

# Perceptions of Cebuano mothers about the Reproductive Health Law

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**Date Received:** 15th of August, 2015

**Date Accepted:** 10th of December, 2016

## ABSTRACT

The study made use of Husserlian transcendental (descriptive) qualitative design to determine Cebuano mothers' perceptions about the RH Law. The research was conducted in Cebu City particularly in Cebu North, Barangay Talamban. The study gathered information from eight (8) purposively chosen Cebuano mothers who have lived in Cebu City for the last six to ten years representing the different sectors: those who are college graduates, high school graduates, and those who are in church organizations. A semi-structured interview was used to gather the data. All information that was gathered from the informants were recorded. In order to analyze the data, Colaizzi's methodological way to deal with phenomenological inquiry was utilized. Based on the interviews of the informants, themes were derived that were categorized into the pros and cons of RH Law. Other themes of the study include RH Law being a population regulator, a forerunner of birth control methods and as a birth spacer. Sub-themes were also identified such as the RH Law as a promoter of artificial birth control, a solution to unwanted pregnancy and abortion, against the divine law, and a solution to poverty. Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that culture and religion play a pivotal role in influencing people to have varied, differing perceptions/perspectives. How a person puts meaning to a situation is greatly influenced by culture and religion

**Keywords:** Cebuano mothers, descriptive phenomenology, perception, reproductive health law

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Reproductive Health Law, popularly known as the "RH Law" is a Philippine law aiming to guarantee universal access to methods and information on birth control and maternal care. The bill has become the center of a contentious national debate. Presently there are two bills with the same goals: House Bill No. 4244 (An Act Providing for a Comprehensive Policy on Responsible Parenthood, Reproductive Health, and Population and Development, and For Other Purposes) introduced by Albay 1st district Representative Edcel Lagman, and Senate Bill No. 2378 (An Act Providing For a National Policy on Reproductive Health and Population and Development) introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (Tumbokon, 2012). The RH Law is highly divisive with experts, academics, religious institutions, and major political figures supporting and

opposing it, often criticizing the government and each other in the process. Debates and rallies for and against the law participated by thousands particularly those held by the opposition have been happening all over the country. One of the major concerns of the law, as indicated by the Delon Porcalla (2013), is that the populace in the Philippines makes it "the 12th most populous nation in the world today", and that the Filipino mothers' fertility rate is "at the upper bracket of 206 countries." It expresses what studies and surveys show that the Filipinos are responsive to having smaller-sized families through family planning methods. It also shows the rapid population growth exacerbates poverty while poverty spawns rapid population growth. Thus, its intention is to uplift quality of life by way of "consistent and coherent national population policy" (Lumayag et al., 2011).

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The debate still continues, up to the present. A considerable number of people agree with what the RH Law purports, and some members of the population disagree (David, 2011). Filipinos are still divided on the reproductive health bill. This research study will contribute to the information and intervention provided by the nursing profession since this would help shed light on what people think of the Reproductive Health Law and that culturally congruent care can be provided once perceptions are gathered. Furthermore, the practical value of the study for the nursing profession will be anchored on strengthening the role of the nurses as partners of the community in providing quality nursing care through promoting acts of delivering health teachings to individuals, families, and the community. By knowing Cebuano mothers' perceptions of the RH Law, nurses will be reminded of their role as providers of information while maintaining neutrality on their stand about the RH Law. Thus, they leave the final say to affected individuals, families, and community about what they believe the RH Law offers and leaving them with the autonomy to make decisions for their health care.

With this, the researchers conceptualized this study in order to determine the perceptions of Cebuano mothers about Reproductive Health Law. As a consequence, there would most likely be differing perceptions of the said law. Also, one of the researchers being a mother initiated the conduction of this study as she reflects the concerns of the law to her own family.

This study will also give us information on Cebuano mothers' knowledge and understanding of the RH Law which will be a basis for correcting misconceptions about it. The study will also be used as an instrument in order to provide correct, complete, and accurate information dissemination about the law.

## II. ATHEORETICAL STANCE

There was a suspension of a priori assumptions and suspension of literature review to prevent biases on the study, therefore identification of the theory was done after data collection.

**Domain of Inquiry.** The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of Cebuano mothers about the Reproductive Health Law.

Specially, it sought to answer the following queries: (a) What were the lived-experiences of the Cebuano mothers about the Reproductive Health Law; (b) What are the meanings of the lived experiences of the Cebuano mothers about the RH Law; (c) What action plan can be drafted based on the findings of the study?

