

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH

VOLUME 23

Recognising the distinctive context of the Philippines, with its unique long history, and peculiar population distribution across thousands of islands, this edited collection analyses its decidedly familial culture. Why do Filipino families maintain perhaps the strongest family bonds of any culture? How have shown a unique ability to persevere, even when faced with the direst of circumstances?

Covering a broad range of topics, chapters and commentaries delve into changing gender roles, poverty and family dynamics, mothering in prison, teenage fatherhood, dating and mate selection, rural family norms, the interweave of family and community, media representations on families, new forms of parenthood, remittances and familial support systems, and how overseas employment affects spousal and parent-child relationships.

A highly comprehensive ethnographic analysis, *Resilience and Familism* demonstrates in a specifically Filipino context how strong familial ties can affect inner strength and outer determination.

Veronica L. Gregorio teaches in the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. She is interested in agrarian changes, family dynamics, and gender and sexuality, with a regional focus on Southeast Asia.

Clarence M. Batan is Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Santo Tomas, Philippines. His research interests include the sociology of childhood and youth, the sociology of work and employment, the sociology of Filipino Catholicism, and qualitative and mixed methods.

Sampson Lee Blair is a family sociologist and demographer at The State University of New York, Buffalo, USA. His research focuses on parent-child relationships, mate selection, marriage, and fertility. He is currently a visiting professor at the University of Santo Tomas, Philippines.



RESILIENCE AND FAMILISM

Edited by Veronica L. Gregorio,
Clarence M. Batan and Sampson Lee Blair

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH
VOLUME 23



RESILIENCE AND FAMILISM

The Dynamic Nature of Families
in the Philippines

Edited by Veronica L. Gregorio,
Clarence M. Batan and Sampson Lee Blair

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH

VOLUME 23

CHAPTER 5

SELECTED CASES OF TEENAGE FATHERHOOD IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN ANALYSIS OF RISKS AND RESILIENCE

Joselito G. Gutierrez, Tisha Isabelle M. De Vergara
and Clarence M. Batan

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the life histories of selected teenage Filipino fathers relative to their experiences of dating, courtship, and the discovery, engagement, and experimentation with risk-taking behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and premarital sex. Using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), this study conducts family genogram and in-depth semi-structured interviews among eight teenage fathers. In so doing, it interrogates the consequences of sexual behaviors to the well-being of their respective families of orientation as well as the future of their expected family of procreation. The chapter argues how the risks of teenage fatherhood in the Philippines are relatively mitigated by the general conservative culture of Filipino families and the Catholic sense of religious orientation that seems to provide resilience captured in three themed experiences of “natauhan” (realization), “pinangatawanan” (accountability), and “pinanindigan” (owning responsibility). Thus, this chapter unravels the voices of young Filipino teenage fathers who straddles, on the one hand, the risk of premarital sex and pregnancy, and on the other hand, the challenges of responsible parenthood. In conclusion, the chapter provides

Resilience and Familism: The Dynamic Nature of Families in the Philippines
Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research, Volume 23, 65–81
Copyright © 2023 by Emerald Publishing Limited
All rights of reproduction in any form reserved
ISSN: 1530-3535/doi:10.1108/S1530-353520230000023005

policy insights on sex education and gender equality training for the vulnerable Filipino youth in the country.

Keywords: Teenage fatherhood; risk-taking behaviors; premarital sex; responsible parenthood; gender equality; life history

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, the issue of teenage pregnancy and sexual promiscuity (i.e., premarital sex) often directs attention to socio-cultural considerations linked with Filipinos' adherence to religious values and conservative culture of marriage and family life. Traditionally, Filipinos espouse sexual intercourse only within the context of marriage wherein women are expected to remain chaste, pure, and untouched for their future husband. On the other hand, Filipino males are allowed to engage in sexual activities outside of marriage. For many males, dating is perceived as a way "to satisfy sexual desires" while for many females, it is a way "to get to know the person better" and assess him as a possible partner in the future (Tan et al., 2001).

The culture of sexual promiscuity among males is highly linked with machismo and they are even expected to engage in premarital sex (Medina, 2015). Their first sexual encounter is called "binyag" (baptism). In fact, an adolescent male can only be called "tunay na lalake" (true man) after he experienced his first sex (Tan et al., 2001). This cultural practice is coming from the idea that single males have nothing to lose.

As observed, for Filipinos, learning about sex and sexual acts is often perceived as bad and is not to be discussed. For instance, Batangan (2006) found out that for many Filipinos, talking about sex is considered taboo. Parents and children avoid talking about sex for it is perceived as *bastos* (disrespectful). At the same time, it is also sacred as the passage way to conceiving life, sex should only be discussed in a reverent manner. Utmost care and respect in discussing sex also lead to a culture of not talking about it in a more detailed way especially in the family.

