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## A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AT A YOUNG AGE

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### Abstract

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This study aims to find out the experiences encountered by the parents at a very young age considering their maturity and financial capabilities. This study highlights the form of gathering data which is conducted using an interview. This is done in a dyad form wherein only one respondent is involved in the interview. The term qualitative research refers to the collection and analysis of non-numerical data and is sometimes based on a phenomenon which could be in a form of a survey questionnaire or an interview. Based on the data and analysis; poverty is the main reason for entering a marriage. Generally, the kind of life wished by everybody to have was not merely dictated by fate, it was a manifestation of personal choice. Each individual has their own choices in what to pursue and to sacrifice, the only sure thing that a person can do is to prepare for the consequences that await in the process

**Keywords:** Experiences; Maturity; Early Marriage; Phenomenological Study

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### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a stage where teenagers experience adjustments in their physical and emotional attributes (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). Young people prefer to go to their friends instead of to their parents due to being influenced by heavy peer pressure. Early childhood also constitutes the sexual maturation phase (Montgomery, 2003). One of the challenges is early pregnancy which drives women in high school to quit studying (Brindis & Philber, 2003). For educators, policymakers, and the general public, this predicament is visible and hence an important concern of society (Spear, 2004). In the Philippines, teenage pregnancy has risen 70% over 10 years (Ugochi, 2012). The country representative of the United Nations Popular Activities Fund (UNFPA) stated that the frequency of pregnancies among adolescents in the country is an issue that the organization takes significant care of and which exposes girls (10-19) to high risk. Pregnant young women are growing in the country and the majority are unmarried. The trend is growing.

Young women during pregnancy are more susceptible to mortality, therefore they are not equipped in maternity physically and emotionally. This shows that young women do not have sufficient pregnancy knowledge (Fair, et al, 2005). According to Grant and Hallman (2006), the competing danger of adolescents leaving school is for reasons other than adolescent pregnancy. They showed that low economic conditions are heavily connected with school drops and adolescence. Stewart (2003) argued that high-educational teens are less likely to be pregnant during school enrollment. That is because they have a high degree of motivation and an incentive to go to college. Turner (2004)

has no reasonable schooling expectancy for kids who have low self-confidence and poor school performance.

Economic independence and adult status have been the road to pregnancy. Influenced young people in early pregnancy include risky sex, deprivation, abuse of substances, dropping out of school, poor school performance, and low family income. Many academics have considered the future of adolescent moms gloomy and may experience certain problems. The woman lacks qualifications after the pregnancy which means that her employment is poorly paid and generally unsatisfactory, yet some young moms have been worked out because they have had little option. For a teenage mother, how to offer a good future for her child is a major difficulty. But there were extra, broader advantages as well as money. Work also provided women with a sense of achievement, trust, and social engagement (Wiggins, 2005). Pregnancy for teenagers has become a complex topic for several organizations. These organizations encourage activities that are beneficial to avoiding pregnancy among young people (Brindis & Philber, 2003).

### **Purpose of the study**

This study is purposely aimed to understand and analyze the experiences encountered by young parents. It is important to understand and analyze the experiences of the young parents as awareness for everybody. It would be ideal to grasp the moment these teenagers started their married life and how they were able to address the problems encountered. The point of this study is to educate and spread the early parent realities at an unfavorable moment for a teenager.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the important decisions made by the respondents before entering early parenting?
2. How they were able to survive creating a family despite not having a job at the moment?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the young parents during marriage life?