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes Husserlian transcendental (descriptive) qualitative design, a phenomenological inquiry as the study explores what Talamban mothers experience with regards to the Reproductive Health Law and how they interpret their experiences. A descriptive qualitative design was used to get narrative information and responses from Cebuano mothers on their perceptions about the RH Law. This served as a baseline to know the informants' own perceptions of what the RH Law is for them. Another purpose was to measure the informants' own understanding about the RH Law.

The research was conducted in Cebu City particularly in Cebu North, Barangay Talamban. Talamban is one of the fastest growing residential barangay in Cebu City, where it emerged as one of top 5 emerging barangays with the highest population which is ideal for the study. People in the community have different perceptions about RH Law - they have different concerns, different assumptions (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1990). This was the reason the researcher conducted the study in Barangay Talamban. The city also has its access to people in the community through the barangay health centers and other institutions that are tasked to provide and deliver information about the RH Law.

The study gathered information from Cebuano mothers who are residents of Cebu City North, Barangay Talamban from the last six to ten years. The informants represented different sectors such as: college graduates, high school graduates, and those who were into church organizations. The informants included mothers who are full time mothers and those mothers who are employed to ascertain that varied perceptions about the law will be investigated.

Utilizing purposive sampling, a total of eight (8) informants were interviewed about their perceptions of the RH Law. All eight (8) informants provided quality information and depth of understanding about the RH Law.

Before data collection the informants were briefed and informed of what the research was all about particularly the subject of the study. Interviews were then conducted using guided questions. Information gathered from the informants was recorded with consent. After finalizing and transcribing the data gathered, the researchers erased all traces of the recordings to comply with privacy procedures.

Colaizzi's methodological approach to phenomenological inquiry was utilized to analyze information gathered in the study. Colaizzi's (1978) technique utilizes parts of Husserlian phenomenology, setting an importance on the description of the lived

experiences instead of a clarification. The data analysis is composed of seven stages: (1) Read and re-read every participants verbatim transcripts phenomena; (2) Meaningful information or expressions are extricated from informants' transcripts relating to research problem; (3) Conveyed meanings are organized from the significant statements; (4) Conveyed meanings are orderly arranged into clustered themes which develop into emergent themes; (5) Integration of the outcomes into a rich and exhaustive description of the lived experience; (6) Substantiation of the exhaustive description from the informants; and (7) Amalgamation of first hand and pertinent data taken from the informants' validation, and tailored to obtain congruence with the lived experience of the informants.

After careful review of the transcription of the informants' interview, meaningful statements were extracted.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The Pros and Cons of the RH Law.** This presents the data pertaining to the views of the informants on the RH Law. Based on the extracted themes, these are categorized according to the two prevailing conflicting opinions of the said law: its pros (RH Law as a positive thing), and its cons (RH Law as a negative thing).

**RH Law: A Positive Thing.** Some informants believe that the RH Law could bring positive effects. In one of the interviews conducted, Informant 6 stated that:

*Makaayu man sad ni ang RH Law para naku kay naka experience ko kun unsa ang daghan ug anak kay 5 ang akong anak. Lisod kon daghan ug anak kay dili sila nimu matagaan ora mismo sa ilang panginahanglanun. (RH Law is good for me for I experience how difficult it is to have many children. I have 5 children and it's hard to have many children because I cannot give their needs right away).*

Informant 4 also strengthened the positivity of the bill when it was mentioned by the informant that: "As per evaluation in our society it will give more benefits to the family who wants to control the spacing for the purpose of controlling growth". Furthermore, Informant 1 verbalized that:

For me RH Law is a better solution in controlling the increasing population. As we all know today, most of the young men and women including adults are liberated and aggressive when it comes to pre-marital sex,

and it results to unwanted pregnancy and ends in abortion without any fear and doubt in doing such things. ... So I think the government should strictly implement the law in order to minimize or to control the population growth in our country and to give a better future to the next generation.

Informant 5 also expressed that: "Let's face reality that we are overpopulated and the only solution to the problem is to control population growth. For this reason, we must support the RH Law in the congress. We must think of the positive way by endorsing the positive side of the RH Law." Lastly, Informant 7 believes that the RH Law is a positive thing especially when she mentioned that:

*Apan maka tabang sad sa ubang taw para dili magkadaghan ang ilang mga anak. Depende sa tawo kon unsay ilang sundon. (But it is useful for the other people to control the number of their children. It depends on what they choose to follow).*

Likhaan Center for Womens Health Incorporate (2011) stated ten great motivations to pass the RH Law. RH Law secures the wellbeing and lives of mothers. The WHO (World Health Organization) approximates the complications increases to fifteen (15) percent of pregnancies, reason to be hospitalize or include in maternal death. From the two (2) million or more live births, with the range of 300,000 maternal complications happen yearly. Consequently, over eleven (11) mothers die pointlessly every day.