Accordingly, engaging with sexual behaviors at a young age may lead to unwanted pregnancies. While many studies are already available concerning the risks of early pregnancies, teenage mothers, and the like, very little are available when it comes to teenage fatherhood. In the Philippines where fathers are expected to fulfill the roles of provider and protector, it also becomes complex when a young man is faced with the challenge of taking on these roles and responsibilities of being a father. This emphasizes the need to include teenage fatherhood in the discussions of early and unwanted pregnancies. This imbalance in the number of studies led this study to focus on the experiences of Filipino teenage fathers, particularly the antecedent events that lead them to become young fathers, their resilience, and their experiences of withstanding challenges in their attempts to prove themselves become responsible fathers. Thus, this chapter unravels the voices of

young Filipino teenage fathers who straddle, on the one hand, the risk of premarital sex and pregnancy, and on the other hand, the challenges of responsible parenthood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teenage Fatherhood in the Philippines

In attaining manhood, one is considered capable of fathering once he becomes a “man.” Accordingly, manhood (*pagkalalake*) is considered as both sexual prowess and being responsible for the family. Teenage males feel like a man by achieving financial independence even at a young age, and should they father a child, having the capability in becoming a provider and a protector of a family. Teenage males feel validated as they transition to become young fathers when they can independently provide for the needs of their families, though this is rare since they are still young and most of them are still studying (Kirven, 2014). For others, they identified events such as circumcision; sexual prowess such as exposure to adult films and magazines, masturbation, first dating, and first coitus experience; and various sports, and risk-taking activities such as smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, dating, necking, and oral sex. However, teenage fatherhood may be considered unacceptable because teenagers are stereotyped as irresponsible and are not yet prepared for parental responsibility. Interestingly, teenage mothers are usually stigmatized as careless by “more careful” youth while teenage fathers are deemed responsible for their own family (Gregorio, 2018).

Role of Family and Culture

An individual is greatly influenced by family traditions and practices where behaviors, values, and attitudes are first learned (Laigo et al., 2009). Parents are a child’s first teachers as they influence the child’s behavior and the way the child thinks and rationalizes. Accordingly, a father’s involvement in his child’s life is directly connected to an increase in cognitive functioning, greater internal locus of control, greater empathy, and less sex role stereotyping (Lamb, 2004 cited in Long et al., 2014). At the same time, his involvement is explicitly connected to his increased confidence, lower psychological distress, and increased life satisfaction (Daly et al., 2009 as cited in Long et al., 2014). However, Casselman and Rosenbaum (2014) claimed that young males’ aggressive behaviors are associated with their own father’s aggressive behaviors. On the other hand, a father’s absence limits the male child’s identification of a masculine role model (Aguiling-Dalisay et al., 2000). It is also seen as detrimental as many of the economic, social, and emotional aspects of the father’s role will go unmet (Lamb, 1996 cited in Aguiling-Dalisay et al., 2000).

For many families in the Philippines, a man who has impregnated a woman, whether engaged or not, is pressured to marry the woman. Marriage is expected to save the female’s honor and provide legitimacy to the child. Further, a male

must be “man enough” to take the responsibility of becoming a father to his child. The Filipino value of *hiya* (shame) motivates a man to take responsibility for his ego and because his family’s reputation is at stake (Bulatao & Gorospe, 1966). On the other hand, a pregnant woman out of wedlock must get married immediately to avoid shame and to avoid becoming the subject of gossip in her neighborhood (Medina, 2015). This cultural rule is very much true of teenagers. Thus, while psycho-emotional maturity is still lacking at their early age, many adolescents get married despite the absence of meaningful love and preparedness for family life.

Sex Education and Role of Media

Information about sex and sexuality is usually acquired from parents, teachers, as well as friends. Even if R.A. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women (2010) encourages sex education to start at home, parents are seen as limited in their ability to offer this sensitive information due to conservatism. On the other hand, the school provides clinical and scientific information as part of the curriculum (Conaco, et al., 2003). Generally, boys are not taught adequately about the anatomy of their reproductive organs. More often, mothers closer to their sons have inadequate information on male sexuality, leading the boys to get information from peer groups (Wormer, 2017).

Likewise, mass media is another sector that fills in the void for proper information about sex. At the same time, it is often blamed for teens’ early exposure to sexuality. In fact, studies say that it has the most pervading influence on today’s youth (Agarwal & Dhanasekaran, 2012). In the United States, the youth engage in sexual activity at an early age and with different partners (Chaves et al., 2005), blaming mass media as the culprit due to its strong influence to them. Straubhaar et al. (2014) attributed males’ indiscreet behaviors and attitudes toward women to too much exposure to pornography. Another study depicted how young men’s monopoly in sexual knowledge (i.e., watching videos and engaging in sexual activities) significantly influences how their female partners perceive sex and make sense of their sexual experiences (Gregorio, 2018).

Adolescence and Risky Behaviors

In many societies, adolescence is acknowledged as the most troublesome and stressful stage since it bridges the gap from childhood to adulthood (Papalia et al., 2009). Hence, being at the transitional stage of “unbecoming of a child – becoming an Adult” meant a period of undergoing big adjustments in all three domains – the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial. In physical development, the rate of increase in height is at its peak at 12.5–14 years of age while muscle strength develops at 15–16 years of age (Wormer, 2017). Cognitive skills were also directly associated with pubertal development (Koerselman & Pekkarinen, 2017). A related study pointed out that teenage males were relatively more emotionally stable, emotionally progressive, socially adjusting, have adequate personalities, and were more independent due to the patriarchal system, gender bias, family climate, and traditions among others (Rawat & Singh, 2017). This thinking leads

to their own beliefs that they are special, unique, safe, and protected, resulting in carelessness in their doings.

Adolescence is a time in human development when many individuals are compelled to try on new roles, behaviors, and attitudes in life including building relationships with other individuals (Alampay et al., 2009; Papalia et al., 2009). Thus, this is the period for many young people who try to take risks in health-compromising activities such as taking illegal drugs, drinking, smoking, extreme sports, and engaging in sexual activity. Risk-taking is an important component of adolescence, it is a thrill-seeking stage necessary for the acquisition of adult behaviors, skills, and self-esteem (Hendry & Kloep, 2002).