## **REVIEW LITERATURE**

Teenage pregnancy is no different from the other problem in the world, even if it appears a frequent concern, it doesn't seem to trouble people that much. It does not matter. It's not until they become directly impacted or discover that the number of individuals afflicted is rising that it slowly reaches an unhealthy level, or that too many lives and parts of living are touched by it (Pogoy, 2014). The pregnancy of the teen is mostly unplanned; therefore, people respond differently to the event. The young person must meet the unexpected requirements that adults require, and in certain circumstances, they could also face criticism and unhappiness from other important persons such as parents and relatives (Clemens, 2002). Youth pregnancy is a societal issue leading to schooling problems, poor obstetric results, insufficient maternity, bad children's outcomes, problems with the relationships between parents, partners, and peers, and growing population numbers and demographic issues (Macleod & Durrheim, 2003). In most situations, teenagers can't return to school after childbirth since they are compelled to care for their children. In other situations, the physical health of these young moms does not help them return to school. While certain young women may be precluded because of these circumstances from returning to school. Some examples of young people have found that they can purposefully avoid high school education requirements by using their pregnant status (De Jang, 2001). Depression is one of the issues resulting from

women's adolescent pregnancy. Depression is a disease that can be connected to actual or imaginary object loss, according to psychodynamic theory (Gee & Rhodes 2003). Giddens (2001) says that cultural factors relate to culture as the manner in which society members live or groups. It covers attire, marital customs and family life, job routines, religious rituals, and leisure activities. The factor is socialization, too. It describes socialization as the process through which people can become adult members of the society in which they live and learn about their community. Socialization helps people to survive and behave in societies in various conditions (Giddens 2001). Ehlers's (2003) research revealed that the impoverished female teenagers who were low-education pupils were more likely to become teenagers than their high-level counterparts. On the other hand, he has also identified some causes of adolescent pregnancy, including the absence of parent guidance, sexual abuse of adolescents, insufficient understanding of safe sex, usage by older males, and socioeconomic issues.

Parent's failure to provide direction: most individuals do not speak sex to their kids. In certain situations, they give wrong knowledge about sex and discourage their children from taking part in informed sex discussions. Adolescent sexual behavior: peer pressure among teenagers is a key element that motivates adolescents to enjoy sexual activity. Missing knowledge of safe sex: most teenagers do not know about safe sex. You probably don't have access to standard prevention techniques and the primary reason behind this is that either they are too ashamed or afraid to look for information. The use of older men: this is another important element in adolescent pregnancy. Girls dating older males are more likely to become pregnant before they turn female. Rape and sexual exploitation also occur among adolescent females leading to unplanned pregnancies. Socio-economic considerations: Teenagers belonging to impoverished households are predominantly pregnant (Pogoy, 2014). The fact that there are restricted careers and education possibilities, but also their link with lack of desire and ambition, is a risk factor according to Quinlivan et Al. (2003). Young people who are unsure of their purpose or professional goal see parenting as their future role.

## **METHODS**

This study made use of the dyad form wherein data is collected only from one respondent. The data is collected in a form of a personal interview and is audio-recorded. After the interview is done, the script will be translated into English if there is a use of dialect and transcribed verbatim to extract the main point of the conversation. Once the script is fully transcribed, it will be now analyzed and labeled in its different sections of important parts. The importance of this method is to break down the information into pieces to grasp the significant data needed in the study. There are prepared questions that would determine the phenomena of the study. 11 open-ended questions set the main idea and purpose of the study. However, these are only basic questions to be asked because the researcher could follow up on questions if there is a need to explore more of the matter. These questions are formulated based on the established themes of the study. Themes are a significant element of the study because it sets the questions into smaller pieces that are expected to be grouped into. It would be easier to address the questions in a more clear and specific data collection.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### DECISIONS MADE OF ENTERING MARRIAGE LIFE

*A personal audio recording was utilized in collecting the data.*

Researcher: What pushed you to enter marriage?

Respondent: *I entered the life of marriage so that I won't bother working anyway and I would be supported by my husband. And to escape poverty...*

; When the researcher asked the respondent what factor pushed her from entering a marriage. Three factors were mentioned, namely, staying unemployed, being dependent on her husband, and poverty.

Researcher: What do you mean by entering marriage to escape poverty?