A satisfactory number of birth specialists and immediate referral to health institutions with crisis obstetric care shows a life-sparing solution to maternal complications. For mothers who decided not to conceive, Family Planning (FP) is the best choice. The mentioned interventions are all included in Reproductive Health. The WHO recommended birth spacing should be observed to decrease infant mortality rate. In the Philippines, the infant death of less than (2) two years old is doubled with those who are three (3) years old. The more effective and user-friendly the family planning method used, the longer the child will survive.

Furthermore, the response of the majority is that they like to have smaller families. When studied about their ideal number of children, mothers in their 40s said that they like to have three children, with those individuals in their teens and early 20s wants to have two (2) kids.

In addition, couples often end up with families bigger than what they want. Typically, Filipino mothers desire

two (2) children however end up with three (3). The gap between what they want and the actual family size is existing in all social class, provinces, however it is very evident among the poor.

Furthermore, it promotes fairness for the less privileged families. Reproductive health displays some biases involving the rich and the poor. For instance, ninety four (94) percent of mothers in the well to do quintile have a qualified attendant during labor compared to twenty six (26) percent in the indigent category. The well-off have thrice higher tubal ligation rate in comparison to the less fortunate. This fairness disparity in tubal ligation partly clarifies why the rich can come up with their desired number of children and poor get an additional two (2). Newborn death among the poorest are thrice higher compared to the richest, which somewhat explains why the poor have more children. RH law will foster equity in health through sounder public health services accessible to underprivileged families. Another advantage is that it prevents induced abortion. Unplanned pregnancies ends up with induced abortion. All unplanned pregnancies, sixty eight (68) percent happens to mothers with no family planning method, and twenty four (24) percent occur to those making use of traditional family methods like withdrawal and calendar-abstinence. Moreover, the RH Law supports and deploys a great number of midwives, nurses and physicians. Reproductive health services are necessary where individuals are establishing their families. It also guarantees Reproductive health services will be widely available in every barangay health center, this service include family planning, maternal and newborn child care and includes management of STD's. A formidable reproductive health services will ensure the dissemination of healthful living of individuals. Additionally, it gives correct information of sex education. At present, a high number of young individuals get involved in married life without thinking and considering the effects of engaging in early sexual activities .That, in return can ruin their lives and also health. Another benefit is the reduction of cancer death. Delaying sex and practicing safe sex can prevent HPV infections, thus preventing cervical cancers. Self-breast exam and Pap-smear can recognize advanced signs of cancer that in turn, can be cured early. All of which are included in reproductive health issues. Contraceptives such as pills can lessen the risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer.

Lastly, it saves money that can be used for other welfare. Having Family Planning for all will increase the needed budget, but the expenses for unintended pregnancies is much higher compared to family planning expenses. There is proof that families with less children

do spend more on health and education (Likhaan Center for Women's Health Incorporated, 2011).

**RH Bill: A Negative Thing.** Some informants on the other hand have negative regard towards the RH Law considering that it is against the Catholic Church's teaching as it promotes artificial birth control methods. In fact, Informant 2 verbalized that "Personally I am not in favor for the RH Law for it recommends the use of artificial birth control." Further, Informant 3 expressed that "I'm not in favor of RH Law, it's against the will of God."

Lastly, Informant 7 expressed her concern on the RH Law as a violation of the Church's teaching but is ambivalent about it since it also brings positive effects. She mentioned that:

*Para nako dakong sala sa mata sa Dios apan maka tabang sad sa ubang tawo para dili magkadaghan ang ilang mga anak. Depende sa tawo kon unsay ilang sundon. Nako migamit man pud ko ana depende sa contraceptive nga gamiton nga dili kayo grabe. (For me, In the eyes of God, it is a grave sin, however it can also help other people in controlling their number of children depending on what they will follow. I am using contraceptions depending on how intense it is.*

Sambajon (2012) mentioned that the RH Law promotes contraception in all its unnatural methods necessarily including abortifacients and sterilization; contraception destroys the "order of existence of things" demonstrated in the course of the natural functions and processes of the reproductive system. It positively and directly frustrates the procreative potentials and arbitrarily dissociates the unitive and procreative meaning of the marital act. It cripples the language of marital sexuality and divests the conjugal union of its innate affective dimension. Moreover, numerous contraceptive methods are abortifacient. They work to alter the normal functioning of the endometrium to prevent the implantation of the zygote or the fertilized ovum thereby getting killed along the process.