In the Philippines, adolescence is a period of blossoming or more popularly known to Filipinos as *pagbibinata* or *pagdadalaga* (Batangan, 2006). Accordingly, it is not only referred to as a period in an individual's life but also a route wherein a person is entering the process of becoming a young adult. Development involves two processes – maturation and learning. It is a transitional stage where one evolves to full sexual and psychological maturity and from the state of total dependence to relative independence (Conaco et al., 2003). It also marks the onset of deliberate sexually motivated behavior – for girls, sex is motivated by love and a desire for a serious relationship and for boys, sex is motivated by the desire to enhance their status with peers (Steinberg, 2012). For Alampay et al. (2009), influences that contribute to family success are family structure, parental influence, perceptions of parental control or discipline, family dynamics, and family religious practices. Accordingly, adolescents with strong attachments to their family members are more likely to avoid risky behaviors compared to those who are in a family that lacks attachment.

Adolescents' risky and careless decisions are usually attributed to peer pressure. Studies showed that teens follow peer influence simply because of parental absenteeism. Teenagers turn to their peers not only for friendship and companionship but for nurturing, intimacy, security, and guidance as well (Conaco et al., 2003). Also, teenagers choose friends of similar interests or they want to be in a group with the people they admire. On the other hand, adolescents are more likely to engage in premarital sex when their peers are open to it and doing it (Zimmer-Gembeck & Helfand, 2008 cited in Kail, 2010).

Parenthood and Difficulties of Becoming Fathers

Teenage fathers use different styles in order to cope with the challenges of fatherhood. In the Philippines, Arca (2002) found out that becoming a father at an early age is a major challenge to overcome because it happened during a stage of transition where one is not yet prepared. For instance, Filipinos' patriarchal values put high regard on the role of fathers as an economic provider. Given this, teenage fathers are often afraid of their financial responsibility to both their child and their child's mother. If he is the eldest in the family, he may have responsibilities not only to his parents but also to his other siblings who are in need (Aguilar, 2009 cited in Medina, 2015).

The challenges also include emotional stability for the relationship, a sense of stability in the place where the baby will be raised in, the burden of

marrying the mother of his child, and the pressure to work hard in order to offer a bright future for his child. Their fears associated with dealing with teenage pregnancy include fear of their family's anger, fear of the girl's family's reaction, fear of lack of resources to support a family, and lastly, the fear for the child's future.

Adolescents abrupt transitioning to fatherhood is inevitable. Teenage fathers utilize different styles in order to deal with the challenges brought by young parenthood. To cope with the changes, Guillermo and de Guzman (2007) enumerated varied sources of strengths such as self-confidence, supportive and stable family, responsible parents, caring classmates and teachers, genuine friends, student-friendly schools, and a committed church and community. Other modes of coping include praying, keeping feelings to oneself, redirecting self to other pleasurable things, and recreation.

In the Philippines, coping mechanisms are usually connected to religion and spirituality. Religion really runs in the blood of Filipinos and innate religiosity enables them to comprehend and accept challenges in the context of faith (Palispis, 2007). Filipinos, being God-centered and God-fearing people, always rely on God especially during heavy times. It explicitly expressed the Filipino attitude "bahala na" in which it has both positive and negative connotations. It is interpreted as the Filipino attitude of accepting suffering and problems and leaving everything to God.

This literature review directs attention to some research gaps which this chapter intends to respond to particularly about the nature and characteristics of Filipino teenage fatherhood as a social phenomenon in terms of roles, influences, demands, and coping social mechanisms. In so doing, this chapter intends to describe the "inner view," inner dynamics, and experiences of selected Filipino teenage fathers.

METHODS

This qualitative research study used the IPA method composed of two parts: phenomenology and interpretation. It reports the participants' reflection of their own lived experiences based on the researcher's personal interpretations: conceptions, beliefs, expectations, and experiences (Rafique & Hunt, 2015). Qualitative research was used in the study to elicit substantial information from teenage fathers' own experiences. Participants provided deep and meaningful information through careful and open-ended questions.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. During the conduct of the study, except for one, all were unmarried teenage fathers, six were cohabiting and two were still living with their families of procreation. The two who were not cohabiting were no longer in good relationships with the mothers of their children. All participants have a 2-year old child, are 15–19 years of age at the time of interviews, and residents of Quezon City. Participants have common circumstances – seven of them were working while one was relying on his parent's support, three are still studying and two were working students.

The data gathering and data analysis procedures are summarized into four stages. The first stage was a nonstructured casual conversation to build rapport with the participant and followed by the interview proper. The second stage was the documentation procedure of the interview when a professional transcriber transferred the recorded information into a word document. There were two ways of gathering information from the participants. The first was by asking them to create their own family genogram and the second was through a one-on-one interview. Follow-up interviews were conducted to elicit further information and to validate previously gathered data.

