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Conscious Conception: A Qualitative Study of Intentional Prenatal Engagement and Parental Experience

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This study explores the concept of Conscious Conception as a form of intentional psychological engagement during pregnancy. While existing research in prenatal psychology has largely emphasized risk factors, such as stress and emotional vulnerability, limited attention has been given to proactive and reflective parental experiences. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study examines how parents engage with their psychological and emotional processes during pregnancy. Data were collected using in-depth, semistructured interviews with parents who reported intentional prenatal practices. Reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework revealed five core themes: emotional preparedness, psychological agency, prenatal bonding, identity transition, and acceptance of uncertainty. Findings suggest that pregnancy can be experienced as a process of growth, rather than solely a period of vulnerability. Conscious Conception is proposed as an integrative conceptual framework for understanding intentional engagement before and during pregnancy, emphasizing emotional awareness, relational meaning-making, and adaptive coping. Implications for prenatal education and support are discussed.

Keywords: prenatal psychology, conscious conception, phenomenology, prenatal attachment, parental identity, qualitative research, prenatal engagement

Pregnancy is a period of psychological transformation involving emotional, cognitive, and relational changes that shape parental identity and early developmental environments. Within prenatal psychology, research has focused on risk factors such as maternal stress, anxiety, and depression and their implications for maternal well-being and child development (Glover, 2014; Lautarescu et al., 2020). Although this work has advanced understanding of vulnerability during pregnancy, this literature predominantly frames the prenatal period in terms of risk, pathology, and intervention.

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In contrast, perspectives in psychological science increasingly recognize pregnancy as a period of active engagement in which individuals interpret, regulate, and make meaning of their experiences. Constructs such as emotional awareness, prenatal bonding, and reflective functioning suggest that parents are not merely passive recipients of biological processes but active participants in shaping their experience of pregnancy (Branjerdporn et al., 2020; Rusanen et al., 2021). Despite these developments, limited research has examined how parents consciously engage with prenatal experiences outside structured clinical or intervention-based settings.

Conscious Conception is proposed in this study as an integrative conceptual framework for understanding pregnancy as an intentional and reflective process. Rather than positioning prenatal experience solely in terms of outcomes or risk mitigation, the framework emphasizes awareness, emotional engagement, relational alignment, and meaning-making as central to the transition to parenthood. This perspective aligns with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which highlights agency and self-regulation, and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

Within this framework, four interrelated dimensions are proposed. The first dimension, Parental Alignment, refers to the intentional preparation and alignment of physical health, lifestyle practices, emotional readiness, and shared parental goals. The second dimension, Conscious Environmental Preparation, emphasizes awareness of stress, nutrition, lifestyle, and psychosocial conditions that may influence parental well-being and developmental outcomes. The third dimension, Mindful Prenatal Engagement, reflects the deliberate cultivation of emotional connection, reflective awareness, and supportive prenatal experiences throughout pregnancy. The fourth dimension, Introspective Partnership, involves self-reflection, emotional growth, and awareness of intergenerational patterns that may influence future parenting experiences.

Rather than functioning as a clinical intervention, Conscious Conception is presented as a reflective psychological orientation that encourages prospective parents to engage intentionally with the transition to parenthood. The present study therefore seeks to explore how individuals experience and interpret this orientation within their lived experiences and whether such intentional engagement contributes to emotional preparedness, psychological agency, prenatal bonding, and parental identity development.

Several established constructs address aspects of prenatal experience, including maternal–fetal attachment, prenatal bonding, mindfulness, reflective functioning, and transition-to-parenthood processes. Conscious Conception is proposed not as a replacement for these frameworks but as an integrative orientation that brings together emotional awareness, reflection, relational alignment, meaning-making, and active participation in pregnancy. This lens helps clarify how interconnected processes may shape parental experience before and during pregnancy.

Existing research within prenatal psychology has highlighted the importance of prenatal attachment and emotional connection during pregnancy. Maternal–fetal attachment has been described as the emotional bond that develops between parents and their unborn child and has

been associated with psychological well-being, adaptive prenatal behaviors, and postnatal parent–infant relationships (Branjerdporn et al., 2020; Rusanen et al., 2021). Contemporary perspectives suggest that prenatal attachment is not merely an emotional outcome, but an active developmental process shaped by reflection, anticipation, and meaning-making during pregnancy.