He further mentioned that it was already scientifically proven that human life begins to exist at the completion of fertilization 5-7 to 10 days before its implantation. Thus, preventing it from implanting into the uterine lining (endometrium) by means of Pills, Depo-Provera, Norplant, Intra-Uterine Device (IUD), and others causing its termination constitutes what is called chemical/medical abortion. The act is both immoral and unconstitutional. Sterilization does not only arbitrarily

thwart the natural faculty of the marital act to generate life but it also destroys the functional integrity of the human body, particularly, of the reproductive system incapacitating it of performing organic functions vitally inherent to its nature (Sambajon, 2012).

Consequently, he also expressed that by the promotion of contraception, abortifacients, and sterilization, the RH Law does more harm than good. In its concern to prevent proliferation of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy and even abortion, the RH Law promotes condoms paving the way to opportunities of indiscriminate and unrestricted sexual activities and multiple sexual relations. The likelihood of such activities and relations is highly proximate considering the moral pluralism, particularly along sexuality that our society is beleaguered with, and the trends for the freedom of sexual revolution among teenagers. The use of condoms would only offset the reduction in infection and unwanted pregnancy rates resulting in a net increase in the incidence of persons infected with HIV and cases of pregnancy (Sambajon, 2012). While it is true that condoms help in prevention of STIs and pregnancy, it does not however provide a 100% in terms of its efficacy and effectiveness. But nevertheless it does help in the reduction of STI infection and unwanted pregnancies.

**RH Law as a Population Regulator.** This section presents the narrative responses of the informants pertaining to their perceptions of the RH Law as a means of controlling the growing population. The informants believe that the RH Law is the solution to the ever growing population of the country.

Informant 4 verbalized that:

As this time population growth is increase and we over populated. We should do something to control it, by endorsing RH Law.

Informant 1 also mentioned that:

For me, RH Law is a better solution in controlling the increasing population... So I think the government should pass this bill as soon as possible in order to minimize or to control the population growth in our country and to have a future for our next generation.

Informant 4 verbalized that:

As per evaluation in our society it will give more benefits to the family who wants to

control for the number of spacing for the purpose of controlling growth.

Informant 6 also said that:

*Para nko ang RH Law ay balaod pagpugong sa ating population nga motaas. ( For me RH Law, is a law to control our growing population).*

Informant 7 expressed that:

*Apan mka tabang sad sa ubang tawo pra dili magkadaghan ang ilang mga anak depende sa tawo kon unsay ilang sundon. (But it is useful for the other people to control the number of their children. It depends on what they chose).*

Lastly, Informant 8 expressed that:

Many couples today are very much productive in having children without thinking of the future of their children. Most of them are suffering from hunger due to poverty and suffering illness without any medication and many out of school youth. So I think the government should pass this bill as soon as possible in order to minimize or to control the population growth in our country and to have a future to our next generation.

These statements were supported by Senate Majority Floor Leader Senator Vicente Sotto who mentioned that indeed. The Reproductive Health Law is in actuality a population control measure. It is an act of trickiness, a shrewd and systematic way of concealing its genuine purpose: to radically decrease the family size and country's population (Macaraig, 2012).

One of the most concerning issues of Philippine government is the expanding rate of poverty in our nation. Having a big family is the closest source of poverty, as they cannot support their regular needs due to lack of job or salary cannot meet their essentials. However, the answer to prevent overpopulation and stop the increasing rate of poverty in our country is RH Law.

One of the content of RH Law is family planning which includes contraceptive methods that can help decrease the birth rate. Contraceptive methods can prevent sperm cells and egg cells from meeting and from later developing as a fetus inside the mother's womb (Green,

(2001).

"Prevent" isn't synonymous with "killing", the Catholic Church argument for using this method demonstrates that utilizing this prevents killing a life. They considered the sperm and the egg cells as a victim of this method, they don't have life still they are part of human existence. In male masturbation, millions of sperm cells were ejaculated and die, thus it means to say that they killed millions for the act and "killing" is a mortal sin. "Killing" is when the two (2) cells are developed and formed to an embryo, if there is an intentional termination from the womb, that is considered as "killing" and it is called "Abortion" (Stephens, Jordens, Kerridge, & Ankeny, (2010).