From the interview transcripts, the analysis focused on how the participants made sense of their experiences. The data gathered were clustered into convergences and divergences, as well as emerging themes. These identified themes were then analyzed and presented in the results and discussion. The themes were reexamined in the fourth and final stages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Family History and Dynamics

This study examines the life histories of selected teenage Filipino fathers in terms of their family life, premarital sexual behaviors, and parenthood. First, this traces how teenage fathers make sense of their own families and their dynamics (see Table 5.1). It centers on the life of Rodel who narrated that teenage parenthood is very common in their family. Accordingly, two subthemes emerged namely, history repeats itself and the impact of family dynamics. Most teenage fathers revealed that they have relatives from their older generations who also became teenage parents. For instance, one of the participants said some of his relatives became parents between the ages of 17 and 19 years. Some developed the courage to have a family at a young age because they copied their relatives who became early parents too.

Making sense of their family genogram, some of the participants attributed their teenage fatherhood to unpleasant family dynamics. For example, two of the participants noticed the estranged relationship between their mother and father. They were no longer together because each one now has their own family. Another participant noticed his aunt on his father's side who had two common law husbands. For him, his experience directly or indirectly contributed to his curiosity and openness to sex. Another participant claimed that the possible reason why his relatives got married at an early age was because of his grandfather's negative style of disciplining, and authoritarian parenting.

Premarital Sex as an Expression of True Love

In a one-on-one interview, when the participants were asked their reason why they engaged in premarital sex, all of them claimed that it was their way of expressing love. However, they gave different explanations when they were asked to give meaning to premarital sex as an expression of true love. As explained, the

Table 5.1. Selected Quotations on Family History and Dynamics Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Making Sense of His Family Genogram	<p>Napansin ko po na sa pamilya po ng Papa ko maaga po sila nagsipag-asawa. Sa side ng Mama ko, maaga din po sila nagsipag-asawa. Sa magkakapatid naman po, parang kaming dalawa naman po ng kuya ko, maaga po kami nagka-anak sa pamilya.</p> <p>Siguro po ang dahilan po ay nakikita rin po sa paligid. Nagagaya. ‘Yun po. Tulad po ng maagang pag-aasawa ng pamangkin ng step father ko. Isa pa po, baka nagaya din sa mga pinsan po naming babae doon tapos lalaki po, nag-aasawa agad, may isang 15, 16, meron pa pong 14.</p> <p>(I noticed with the family of my father, they all married at a young age. On my mother’s side, it is the same. Among my siblings, my older brother and I both have children at a young age. I think the reason for that is because we see it and we adopt it. Another example is the nephew of my step father who also married early. Even our cousins, both male and female, even as early as 14, 15, and 16 years old.)</p> <p>(Rodel)</p>
Family dynamics	<p>Opo, dahil sa sobrang pagiging matapang at mabagsik ng aking lolo, at sa sobrang pananakit niya sa kanyang mga anak, ang kanyang mga anak ay naisip na lang na lumisan sa kanilang bahay, sumama sa kanilang mga kasintahan at bumuo ng sariling pamilya.</p> <p>(Yes, because my grandfather is too strong, strict, and even violent to his own children, they just decided to move out from their home, elope and start their own families.)</p> <p>(Rodel)</p>

respondents are exposed to premarital sexual behaviors due to their own family and peers (see Table 5.2). It is also where they develop certain perceptions about sex and relationships. For Joel, having sex is not a big deal especially for individuals in a relationship.

Table 5.2. Selected Quotations on Perceptions About Sex Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Perceptions About Sex
Sex as part of relationships	<p>Ano lang po, kasi pag mag-girlfriend o boyfriend po kayo, kapag sa sobrang tagal ninyo na po, doon na po napupunta iyon. Parang doon nababase kung gaano mo siya kamahal.</p> <p>(It has no meaning to me. If you are in a long relationship, it is expected to lead to sex already. That also becomes a basis how much you love your partner.)</p> <p>(Joel)</p>
Happiness and pleasure	<p>Para sa ‘kin Sir, parang nandiyan po yung kaligayahan kasi minsan naguusap-usap kaming mga tropa kapag nangyayari sa kanila ‘yung pagse-sex ‘yung pakiramdam daw po masarap ganun.</p> <p>(For me, we find happiness in it. When our friends talk about their sexual activities, they describe it as pleasurable.)</p> <p>(Jerry)</p>

Another participant narrated that he was aware that it is hard to bear a family. However, he was certain that if he accidentally got his girlfriend pregnant, he would never think twice. He would definitely take responsibility for the consequences. The third teenage father said that premarital sex was a way of attaining happiness. The feeling was pleasurable and an effective way in releasing some stress. But he expressed his negative impression of a girl who engages in premarital sex with a man who is not her boyfriend.

At the same time, teenage fathers consider their romantic or sexual partners as a source of inspiration and a sign of manhood (Table 5.3). For instance, one of the respondents sees having a girlfriend as a motivation to go to school while Ariel makes sure to avoid hanging out and meeting other people. Meanwhile, peer pressure among male friends has also been a contributing factor in engaging to premarital sexual behaviors.

As the respondents became more aware and engaged in having relationships, they also experience risky sexual behaviors (see Table 5.4). This involves having sexual encounters under the influence of alcohol and risking unwanted pregnancy.