Respondent: *If I would stay with my family, I would just add up to the mouth to be fed by my parents, and so if I leave my home and start my new family, they wouldn't have to worry about me...*

; Her definition of escaping poverty means avoiding the tendency of her parents from suffering by feeding and supporting them. Escaping is also a sign of bravery and independence.

Researcher: How old are you when you were married?

Respondent: *I was 18 years old back then...*

Researcher: What was the reaction of your parents when they knew you were about to get married?

Respondent: *Angry... They were so angry because of my sudden decision...*

Researcher: Why they were so angry?

Respondent: *Because I was too young to start my own family...*

### SURVIVAL WITHOUT FINISHING SCHOOLING

*A personal audio recording was utilized in collecting the data.*

Researcher: Did you finish your schooling?

Respondent: *I didn't finish my studies...*

Researcher: What grade are you when you stopped attending school?

Respondent: *I only finished 4th grade in elementary...*

Researcher: What were your plans to sustain your child's needs?

Respondent: *Of course, I would strive hard to find a job... Doing business like selling...*

; One of the mentioned solutions for providing for the needs of her child includes doing business like selling something.

Researcher: What was your job at the moment when you enter marriage?

Respondent: *I started with the sari-sari store...*

Researcher: What are the things that you sold in the sari-sari store?

Respondent: *Rice, hmm... liquors... I am self-employed at that time...*

Researcher: What was the job of your husband?

Respondent: *He was employed in a factory as a manager...*

### CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING MARRIAGE YEARS

*A personal audio recording was utilized in collecting the data.*

Researcher: What are the 3 biggest challenges you encountered during the marriage?

Respondent: *First, we do not have rice to cook. Second, my husband was always drunk with his friends. Third, he would challenge me to leave the house, if I feel like I don't like living with him at all...*

; The three challenges encountered by the respondent during marriage include, not having enough food, a drunkard husband, and intense arguing.

Researcher: How did you deal with it?

Respondent: *I always stayed patient and gave chance so that the family wouldn't go to waste ...*

Researcher: What is the biggest challenge you encountered that impacted your life?

Respondent: *Not having food on the table and grave poverty. That is why I strived hard to earn money and sustain the needs of my child. I did business and other forms of job just to avoid experiencing the situations we had back then...*

; The biggest challenge encountered by the respondent that changed her perspective in life is providing food on the table for her family and that means striving hard to earn money for survival.

Researcher: How did you solve the problems?

Respondent: *I persevere and strived to do business and always stayed positive in life...*

; Some of the solutions made by the respondent in combating poverty are doing business and being optimistic.

Researcher: Anything else that you wanted to share?

Respondent: *Do not give up and strive hard to find ways on earning money so that you sustain the daily needs of your family...*

<b>Theme 1</b>	Unemployed	<i>...I entered the life of marriage so that I won't bother working anyway...</i>
<b>Theme 2</b>	Dependent	<i>...If I would stay with my family, I would just add up to the mouth to be fed by my parents, and so if I leave my home and start my new family, they wouldn't have to worry about me...</i>
<b>Theme 3</b>	Poverty	<i>...Not having food on the table and grave poverty. That is why I strived hard to earn money and sustain the needs of my child. I did business and other forms of job just to avoid experiencing the situations we had back then...</i>

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected and analyzed, poverty is the main reason that the respondent encountered upon entering a marriage. The respondent chose to have a family in the hopes of escaping the poverty she had in her family before. But she ended up lurking in the same manner of life that she does not want to spend with. Decision-making is a life skill that must be mastered by most teenagers because it sets what the future lies ahead. After all, instead of blaming herself, she strived and persevered to provide for the needs of her child. Generally, the kind of life that everyone wanted to have is not merely dictated by fate, it was a manifestation of personal choice. Each individual has their own choices in what to pursue and to sacrifice, the only sure thing that a person can do is to prepare for the consequences that await in the process.

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