**A Forerunner of Birth Control Methods and a Birth Spacer.** This section deals with the theme on the RH Law being a promoter of birth control methods. The RH Law as a policy states that the State "guarantees universal access to medically-safe, legal, affordable, effective and quality reproductive health care services, methods, devices, supplies and relevant information and education thereon even as it prioritizes the needs of women and children, among other underprivileged sectors" (Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation Inc., 2011). In fact, one goal of RH Law is to provide free access of artificial birth control to the public.

**Promoter of Artificial Birth Control.** The RH Law is said to promote artificial birth control methods. Informant 2 mentioned that:

Personally I am not in favor for the RH Law for it recommends the use of artificial birth control.

Informant 6 further explained that :

*Mao nga nagamit jud ko og contraceptives nga condom.* (That's why I used contraceptives which is condom).

Informant 7 also mentioned that:

*Nako migamit man pud ko ana depende sa contraceptive nga gamiton nga dili kayo grabe.* (For me I used contraceptives but it depends on their effectiveness).

It should also be noted that section 7 of House Bill 4244 mentioned about access to family arranging whereby all accredited health facilities shall provide a full range of modern family planning methods, except in specialty hospital which may render such services on optimal basis For poor patients, such services shall be fully covered by Phil Health Insurance and/or

government financial assistance on a no balance billing (Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation Inc., 2011).

**A Birth-Spacer.** In one of the conversations with the informants, Informant 4 said that "As per evaluation in our society it will give more benefits to the family who wants to control the number of spacing for the purpose of controlling growth".

Using data from the 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey, Lagman stated that twenty-two percent of married Filipino women have an unmet need for family planning services, an increase by more than one-third since the 2003 National Demographic and Housing Survey. Our women are having more children than they desire, as seen in the gap between desired fertility (2.5 children) and actual fertility (3.5 children), implying a significant unmet need for reproductive health services, state some Ateneo de Manila University professors. The Bill provides that "The State shall support couples, parents and individuals to achieve their desired family size within the context of responsible parenthood for sustainable development and urge them to have two kids as the ideal family size and there are some informants who stated about number of children and meeting their needs (Pernia et al, 2011).

**A Solution to Unwanted Pregnancy and Abortion.** This section lays down the information gathered pertaining to the perceptions of the informants regarding the RH Law as means of solving unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

Informant 1 mentioned that "As we all know today most of the young men and women including adults are liberated and aggressive when it comes to pre-marital sex. This results to unwanted pregnancy and ends in abortion without any fear and doubt in doing such things".

According to the RH Law, one of its elements is "prevention of abortion and management of post-abortion complications." It provides that "the government shall ensure that all women needing care for post-abortion complications shall be treated and counseled in a humane, non-judgmental and compassionate manner." It additionally expresses that "abortion remains a crime and is punishable," as the Constitution declares that "the State shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. To accomplish its goals, the bill offers for mandatory reproductive health education and that it be taught in "an age-appropriate manner... by adequately trained teachers starting from Grade 5 up to Fourth Year High School (Republic of the Philippines House of Representatives, 2012)."

Unplanned pregnancies lead mostly to all induce

abortions. With these type of pregnancies, sixty eight percent occurs to mothers without family planning, and twenty four percent occurs to women using traditional family planning like withdrawal or calendar-abstinence. If women use birth spacing and stop conceiving with the use of modern family planning, abortion will decrease by five hundred thousand- close to ninety percent of the estimated total. Philippines where abortion is a criminal offense, and where ninety thousand mothers are hospitalized yearly due to complication. it would be careless not to ensure prevention through family planning (Likhaan Center for Women's Health Incorporated, 2011).

**Against the Divine Law.** Another central issue is the morality of contraception. Around 81 percent of Filipinos are Catholics, and the Catholic Church teaches that the immorality of contraception is not a matter of religious doctrine (e.g. liturgy) but is of an ethical nature, such as lying and prostitution, which common ethical reasoning can understand. It says that contraception is evil because it desecrates sex which is intrinsically linked to new sacred human beings, it makes spouses lie about their total self-gift to their spouse, by not surrendering their personal fertility, and is an abuse of the function of reproductive organs (Chaput, 1998). Being a catholic country, Filipinos have been indoctrinated about the immorality of contraception. Religion greatly influences the peoples' thinking about matters affecting society. Contraception being tagged as immoral by the church remains as it is and is a stand that the church firmly believes.