Table 5.3. Selected Quotations on Perceptions About Romantic/Sexual Partners Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Source of inspiration	<p>Noong una po akong magka-girlfriend, gusto ko lang po. Kasi sa magkakaibigan, kailangan po may ganoon. Kasi pag wala kang girlfriend, 'di naman sa nagpapasikat, inspirasyon na lang din po. (When I first had a girlfriend, I just wanted it because among friends, that is important. If you do not have a girlfriend, it's not about bragging, but more of a source of inspiration.)</p> <p>(Joel)</p> <p>Sa tingin ko parang gusto kong subukan (mag-girlfriend). Parang masaya po kasi meron kang inspirasyon. Mukhang mas ganado pong pumasok. Mas masaya pong pumasok pag meron ka inspirasyon.</p> <p>(I think I want to try having a girlfriend. It seems happy to have a source of inspiration. You become more motivated to go to school.)</p> <p>(Mar)</p>
Sign of true manhood	<p>"Masaya po kasi nakakabuo ng pagiging isang lalaki." (I am happy because it makes me feel whole as a man.)</p> <p>(Mar)</p> <p><i>Pag-uusapan ka niyan sir. Kunwari, nag-uusap kayong magkakaibigan na lalake, tapos ikaw wala ka pa, siempre po sir tatawagin ka nilang mahina. Mahina sa mga babae, mahina 'yung diskarte, parang torpe!</i></p> <p>(They will talk about you. For example, when you are talking with your guy friends and you still do not have a girlfriend, they would call you weak. You are weak when it comes to women.)</p> <p>(Peter)</p>

Table 5.4. Selected Quotations on Risky Sexual Behavior Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Risky sexual behavior	<p><i>Bale po noong ano, nag-sex po kami sa bahay nila, madaling araw po, bale doon ko na po talaga inano...sinadya ko po talaga, pero 'di ko po sinabi sa kanya na pinutok ko po talaga sa loob.</i></p> <p>(When we had sex at my girlfriend's house, that's when I intentionally tried to impregnate her without telling her.)</p> <p>(Ariel)</p> <p><i>"... Nung last na ano po, 'yung birthday nung barkada ko. Na ano po, lasing, nalasing po 'yung bisita nilang babae na dalawa, bale 'dun na po namin inano ng barkada ko."</i></p> <p>(During my friend's birthday, two of their female guests got drunk, and that's when my friend and I had sex with them.)</p> <p>(Ariel)</p>

CHALLENGES AND EFFECTS OF TEENAGE FATHERHOOD

Different teenage fathers encountered different challenges brought by teenage fatherhood. Some of the common challenges they encountered were how to tell their parents, the cost of childbirth, and how to provide for the needs of the baby. The following discussions were divided into two: the challenges encountered by teenage fathers and the effects of early fatherhood to the teenage fathers' lives.

One of the key realizations of the respondents is having a stable work and source of income to provide for their families (see Table 5.5). As they have not completed their schooling yet, they consider it difficult to do their responsibility.

Teenage fathers reacted negatively when they discovered that they got their girlfriends pregnant. One participant said he became happy and at the same time afraid because he did not know how to tell this to his parents. Another participant said that it took him some time before he finally accepted that he will soon become a father. One teenage father's fear was how he will support his child, find a job, a place to stay, and many more. However, the disappointment was immediately replaced by acceptance of his fate for he had no other choice but to accept it.

Consequently, this study highlights *natauhan* or realization among the selected Filipino teenage fathers. For the first participant, teenage fatherhood made him realize that life should be treasured. Before, he was an easy-go-lucky person. Now, he is doing house chores like cooking, washing clothes, taking care of his child, and many more. Giving meaning to all these life experiences, he narrated that these events made him a more mature person and a responsible father. For another participant, when his girlfriend's abdomen was expanding in size, it meant that he should strive and work hard. He admitted that his girlfriend's pregnancy increased his self-confidence because he can show other people that he was a true man.

In addition, the realization is followed by a sense of accountability (see Table 5.6). One of the respondents emphasizes the importance of being able to graduate from school and find a stable work in order to set a good example for his children.

Table 5.5. Selected Quotations on Work and Income Realizations Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Work and income	<p>Ang pakiramdam ko po, halo-halo po eh. Parang masaya din po kaso natatakot din po...natatakot din po kasi hindi ko po alam kung paano sasabihin sa mga magulang ko pati sa mga magulang niya, takot po ako dahil syempre po... balak ko rin po kasi talaga mag aral nun eh tas 'yun nga po nabuntis ko nga siya. Wala rin akong trabaho tas ano...natatakot po ako dahil sa responsibilidad na darating sa kin...tulad ng paano ko bubuhayin pamilya ko, (I have mixed feelings. I feel happy but I am also afraid because I do not know how to tell my parents and her parents... I am scared because I intended to study but I impregnated her. I have no work and I am scared because of the responsibilities including how I can provide for my family.)</p> <p>(Jerlin)</p> <p>Yung girlfriend ko namumutla tapos ang una kong sinabihan ay 'yung brother-in-law ko na naging kadikit ko sa lahat ng family members kahit hindi ko siya kadugo. Ang sabi niya sa akin hindi ko pwedeng ipabukas-bukas yung ganun dahil kailangan ng vitamins, check-up ng mag ina ko. (I first informed my brother-in-law who is my closest among her family members. He told me that it is urgent for my girlfriend and our unborn child to get checked because they need vitamins.)</p> <p>(Peter)</p>

Table 5.6. Selected Quotations on Accountability of Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Sense of accountability	<p><i>Pagsisikap</i> sir eh. Laging tumatatak sa isip ko na kailangan kong magsikap. Magsikap. Magsikap. Laging sinasabi sa akin ng partner ko na hindi habang-buhay nandyan ang magulang namin. (Perseverance. I always instill in my mind to persevere and work hard. My partner always reminds me that our parents will not always be there for us.)</p> <p>(Peter)</p> <p>Hindi po, siguro tatapusin ko muna ang pag-aaral ko kasi po maganda po kung makatapos ka muna ng college kasi ngayon po hindi madaling makahanap ng trabaho. (I think I want to finish my education first because it is important in finding job.)</p> <p>(Peter)</p>

One of the respondents explained that responsible fatherhood is “mabuti, responsable, mapagmahal sa anak at sa asawa, may paninindigan at sipag sa paghahanap-buhay” which means kind, responsible, loving to his child and wife, firm to his decision and diligent and hardworking. Teenage fatherhood brought new meaning to the lives of teenage fathers. In one way or the other, their experience of early parenthood gave them the opportunity to move forward and advance into maturity.

