactions (Baxter & Jack, 2015). The study focused on early adult women who became pregnant outside of marriage in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. Participants were purposively selected for ease of access. Eligible participants were contacted via the WhatsApp application, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to ensure confidentiality; their individual affiliations were not disclosed. The participants were from different villages and included RI (20 years old), SS (19 years old), and RA (23 years old).

Data were collected through semi-structured and in-depth interviews. During the interviews, participants were asked to share their experiences regarding the meaningfulness of life and psychological well-being during their out-of-wedlock pregnancies, as well as narratives about their current circumstances. All interviews were conducted face-to-face between July and August 2024, with each session lasting between thirty and thirty-five minutes. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian, and the transcripts were subsequently translated into English for publication purposes. The researcher meticulously documented all relevant information, including interview transcripts, field notes, and analyzed documents.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method commonly employed in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data. Thematic analysis aims to uncover and highlight significant themes that emerge from the collected data, such as interviews, observations, or documents (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The researcher then produced a report detailing the identified themes and explaining how these themes address the research questions.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the conditions of early adult women who became pregnant outside of marriage, with a particular focus on life meaningfulness and psychological well-being. The researcher identified two main themes, as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Main Themes and Subthemes**

<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>Subtheme</b>
Life Meaningfulness	Existence of Meaning
	Search for Meaning
Psychological Well-being	Autonomy
	Positive Relations with Others

Personal Growth
Life Purpose
Self-Acceptance

## Meaningfulness of Life

Within the theme of meaningfulness of life, two subthemes consistently emerge among early adults who experience pregnancy outside of marriage: (1) the existence of meaning and (2) the search for meaning.

### *Meaningfulness*

Informants debated whether their lives retained meaning after facing stress, depression, and social stigma due to their circumstances. While some expressed a loss of meaningfulness, others like RI affirmed their continued sense of purpose and personal values. Each informant contributed uniquely to the discussion on the meaningfulness of life, emphasizing the importance of women aligning their actions with their values and morals.

SS: "No, as I felt stressed, depressed, and ashamed after becoming pregnant out of wedlock." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "I believe that my life still holds meaning and value, despite the challenges. I perceive this as an opportunity for personal growth." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "I feel that my life no longer holds meaning following my experience of pregnancy outside of marriage." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

### *The Search for Meaning*

Some informants described seeking meaning through work and household responsibilities, while others emphasized the individuality of life journeys, believing that positive or negative experiences could offer valuable insights and growth opportunities.

SS: "I plan to focus on work and prioritize my role as a housewife." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "After experiencing pregnancy outside of marriage, I recognize the uniqueness of each life journey and the potential for personal improvement through every experience." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "My focus will be on securing employment and managing household responsibilities." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

From the interviews, it is evident that the meaningfulness of life varies among women who experience pregnancy outside of marriage, reflecting a diverse range of emotional experiences and personal reflections. While some perceive a loss of meaning due to stress and societal pressures, others, like RI, maintain a positive outlook, recognizing valuable lessons in their journey. These women navigate their experiences by rediscovering meaning through work, household duties, and embracing personal growth opportunities.

## Psychological Well-being

Within the theme of psychological well-being, six subthemes emerged: (1) positive relationships with others, (2) environmental mastery, (3) personal growth, (4) life purpose, and (5) self-acceptance.

### *Positive Relationships with Others*

Women who became pregnant out of wedlock often struggled with maintaining positive relationships with others, as they were frequently subjected to gossip and ostracization from society. However, some individuals did provide support to help them manage stress.

SS: "My relationship with my surroundings is not very good because they gossip a lot about me, as I got pregnant out of wedlock. But sometimes there are those who support me, so I don't get stressed or dwell on what others say." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "When people found out I was pregnant out of wedlock, my relationship with those in my neighborhood deteriorated. However, after my son was born, the rumors gradually faded, and my relationship with the neighborhood improved." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "I was frequently talked about and ostracized in my neighborhood." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

### *Personal Growth*

For women who became pregnant out of wedlock, personal growth is a crucial indicator, as this experience, though challenging, offers potential for learning and self-development. Some participants reported experiencing personal growth, while others did not. One informant noted that her experiences led to increased resilience.

SS: "I have limited experience because my potential is confined to being a housewife." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "After the incident, I learned a lot and deeply regretted my actions. The experience prompted me to reflect on my values, life goals, and priorities." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "It was a stressful and traumatizing life experience, filled with guilt, shame, regret, and anger. However, facing challenges like social stigma, rejection, or financial hardship has made me stronger." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

### *Life Purpose*

For women who became pregnant out of wedlock, finding and maintaining a life purpose is essential to navigating their challenges while preserving psychological well-being. Some participants identified life goals such as making their families and husbands happy, while others focused on caring for their children and prioritizing their families.

SS: "My purpose in life is to make my family happy and be a good wife to my husband." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "My meaningful life purpose is to learn from past experiences and focus on caring for my child with love. My commitment is to focus on what truly matters to me and my family." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "My current goal is to have a happy family with my husband." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

### *Self-Acceptance*

The participants demonstrated a strong sense of self-acceptance, acknowledging both their strengths and weaknesses. Some expressed that they would not change aspects of themselves and have accepted their situations as they are.

SS: "I always accept myself, with all my shortcomings and strengths, because I believe that both I and my family deserve to be happy." (SS, Personal communication, July 26, 2024)

RI: "Yes, I fully accept myself as I am because I have endured many things that not everyone could handle." (RI, Personal communication, July 28, 2024)

RA: "At this point, I have accepted my situation as it is, because what has happened cannot be undone." (RA, Personal communication, July 30, 2024)

The majority of participants in this study displayed a good ability to accept themselves, including accepting the circumstances of their pregnancy outside of marriage, along with the strengths and weaknesses inherent in themselves. This self-acceptance is a crucial aspect of psychological well-being, serving as a foundation to overcome the various challenges they face.