Informant 3 strongly expressed that it is against the will of God. Furthermore, Informant 7 mentioned that:

Para nako dakong sala sa mata sa Dios (For me, it's a big sin in the eyes of God).

Lastly, Informant 8 verbalized that:

It contradicts one of the teachings of our church, particularly the propagation of life authored by God himself.

The Catholic Church strongly opposes Reproductive Health Bill because use of artificial control methods could possibly lead to promiscuity and possible termination of newly implanted product of conception should fertilization happened. These acts would be against Natural Moral Law (Macklin, 2012). Moreover, the Catholic Church strongly promotes human reproduction, as if the number of children, in itself, is a clear evidence of authentic Christian life. However, the Church is for responsible parenthood, which means

openness to life within marriage, and spacing of birth, only when needed for reasons of serious medical condition or grave poverty, through sole use of natural family planning methods (Gorospe, 1969).

**Solution to Poverty.** Informant 4 also verbalized that:

Many couples today are very much productive in having children without thinking about the future of their children. Most of them are suffering from hunger due to poverty and suffering from illness without any medication and many are out of school youth.

The factual score on populace and poverty. Initially, the experience from throughout Asia shows that a population policy cum government-supported family planning program has been a significant match to sensible economic policy and poverty. However, the weaker the state's capacity to impose taxes and activate assets, the more negative the effect will be on the economic status of a vast growing population, which in each developing country is mainly represented by the least urbanized, uneducated and poorest section of population (Pernia, et al., 2011).

Second, at the micro level, family size is mainly related with being poor, as constantly reflected in household surveys. Thus, poor families are greatly burdened when they have more children. The most recent data reveals that poverty rate is less than ten (10) percent for a partner with one (1) kid, and increases progressively to fifty seven (57) percent for a family with nine (9) kids or more (National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 2003). Bigger families likewise make less investment in human capital per child –investment that is essential in stopping the chain of intergenerational poverty. A typical yearly budget on education per schoolchild ranges to Php 5,558 (one child) to Php 682 for a family with nine (9) or more kids, and health budget per capita drops from Php 1,700 to Php 150 (Family Income and Expenditure Survey, 2003; Pernia et al., 2011).

Third, there is an indication that indigent families favor less number of family members but failed to attain their preference. Among the ten (10) percent poorest mothers of reproductive age, forty four (44) percent of pregnancies are unplanned (Family Planning Survey, 2006; Pernia et al., 2011).

Unplanned births signifies a neglected need for family planning concerns. With the indigent families, twenty two (22) percent of married women in their reproductive period express avoidance to pregnancy and still not protecting themselves from having one.

Contraceptive is still not accepted among low economic population due to less information and access to the program. Amongst twenty (20) percent of mothers, more than half do not use family planning while one third uses modern methods (FPS, 2006; Penia et al., 2011). With the desire to avoid pregnancy, forty one (41) percent of the poor mothers don't use birth control methods (Penia et al., 2011).

Fourth, lack of access to birth control has significant health implication. Maternal death reflects an increase of 162 for each 100,000 live births and is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 52 by 2015. Numerous and closely-spaced children increases the chances of having illness and premature death. Ten mothers die everyday due to pregnancy and related with labor (NDHS 2003). Unplanned pregnancies result in induced and intentional abortion with almost half a million per year, as stated in the data in 2000 (Juarez, Cabigon, & Hussain, 2005; Pernia et al., 2011).

Fifth, the health hazard with unwanted pregnancy are increasing for teenagers for they are likely to have complication. Most of the dropout females got pregnant in their early teens and only three (3) percent are in college (Pernia et al., 2011).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the perceptions of individuals really vary from one another. Culture and religion are pivotal in a person's perception. With this, the passage of RH Law is an event that is in question at hand. Variety of reactions and perceptions have been gathered, and it have been found out in the study that culture and religion are strong factors in the development of meanings to a given phenomenon. The perceptions of the informants of the study were based on what the Cebuano mothers believed and not what basically are true. Despite knowing the advantages and disadvantages of the RH Law the symbolic meaning of the RH Law overrides the advantages and disadvantages it brings.

With this theory Cebuano mothers based their perceptions on the RH Law on the meaning, language, and thought they personally experienced with the RH Law as may be seen the figure. However, in the giving of meaning, the cultural and religious aspects play important role as these greatly affect to how the Cebuano mothers give meaning to the RH Law.

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Originality Index:	92 %
Similarity Index:	8 %
Paper ID:	897381675
Grammar:	Checked



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