As narrated by one of the participants, he will persevere in his work to be able to provide the needs of his family. He only wanted to at the least provide three meals a day and to be able to send his child to school and finish his/her education.

He explained that all his dreams will come true by working hard, saving a lot and, if God will allow, work abroad. The fourth participant admitted that he encountered difficulties in managing his limited income but he said that he felt grateful whenever he was able to support his child.

With accountability, the selected Filipino teenage fathers also exemplify *paninindigan* or owing up to their responsibility (see Table 5.7). As teenagers, the respondents have engaged in various risky behaviors and vices. For instance, Ariel admitted that he uses cigarettes and drinks alcohol and he willingly stopped all his vices when he became a father. Consequently, some of the respondents consider fatherhood as a responsibility to protect their children and provide for the needs of their families.

Table 5.7. Selected Quotations on Owning Responsibility Among Selected Filipino Teenage Fathers.

Dimensions	Selected Quotations
Developing a sense of responsibility	<p><i>Sobrang</i> laki po (ng pagbabago). Since syempre po ngayon may anak na po ako, 'nung binata po ako dati, aminin ko po may bisyo po ako. Pero 'di po alam ng mga magulang ko, pero hindi po nila ako nahuhuli. Okay 'yung alak po legal na po ako sa magulang ko, 'yung sigarilyo po hindi yun. 'Yun itong nagkapamilya na po ako ngayon, bihira na po ako magganyan po, tapos alas-siete palang nandun na po ako sa bahay, pero dati po ala-una, alas-dos nandun pa po ako sa ano (labas).</p> <p>(There are many changes now that I have a child. Before, I really had vices and my parents had no idea. They are okay with me drinking alcohol, but cigarettes are not. Now that I have a family, I seldom do those vices. At 7 in the evening, I am already at home. Unlike before that I stay out until 2am.)</p> <p>(Ariel)</p> <p><i>Ngayon</i> sir... parang mas lalo akong ginaganahan, na pumasok, mag-aral kasi may inspirasyon na ako sir, parang gusto kong patunayan sa anak ko na magiging maganda buhay namin, na mapag-aaral ko siya sa magandang paaralan, na magiging maayos din ang lahat sa amin.</p> <p>(I became more motivated to go to school and study because I have an inspiration. I want to prove to my child that I can give us a good life and that I can also send him to school.)</p> <p>(Jerry)</p>
Being a father	<p>Ang isang mabuting ama ay itinuturo ang tama at mali sa anak, binibigyang direksyon, ilalapit sa Diyos, pinoproteksyonan ang anak, nagbibigay ng pangangailangan at higit sa lahat, di sinasaktan ang mga anak.</p> <p>(A good father teaches right and wrong, gives direction in life, helps his child to know God, gives protection, provides their needs, and above all, do not inflict harm to his children.)</p> <p>(Rodel)</p> <p>Para po sa'kin ah..ang pagiging isang responsableng ama syempre yung pagtatrabaho mo kailangan ah.. control ah.. nakadipende ka na sa trabaho mo hindi mo na kailangang magloko, nakatuon na lang yung buhay mo sa mga anak mo syempre at sa asawa mo.</p> <p>(For me, being a responsible father, you need to focus on your work and not engage in risky teen behaviors anymore. You should focus on your children and wife too.)</p> <p>(Mar)</p>

The Three-Stage Processes of Teenage Fatherhood: “Natauhan (The Realization), Pinangatawanan (Accountability), and Pinanindigan (Taking Responsibility)”

In an attempt to make meaning of the participants’ experiences, three key processes are identified: “Natauhan (the realization), Pinangatawanan (accountability), and Pinanindigan (taking responsibility).” The discussion starts from the antecedent events leading to impregnation or when an adolescent male got a girl pregnant to “natauhan” which means the realization of what he did and the challenges the young father must face. The next phase is “pinangatawanan,” the moment when the teenage father accepts fatherhood; and the final phase is “pinanindigan” or when the adolescent father performs his responsibilities for the child and the family. The discussion highlights each process reflecting and drawing meaning on each of the participants’ reflections of their experiences as well as from their own meaning of these experiences.

The framework starts on how the adolescent males in the study are surrounded by influences that encourage sexual risk-taking behavior that leads to getting a woman pregnant. Premarital sex is an attractive adventure. The prospect of having a sexual experience with someone with whom the teenage male is comfortable with is tolerated by the Filipino culture. The innate desire to experience life’s firsts and the permissive environment, where adolescent men feel entitled to exercise their sexual prowess believing that they “have nothing to lose,” where members in their ascendant generations were not sanctioned for their sexual behavior, where family dynamics are far from ideal – all these contribute to the risk-taking behavior that led them to engage in premarital sex that ends up in unplanned pregnancy to teenage fatherhood.