Pregnancy is also recognized as a developmental transition in adult life. The transition to parenthood involves psychological, relational, and identity-related changes as individuals prepare for new responsibilities and evolving family roles. Research suggests that this transition often requires integrating emerging parental identities with existing self-concepts, prompting reflection on personal values, relationships, and future aspirations (Mercer, 2004). Such processes have been linked to adaptation, emotional growth, and the construction of meaning during the prenatal period.

The literature on prenatal attachment and the transition to parenthood suggests that pregnancy can be understood not only as a biological event but also as a developmental journey. This foundation supports the examination of Conscious Conception as a reflective orientation that may influence how individuals engage with and interpret prenatal experiences.

Another relevant area of research concerns reflective functioning and mindfulness during pregnancy. Reflective functioning refers to an individual's capacity to understand and interpret internal mental states, including thoughts, emotions, intentions, and motivations, both in oneself and in others. Within the context of pregnancy, reflective capacities have been associated with greater emotional awareness, adaptive coping, and more meaningful engagement with the transition to parenthood (Slade, 2005). Parents who engage in reflective processes are often better able to interpret their experiences, regulate emotional responses, and develop coherent narratives around pregnancy and emerging parenthood.

Similarly, mindfulness-based approaches have received increasing attention within prenatal psychology. Mindfulness practices encourage present-moment awareness, nonjudgmental observation of internal experiences, and acceptance of uncertainty. Research has suggested that mindfulness during pregnancy may support emotional regulation, reduce distress, and strengthen awareness of the prenatal experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Sari et al., 2023). These findings indicate that intentional attention to internal experience may shape how individuals experience pregnancy.

Research on reflective functioning and mindfulness further suggests that pregnancy involves more than physiological adaptation. It may also offer opportunities for growth, self-awareness, and intentional engagement, supporting further examination of Conscious Conception as a framework for understanding how individuals make meaning of prenatal experiences.

Despite its conceptual relevance, Conscious Conception remains underexplored within mainstream research. Existing literature has largely relied on quantitative methodologies that prioritize measurement and generalization, often overlooking the depth and complexity of lived experience. As a result, qualitative inquiry is needed to examine how parents perceive, interpret, and make meaning of intentional prenatal practices within their lived contexts.

Addressing this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore parents' lived experiences of Conscious Conception. The study seeks to understand how parents conceptualize intentional prenatal engagement, how they experience emotional and relational processes during pregnancy, and how they interpret the psychological significance of these experiences. By foregrounding participant narratives, the study contributes to a more nuanced and experience-centered understanding of prenatal psychology.

In doing so, the research moves beyond deficit-oriented models and offers a balanced perspective that recognizes both the challenges of pregnancy and opportunities for growth. The findings can inform theory, practice, and future research on prenatal engagement while expanding prenatal psychology beyond risk-focused paradigms.

Methods

Participants

Participants for the present study were selected using purposive sampling, a commonly employed strategy in qualitative research that involves identifying individuals with direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation. The sample consisted of parents who reported engaging in intentional prenatal practices consistent with the conceptual framework of Conscious Conception.

The final sample comprised 10 participants, including 7 gestational mothers and 3 partners (fathers and non-gestational partners). This composition enabled the inclusion of both direct prenatal experiences and relational perspectives associated with the prenatal period. Participants ranged in age from 29 to 38 years, with the majority falling within the 29–32 age range. Regarding parental experience, 8 participants were first-time parents, while 2 had prior parenting experience, with their first child aged between 4 and 6 years.

Inclusion criteria required participants to have consciously engaged in reflective or intentional practices during the preconception or prenatal period. These practices included, but were not limited to, emotional self-awareness, mindfulness, reflective intention-setting, and deliberate engagement with prenatal bonding. Participants were required to have completed their pregnancy and to be able to reflect retrospectively on their experiences.

Exclusion criteria included individuals who did not engage in intentional prenatal practices or who were unwilling to participate in in-depth interviews. Participants who were unable to provide informed consent or who preferred not to have their interviews recorded were also excluded from the study.