Overall, the psychological well-being of women who become pregnant out of wedlock largely depends on how they manage and navigate various interconnected aspects of life, such as social relationships, environmental mastery, life goals, and self-acceptance. Despite the unique challenges they face, including social stigma and emotional distress, many of these women find ways to grow and develop from their experiences.

It is crucial for women who become pregnant out of wedlock to find meaning in life and maintain psychological well-being to achieve a better quality of life. The findings of this study reveal that some informants felt that their lives lost meaning after experiencing an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, leading to stress, depression, and profound shame. These results align with previous research, which has demonstrated a strong association between unintended pregnancies and increased levels of depression. For instance, women who reported their pregnancy as unintended were almost twice as likely to experience depressive symptoms compared to those with planned pregnancies (Ghorbani et al., 2015; Sujadi, 2022). This correlation is particularly pronounced among adolescents, where early pregnancy has been linked to higher levels of psychological distress (Figueredo et al., 2019). Additionally, the context of unintended pregnancy often involves social disadvantage, which exacerbates mental health issues. Adolescents who become pregnant out of wedlock frequently face social stigma, leading to feelings of shame and isolation, which can intensify depressive symptoms (Warren et al., 2010).

In their search for meaning, some informants chose to focus on work and household responsibilities as a way to rediscover purpose in their lives. The phenomenon of searching for meaning among women who become pregnant outside of marriage is complex and closely intertwined with societal norms, personal beliefs, and psychological factors (Hidayah et al., 2024). These women often struggle with feelings of shame and stigma, which can significantly influence their search for meaning. For some, this search for meaning is expressed through the relationships they form with their children. Many women develop a strong commitment to nurturing their children and find purpose in motherhood, despite the challenges they face (Saim et al., 2022). The desire to create a meaningful bond with their child can be a source of strength and resilience, helping them cope with the stigma and difficulties associated with their situation. However, societal stigma related to their status can still hinder their ability to fully embrace this role, as they may feel judged or unsupported in their parenting journey (Saim et al., 2022).

The psychological well-being of women who become pregnant out of wedlock indicates that, despite the social and emotional challenges they face, there are efforts to achieve well-being through various means. Relationships with others often suffer due to stigma, but some women manage to improve these relationships over time. Research shows that women who become pregnant out of wedlock often experience social exclusion and shame, which can lead to isolation from their communities and families. For example, a study in South Africa, university students who became pregnant out of wedlock encountered negative attitudes from healthcare providers, which further reinforced their feelings of stigma and marginalization (Msipu Phiri et al., 2023). Regarding personal growth, some informants reported that their experiences drove them to enhance their resilience, despite the difficulties they encountered. Cheng et al. found that mothers with unplanned pregnancies might prioritize their children's well-being over personal ambitions,



resulting in a shift in their long-term goals (Cheng et al., 2016). Despite these challenges, many women expressed a strong desire to continue their education and advance their careers.

In terms of life purpose, many informants found meaning and direction through their focus on family and children. This focus can provide a source of motivation and stability. Research shows that women with unintended pregnancies frequently reassess their goals, often prioritizing their immediate responsibilities (Cheng et al., 2016). Regarding self-acceptance, the majority of informants had come to terms with their circumstances, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses without attempting to change fundamental aspects of themselves. Self-acceptance among women who become pregnant outside of marriage is influenced by a complex interplay of societal stigma, psychological factors, and support networks (Ljakoska, 2019; Msipu Phiri et al., 2023; Parrish et al., 2023). Although many women face considerable challenges in accepting their circumstances, this journey towards self-acceptance can lead to empowerment and a redefined sense of identity (Ljakoska, 2019).

While this study offers significant insights into the psychological well-being and meaningfulness of life for women who are pregnant outside of marriage, it has some limitations. Firstly, the informants' special activities made direct meetings challenging, which sometimes hindered the researchers' ability to fully understand the conveyed information due to the absence of non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. This limitation may have reduced opportunities to gather additional data. Secondly, the informants' busy schedules, balancing work and household responsibilities, made it difficult to arrange suitable interview times. This led to delays and occasional cancellations. Future research could address these issues by offering more flexible interview schedules, such as conducting interviews on weekends, to better accommodate informants' availability and reduce the likelihood of cancellations.

## CONCLUSION

Early adult women who became pregnant out of wedlock experienced varied levels of life meaningfulness and psychological well-being. Some individuals felt that their lives had lost meaning due to stress, depression, and shame, while others found continued meaning and value in their experiences, viewing the situation as an opportunity for personal growth and improvement. Their psychological well-being was also influenced by social stigma, which often disrupted their relationships with others. However, some women managed to maintain or even enhance these relationships. Aspects such as environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, and self-acceptance varied widely among the informants. While some demonstrated resilience and strength in navigating these challenges, others struggled to achieve balance in their lives. These experiences illustrate a complex spectrum of emotions and reflections, with some women successfully rediscovering meaning and well-being, while others are still navigating the recovery process.

This study has significant implications for supporting women who become pregnant outside of marriage in achieving meaningful lives and psychological well-being. The findings highlight a common decrease in life meaning and psychological well-being among these women. Therefore, it is crucial for government agencies, health institutions, and communities to provide comprehensive psychosocial support, including counseling and mentoring programs, to assist them in managing stress, depression, and shame. The results underscore the need for improved access to mental health services for early adult women facing out-of-wedlock pregnancies. This includes access to therapy, counseling, and other supportive resources that can aid in the process of finding life meaning and restoring psychological well-being.

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