Natauhan (The realization). This process is the turning point. Upon learning that they got their girlfriend pregnant, teenage males experience some of life’s challenges. Such challenges include how to tell their parents, how to support their girlfriend and soon-to-come child, where to get money for maternity expenses, where to stay, and many more.

All narrated that they have felt some fear – two felt disappointed since they were too young to become fathers and that they had to stop studying, find a job, earn a living, to stop thinking of themselves and place their child above everything else. However, they later realized that a child’s life was soon to be dependent on them leading them to refocus and find a job.

Pinangatawanan (Accountability). All the teenage father participants knew that when they engage in sexual activity, pregnancy was a possibility as well as becoming an adolescent father. However, when fatherhood occurred, all of them admitted that, at first, they went through the denial stage wherein they refused to accept that they will soon become a father at a young age. They could not accept that they have to bear a serious responsibility as a consequence of their curiosity and adventurism.

They realized later that they have no other choice but to bear the consequence of their previous action brought by the risk-taking behavior of premarital and unsafe sex.

Pinanindigan (Taking responsibility). The last stage happens when teenage fathers decide to rise above the challenge of teenage fatherhood and take the responsibility that is expected from them. The characteristics of teenage fathers who are able to rise above the challenges brought by early parenthood are personal maturity, clearer personal and family goals, improved family dynamics, and stronger support system. Finally, a new meaning in life is found by putting their trust in God.

After getting their girlfriends pregnant, teenage fathers went beyond what was expected from them to prove to their families as well as to the family of their girlfriends that they were “man enough” to support their family. This is the meaning of *pinanindigan*, when a man decides to bear his responsibility to his girlfriend and child.

Making Sense of Teenage Fathers' Experiences

In trying to make sense of their experience, participants were asked on how they currently viewed teenage fatherhood. The following are participants' recommendations when asked if they will recommend their past actions to fellow teenage males who are in the stage of adolescence.

All eight participants agree that teenage fatherhood was an event that they did not wish to happen in their lives. Although two of the participants claimed that they intentionally impregnated their girlfriends, it was clear to all of them that at the age of adolescence, one is not yet capable of becoming a good and responsible father particularly when it comes to making serious decisions in life. Some teenage fathers were not reluctant in engaging in premarital sex even when they were aware that they could impregnate their girlfriends. They still engaged in sexual activities because becoming a teenage father and starting a new family could mean an escape from one's loose family ties. In their family of origin, they had parents who were far too preoccupied in their work or businesses that they failed to give quality time to their offspring. However, their risk-taking action can be interpreted as escaping from a dysfunctional family to form another new unplanned family.

Another important insight is that the events and circumstances tempted adolescent males to engage in risky sexual activities. Culture dictates that a true man must engage in risky sexual activities because it is the only way to be called macho or a true man. These events and circumstances contribute to the young males' curiosity and adventurism that lead to premarital sex and eventually to teenage fatherhood.

When the participants were asked what advice they can give to teenagers who wanted to marry or cohabit at an early age, two different points of view arose. First, is their direct objection to getting married or cohabitation at a young age. Second, is their suggestion not to get married or cohabit early but they did not explicitly say that getting married at a younger age is completely wrong. The advice is meant to discourage a teenage male from experiencing a risk-taking activity such as premarital sex.

The above insight is parallel to existing studies on adolescents. Teenage fathers were unable to make mature, moral, and rational decisions. They only based their actions using their personal feelings and not on the principles of rightness, fairness, or justice (Papalia et al., 2009). This also affirms that adolescents' lack of formal and abstract thinking is the reason why they could hardly arrive at a wise decision in their lives (Alampay et al., 2009). These could help us understand the reasons why teenage fathers have carried out immature decisions in the past.

CONCLUSION

Teenage fatherhood is brought about by several influences both internal and external from the person involved. The study indicated that teenage fathers became biological fathers because of internal influence such as adolescent risk-taking behaviors that include curiosity, adventurism, and the innate desire to explore new things. The attempt to experience life's firsts leads them to try risk-taking activities like engaging in sex. Unfortunately, sexual experiments can eventually lead to teenage pregnancy for the female and teenage fatherhood for the male. On the other hand, external influences instigating adolescent males to engage in risky sexual behaviors are Filipino culture and family dynamics such as the parents' modeling, marital relationship, and parenting style.

The study revealed the pattern of early parenthood from the past generations to the present. In this study, teenage fathers narrated that they had ascendant generations: grandparents, parents, parent's siblings, and other relatives, who became teenage parents like them. Seeing the patterns in the different family genograms produced during the first interview and then hearing how each of the teenage participants brought meaning to these patterns and their experiences within their families, this observes a continuing pattern that motivated individuals to follow the same path their older generations took.

Some Filipino cultural practices directly encourage male adolescents to engage in sex. As stated, Filipino males are given special privileges because they are perceived as invulnerable and have nothing to lose. The notion of invulnerability of Filipino males is ascertained in the tradition of "binyag" (baptism) wherein they are urged to experience sexual activity at an early age. This opens the door to risky sexual activities, sexual promiscuity, and premarital sex that may result in the early pregnancy of their partners and teenage fatherhood.