Recruitment concluded when additional interviews no longer contributed meaningful new insights. This sample size is consistent with phenomenological research standards, which prioritize depth and richness of lived experience over numerical representativeness.

Recruitment was conducted through purposive sampling within pregnancy and parenting communities associated with the researcher's professional network and educational initiatives. Potential participants were approached through parenting groups, prenatal education networks, and voluntary invitations shared with individuals connected to these communities. Interested

individuals were screened through a brief preliminary discussion to determine whether they had engaged in reflective, emotional, psychological, or preparatory practices before conception or during pregnancy. Eligible individuals received information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and only those who met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate were enrolled in the study.

Design

The study adopted a qualitative research design grounded in a phenomenological approach. Qualitative research is particularly suited to exploring phenomena that involve subjective meaning, emotional processes, and lived experience. In the context of prenatal psychology, where experiences are deeply personal and relational, a qualitative design enables an in-depth understanding of how individuals interpret and make sense of them.

Phenomenology was selected as the guiding methodological framework because it focuses on capturing the essence of lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was appropriate for examining how participants interpreted Conscious Conception within their own prenatal experiences.

The present study aligns with interpretivist and constructivist epistemological perspectives, which view reality as socially and psychologically constructed. Within this framework, knowledge is co-created through interaction between the researcher and participants, and the researcher plays an active role in interpreting participant narratives while remaining grounded in the data.

Data Collection

Data were collected using semistructured, in-depth interviews designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' experiences. A semistructured interview guide was developed based on the research objectives and existing literature, allowing for consistency across interviews and flexibility to explore emerging themes.

Interviews were conducted either in person or online, depending on participant availability and preference. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes, allowing participants time to reflect on and articulate their experiences. With informed consent, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy during transcription and analysis. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim shortly after each interview, and transcripts were reviewed against the recordings for accuracy and completeness. All recordings and transcripts were stored securely on password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher and were used exclusively for research purposes.

The study was conducted independently and involved nonclinical interviews with consenting adults reflecting on their retrospective experiences. Under the applicable research context, formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) review was not required. Nevertheless, all procedures were conducted in accordance with ethical principles for research involving human participants, consistent with the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017). Participant confidentiality and anonymity

were protected through the use of pseudonyms, the removal of identifying information from transcripts, and the secure storage of all study materials. Interviews were conducted in a respectful and nonintrusive manner, and participants were free to decline or skip any questions they did not wish to answer.

The interview process was conducted in a nonjudgmental and empathetic manner, encouraging participants to share openly. Probing questions were used where necessary to clarify meanings and deepen understanding. This approach facilitated the collection of nuanced data reflective of participants' lived experiences.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

In the first phase, interview transcripts were read and re-read to achieve familiarity and immersion in the data. Initial notes were made to capture preliminary observations. In the second phase, meaningful units of data were systematically coded, with a focus on participants' descriptions of emotional awareness, intentional engagement, prenatal bonding, and identity-related experiences.

In the third phase, codes were examined for patterns and organized into potential themes. These themes were then reviewed and refined in the fourth phase to ensure coherence, internal consistency, and alignment with the data. In the fifth phase, themes were clearly defined and named to reflect the essence of participants' experiences. The final phase involved producing a structured narrative that integrated themes with supporting data extracts.

To enhance trustworthiness, reflexive practices were maintained throughout the research process. The researcher engaged in ongoing reflection to reduce subjective bias and keep interpretations grounded in participant narratives. Coding consistency was supported through iterative comparison of transcripts and themes. Rich descriptions and direct participant quotations were used to enhance credibility, transferability, and transparency.

Researcher Positioning and Reflexivity

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as an active instrument in the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data. Accordingly, it is important to acknowledge the researcher's relationship to the topic and the potential influence of prior experiences and assumptions on the research process.

The primary researcher has professional experience in pregnancy, parenting, and family well-being and is the founder of the MyShishu parenting ecosystem, which focuses on prenatal education, conscious parenting, and family development. Through work with expectant parents over several years, the researcher developed an interest in understanding how individuals prepare for parenthood and make meaning of their prenatal experiences. This background contributed to the development of the concept of Conscious Conception and informed the motivation for the present study.

Recognizing the potential influence of prior beliefs and experiences, reflexive practices were employed throughout the research process to enhance trustworthiness and minimize interpretive bias. During data collection, interview questions were designed to encourage open-ended exploration rather than confirmation of predetermined assumptions. Participants were invited to describe their experiences in their own words, and probing questions were used to clarify meanings rather than direct responses.

Throughout data analysis, the researcher engaged in ongoing self-reflection and reflexive notetaking to examine personal assumptions and ensure that emerging themes remained grounded in participant narratives. Coding decisions and thematic interpretations were continuously reviewed against the original interview data to maintain fidelity to participants' lived experiences. Particular attention was given to identifying patterns that emerged from the data rather than imposing existing conceptual frameworks onto participant accounts. These reflexive strategies were implemented to strengthen the study's credibility, transparency, and trustworthiness while acknowledging the researcher's professional proximity to the subject matter.

Results

Thematic analysis of participant narratives revealed five major themes that captured the lived experiences of Conscious Conception and emerged iteratively through the analytic process. These themes reflect patterns of emotional awareness, intentional engagement, relational processes, identity transformation, and adaptive responses to uncertainty. Each theme is presented below along with its corresponding subthemes.

Conscious Awareness and Emotional Preparedness

Participants described heightened awareness of their emotional states during pregnancy and efforts to engage with these emotions reflectively. They became more attentive to internal experiences, including fluctuations in mood, thoughts, and bodily sensations. Rather than avoiding or suppressing emotions, they reported consciously acknowledging and processing them.

Awareness of Emotional States

Participants described developing a deeper awareness of their emotional responses, including moments of anxiety, joy, uncertainty, and anticipation. One participant shared, "I became more aware of what I was feeling every day. Instead of ignoring my emotions, I started observing them and understanding where they were coming from." Participants described that this awareness enabled them to recognize emotional patterns and respond more thoughtfully.

Reflective Emotional Engagement

Participants reported engaging in reflection as a way of understanding their emotional experiences. A participant explained, "Earlier, I would react immediately, but during pregnancy I started pausing and noticing what I was feeling before responding." This reflection was

described as a deliberate process of observing and interpreting emotions rather than reacting impulsively.

Emotional Preparedness for Parenthood

Increased emotional awareness contributed to a sense of preparedness for parenthood. Participants expressed feeling more equipped to manage emotional challenges associated with pregnancy and early parenting.

Intentional Engagement as Psychological Agency

Intentional engagement fostered a sense of agency during pregnancy. Participants described Conscious Conception as an active process involving deliberate attention to thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Deliberate Attention and Awareness

Participants reported consciously directing their attention toward their experiences, including their emotional responses and interactions with their environment.

Sense of Personal Agency

Participants expressed feeling a sense of control over how they responded to their experiences, even in situations where external circumstances were beyond their control. One participant shared, “I felt like I had a role to play in this journey. Even if I couldn’t control everything, I could control how I responded to my thoughts and emotions.”

Active Participation in the Prenatal Experience

Participants described themselves as active participants in the prenatal journey rather than passive recipients of biological processes. A further participant reflected, “Being intentional did not mean controlling everything. It meant being present in the experience and recognizing that my choices, thoughts, and actions still had meaning during the journey.”

Prenatal Bonding as a Relational Process

Participants experienced emotional connection with their unborn child as an evolving relational process influenced by awareness, reflection, and context.

Development of Emotional Connection

Participants reported experiencing moments of emotional closeness with the unborn child, often associated with reflection or intentional awareness. One participant shared, “There were moments when I felt deeply connected to the baby, like I was already forming a relationship, even before birth.”

Fluctuating Nature of Bonding

Bonding was not described as constant but as fluctuating in response to emotional states and situational factors. A participant described, “Some days I felt a stronger connection than others, but whenever I intentionally paused and focused on the baby, I felt a sense of closeness and responsibility that made the experience more meaningful.”

Meaning-Making in the Parent–Child Relationship

Participants interpreted prenatal bonding as a meaningful relational experience that contributed to their emerging identity as parents. Another participant reflected, “I often found myself talking to the baby even when I was alone. It helped me feel connected and reminded me that the pregnancy was not just happening to me but that a relationship was already beginning.”