This also highlights some implications of youth's exposure to media with sexual content. Accordingly, aside from peer groups, male adolescents get their information about sex from media and these young people have the impression that information coming from media is always correct, reliable, and applicable to their own lives. In this study, knowledge of sex picked up from the media further triggered adolescents' curiosity and adventurism to engage in sex which eventually led to early pregnancy and teenage fatherhood.

In conclusion, this study directs attention to some policy insights on sex education and gender equality training for the vulnerable Filipino youth in the country. Current national strategies addressing teenage pregnancy and early family life

give importance to women's rights and health education. The Magna Carta of Women asserts that "no school shall turn out or refuse admission to a female student solely on account of her being pregnant outside of marriage during her term in school." However, pregnant teenage women from resource-poor settings are not fully aware of their rights (Gregorio, 2018). Thus, it is crucial to provide proper sex education and gender equality training to Filipino youth in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies, teenage fatherhood, and/or better prepare them for parenthood and family life. Using an empowerment approach, it is important for teenage parents to recognize themselves as equals in their relationships, capable of protecting their own health and well-being.

For the parents, schools, and religious and government institutions, this study recommends a further increase of valuable groups, clubs, or worthwhile activities such as community involvement, tourism development, environmental protection, sports tournament, student exchange program, religious organization, support groups, among others in order to engage youth as active members of society.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, V., & Dhanasekaran, S. (2012). Harmful effects of media on children and adolescents. *Journal of Indian Association of Child Adolescents' Mental Health*, 8(2), 38–45. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ989518.pdf>
- Aguiling-Dalisay, G. (1983). *Fathers as parents: An exploratory study* [Master's thesis]. University of the Philippines, Quezon City.
- Aguiling-Dalisay, G., Mendoza, R., Miraflex, E., Yacat, J., Sto Domingo, M. R., & Bambico, F. R. (2000). *Pagkalalake: Men in control?* Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino.
- Alampay, L. P., Liwag, M. D., & Dela Cruz, A. S. (2009). Risk-taking among Filipino adolescents: A review with implications for research. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 42(1), 97–116.
- Arca, J. R. A. (2002). *On disgrasyas and kati: Talk of Filipino boys on teenage pregnancy*. University of Amsterdam. [http://amma.socsci.uva.nl/theses/arca%20\(2002\).pdf](http://amma.socsci.uva.nl/theses/arca%20(2002).pdf)
- Batangan, M. T. D. U. (2006). *Pagdadalaga at pagbibinata: Developmental contexts of adolescent sexuality*. University Center for Women's Studies.
- Bulatao, J., & Gorospe, V. (1966). *Split-level Christianity: Christian renewal of Filipino values*. Ateneo de Manila University.
- Casselmann, R., & Rosenbaum, A. (2014). Fathers, sons, and aggression: A path model. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 23(5), 513–531.
- Chaves, L., Tortolero, S., Markham, C., Low, B., Eitel, P., & Thickstun, P. (2005). Impact of the media on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviors. *Pediatrics*, 116(1). http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/116/Supplement_1/303.short
- Conaco, M. C. G., Jimenez, M. C. C., & Billedo, C. J. F. (2003). *Filipino adolescents in changing times*. U.P. Center for Women's Studies and Philippine Center for Population Development.
- Gregorio, V. (2018). The only exception: Teenage pregnancy in the Philippines. *Review of Women's Studies*, 28, 1–28.
- Guillermo, M. L., & de Guzman, A. B. (2007). *The Filipino Family in Constant (R)evolution*. Rex Bookstore.
- Hendry, L., & Kloep, M. (2002). *Lifespan development: Resources, challenges and risks*. Thomson Learning.
- Kail, R. V., & Cavanaugh, J. C. (2010). *Human development: A life-span view* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Kirven, J. (2014). The reality and responsibility of pregnancy provides a new meaning to life for teenage fathers. *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy*, 33(2), 24. http://www.wglasserinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/19_IJCTRTPRING2014.PDF

- Koerselman, K., & Pekkarinen, T. (2017). *The timing of puberty and gender differences in educational achievement*. Institute of Labor Economics. <https://docs.iza.org/dp10889.pdf>
- Laigo, L. B., Cura, N. M., Oreta, J. S., & Galang, G. P. (2009). *The Filipino family: Indicators of well-being*. PWU Publishing House.
- Long, E., Fish, J., Scheffler, A., & Hanert, B. (2014). Memorable experiences between fathers and sons: Stories that shape a son's identity and perspective of his father. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 22, 122–139.
- Medina, B. T. G. (2015). *The Filipino family*. The University of the Philippines Press.
- Palispis, E. (2007). *Introduction to values education*. Rex Printing Company.
- Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldman, R. D. (2009). *Human development* (11th ed.). The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Rafique, R., & Hunt, N. (2015). Experiences and coping behaviours of adolescents in Pakistan with alopecia areata: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 10, 26039. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v10.26039>
- Rawat, C., & Singh, R. (2017). The paradox of gender difference on emotional maturity of adolescents. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 58(3), 126–131. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2017.1305610>
- Steinberg, L. (2012). *Adolescence* (12th ed.). McGraw Hill Education.
- Straubhaar, J., La Rose, R., & Davenport, L. (2014). *Media now: Understanding media, culture, and technology* (8th ed.) Cengage Learning.
- Tan, M. L., Batangan, M. T. U., & Cabado-Española, H. (2001). *Love and desire: Young Filipinos and sexual risks*. UP Center for Women's Studies.
- Wormer, K. (2017). *Human behavior and the social environment (individuals and families)* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