Identity Transition and Meaning-Making

Participants described pregnancy as a period of identity transition. Reflection helped them integrate evolving roles, values, and self-concepts as they prepared for parenthood.

Evolving Self-Concept

Participants described changes in how they perceived themselves, including shifts in priorities, values, and identity. One participant shared, “I could feel myself changing as a person. I was not just thinking about myself anymore—I was slowly becoming a parent.”

Integration of Parental Identity

Participants reported efforts to integrate their pre-existing identity with their emerging role as parents. Another participant noted, “It wasn’t just about becoming a parent after birth; I felt the transition had already started within me during pregnancy.”

Narrative Construction and Meaning-Making

Participants described constructing personal narratives that helped them make sense of their experiences and transition into parenthood.

Reflections on Limitations and Uncertainty

Participants recognized uncertainty as an inevitable part of pregnancy and described adaptive responses to perceived limitations. When expectations did not align with lived experiences, they drew on acceptance and flexibility.

Recognition of Uncontrollable Factors

Participants acknowledged that not all aspects of pregnancy could be controlled or predicted. This awareness reduced unrealistic expectations and supported a more balanced outlook. One participant shared, “I realized that not everything is in my control. Accepting that actually made me feel calmer and more balanced.”

Emotional Flexibility and Acceptance

Acceptance emerged as a key coping mechanism. Participants described learning to remain emotionally flexible and open in the face of uncertainty, allowing them to navigate challenges without excessive distress. A different participant reflected, "There were moments when things did not go according to my expectations. Instead of becoming overwhelmed, I learned to focus on what I could control and let go of what I could not."

Psychological Balance and Realism

Participants emphasized balance and realism rather than perfection. Conscious Conception was described as a flexible orientation rather than a rigid set of expectations, supporting stability and self-compassion. Another participant explained, "At first, I wanted everything to be perfect, but pregnancy taught me that uncertainty is part of the journey. Learning to accept that reduced a lot of unnecessary stress."

Cross-Case Observations

Although the five themes were evident across the participant group, variations were observed in the way individuals described and prioritized their experiences. First-time parents tended to place greater emphasis on emotional preparedness, uncertainty, and identity transition, often describing pregnancy as a period of significant personal transformation. Participants with previous parenting experience more frequently discussed intentional engagement, drawing on lessons learned from earlier pregnancies and reporting a greater sense of confidence in navigating the prenatal period.

Differences were also observed between gestational mothers and partners. Gestational mothers generally described more direct experiences of emotional awareness and prenatal bonding, whereas partners more frequently emphasized relational support, shared responsibility, and intentional participation in the pregnancy journey. Despite these variations, participants consistently described Conscious Conception as involving intentional reflection, emotional engagement, and active participation in the transition to parenthood.

No strongly contradictory cases emerged that challenged the overall thematic structure. However, participants differed in the intensity, frequency, and personal meaning attributed to specific experiences, highlighting the individual and context-dependent nature of intentional prenatal engagement.

Discussion

The present study explored the lived experiences of parents who engaged in Conscious Conception using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Rather than restating the themes in detail, this section interprets the findings in relation to existing psychological literature and theoretical frameworks.

Participants' accounts highlight the role of emotional awareness in shaping prenatal experience. Their descriptions align with research linking emotional regulation and awareness

with well-being during pregnancy (DiPietro et al., 2008; Glover, 2014). Whereas prior studies often conceptualize emotional regulation as a response to stress, the present findings illustrate how participants experienced awareness as a proactive orientation. This shift from reactive to proactive engagement reflects a strengths-based perspective within prenatal psychology.

Participants' descriptions of agency are consistent with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes self-regulation and agency in human behavior (Bandura, 1986), and with self-determination theory, which highlights autonomy and intrinsic motivation as components of well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The present study contributes to these frameworks by showing how agency was experienced during pregnancy, in which external circumstances may limit control, yet internal engagement remains accessible.

The third theme, prenatal bonding as a relational process, offers a nuanced understanding of emotional connection with the unborn child. Participants described bonding as dynamic and fluctuating, shaped by emotional states and reflective engagement. This finding is consistent with research on maternal–fetal attachment, which emphasizes the role of emotional representations in prenatal bonding (Branjerdporn et al., 2020; Rusanen et al., 2021). However, the present study extends this literature by foregrounding the subjective and evolving nature of bonding rather than treating it as a stable or uniformly positive construct. This perspective supports a more realistic and compassionate understanding of prenatal attachment.

Participants also described pregnancy as a period of identity reorganization. This interpretation aligns with developmental and constructivist perspectives that view identity as shaped through life transitions and narrative meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978). The study adds to this literature by illustrating how prenatal engagement may be experienced as part of the development and integration of an emerging parental identity.

Participants' reflections on uncertainty underscore the role of acceptance and flexibility in adaptation. Their accounts align with research on adaptive coping and mindfulness, which identifies acceptance and flexibility as components of resilience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Sari et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the importance of framing intentional practices as flexible orientations rather than rigid expectations, reducing the potential strain associated with perfectionism.

Conscious Conception may therefore be understood as a reflective orientation associated with participants' experiences of emotional awareness, agency, relational engagement, and identity development during pregnancy. Rather than positioning prenatal experience solely within a framework of risk and intervention, the study highlights how participants perceived intentional engagement as contributing to meaningful experience.

The study contributes to prenatal psychology by offering an experiential perspective that complements existing quantitative research. By focusing on lived experience, it provides insight into how parents interpret and engage with prenatal processes in real-life contexts. These findings suggest that prenatal care may benefit from approaches that support reflective awareness, emotional engagement, and flexibility while expanding prenatal psychology beyond risk mitigation.

These findings also have practical implications for professionals working in prenatal and perinatal settings. Prenatal education programs, childbirth preparation courses, and support services may benefit from incorporating opportunities for reflective dialogue, emotional awareness, and intentional engagement alongside traditional health-focused content. Encouraging parents to explore their thoughts, emotions, expectations, and emerging identities may help them feel more prepared during the transition to parenthood.

From a clinical perspective, intentional prenatal engagement may complement approaches aimed at promoting parental well-being. Rather than focusing exclusively on preventing distress, prenatal support services may also foster strengths such as self-awareness, reflective capacity, emotional flexibility, and relational connection. Such an approach aligns with strengths-based models of psychological health and may contribute to a holistic understanding of prenatal well-being.

The present study also highlights the value of viewing pregnancy as a developmental and meaning-making process. Supporting parents as they consciously engage with prenatal experiences may enhance their sense of agency, preparedness, and resilience during a period often marked by change and uncertainty.

Limitations

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a relatively small sample of ten participants, which is consistent with phenomenological research but may limit the transferability of findings to broader populations. The purpose of the study was to explore depth and meaning rather than achieve statistical generalization.

Second, participants were recruited through communities associated with intentional parenting and prenatal engagement, which may have resulted in a sample that was more motivated, reflective, or positively oriented toward Conscious Conception than the general population. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of individuals who approach pregnancy through different perspectives or circumstances.

Third, the study relied on retrospective self-reports, which may be influenced by memory biases and personal interpretations of past experiences. Participants' accounts reflect subjective meaning-making processes and may not capture all aspects of their prenatal experiences.

Finally, as with all qualitative research, the researcher's background and professional involvement in the field may have influenced data interpretation despite the reflexive strategies employed throughout the research process. While efforts were made to maintain transparency and trustworthiness, alternative interpretations of the data remain possible.

Future research involving larger, more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and mixed-methods approaches may provide further insight into the role of intentional prenatal engagement across different cultural and social contexts.

Conclusion

The present study explored the lived experiences of parents who engaged in Conscious Conception using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Conscious Conception is best

understood not as a prescriptive or outcome-driven practice but as a flexible, reflective orientation. By focusing on participants' narratives, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how intentional prenatal engagement is experienced through emotional awareness, agency, relational bonding, and identity transition.

From a practical perspective, prenatal care and support may benefit from approaches that foster reflection, emotional engagement, and flexibility. Such approaches may help parents navigate pregnancy with greater preparedness and resilience.

Future research should build on these findings through mixed-methods, longitudinal, and cross-cultural studies that further examine intentional prenatal engagement in diverse contexts. As an experience-centered perspective, Conscious Conception may complement existing prenatal care models by supporting parental preparedness and well-being.

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