

Review Article

Experiences of Student–Mothers during Distance Learning: A Sociobiological Perspective

Kenzie F. Jovellanos, Keistine C. Reyes, Khey-CC. Villaganes and Gerald S. Martos*

MASE STEM Teacher III, Cainta Senior High School, Rizal, Philippines

*Corresponding author: Gerald S. Martos, MASE STEM Teacher III, Cainta Senior High School, Rizal, Philippines

Received: December 28, 2022; Accepted: January 04, 2023; Published: January 11, 2023

Abstract

Teenage pregnancy and parenting continuously becomes a pressing concern in basic education. A growing body of literature is pointing out that student mothers experience trouble in managing their varied responsibilities. To provide richer literature about the experiences of student mothers during distance learning framed in sociobiological dimension, this qualitative study was conducted. This phenomenological study aims to explore the experiences in Cainta Senior High School during distance learning and frame their narratives using sociobiological theories. An adopted but modified questionnaire was used to gather data from seven purposively chosen respondents. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was then utilized to analyze the data collected from focus group discussion (FGD) and electronic mail.

Data analysis revealed the emergence of four themes which included (a) struggles in managing their dual roles; (b) motivation for success through education (c) prioritizing baby's welfare; and (d) people involvement before, during and after pregnancy. These four identified themes are also congruent to Kin Selection Theory, Evolutionary Life History Theory and Self-Regulation Theory in which narratives are analyzed. Academic institution may offer considerations in their academic workloads such as providing printed modular program, lessening requirements and homework, and counselling services. Future studies may concentrate on best practices schools may give to improve the welfare of student-mothers. Further research could be done to the sociobiological foundations of this paper especially if the experts and policy makers would like to possibly apply the results of this research in crafting interventions to curb school dropouts due to adolescent pregnancy and parenting.

Keywords: Qualitative, Phenomenology, Experiences, Distance learning, Teenage pregnancy, Student-mothers, Sociological, Biological, Theories 4

Introduction

Over 90% of learners in approximately 200 countries ranging from basic to tertiary education were affected by closing of schools due to CoViD-19 pandemic [1]. In the Philippines, lockdowns have been enforced throughout the Philippines since March 2020 to encourage social distancing and to restrict the spread of the virus [2,3]. The Department of Education has also moved the opening of classes to October 5, 2020 when Republic Act No. 11480 was signed [4]. Since then, emergency distance learning was initiated in basic education institutions to deliver education amidst global pandemic. UNESCO suggested the use of distance learning modalities such as online distance learning and modular distance learning to deliver education remotely. However, it was shown that the implementation of remote learning had brought about some negative effects on students [5] more so, to student-mothers [6]. As stated by UNESCO in 2020, school closures paved the way for an increase in child labor, sexual exploitation of young women, early marriages, and teenage pregnancies. The Department of Science and Technology - National Research Council of the Philippines also supported the statement of UNESCO and concluded that one of the effects of school closure to adolescent girls is being pregnant at an early age [7]. Pregnancy among teenagers has become a worldwide issue wherein both emerging and developed nations are affected. Most governments throughout the world are dealing with the issue of how to

manage and prevent teenage pregnancy from increasing [8]. According to the World Health Organization [9] there are roughly around 12 million girls aged 15-19 years old that give birth every year in developing countries. In fact, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) State of the World Population Report of 2018, the Philippines have the fifth highest adolescent birth rate among 11 Southeast Asian nations. DepEd Secretary Briones stated that 61.9% out of more than two million out of school children and youth ages 16-24 dropped out from school due to marriage/family matters. Briones also confirmed that currently, teenage pregnancy could already be considered as one of the main reasons of children dropping out of school [10]. According to Taukeni [11], student-mothers encounter several challenges in performing their dual role, as student and as parent. There is a growing body of literature that points out the serious and prevalent physical, emotional and mental challenges among student mothers especially if one is still a teenager [12]. Several authors have recognized a solid link between dual roles of student-mothers and their negative experiences [13,14]. Several studies are concentrated on student-mothers in regular tertiary education internationally [15-17] and locally [18-20]. However, very few studies have looked into experiences of student mothers in distance education [21]. This study, therefore, is unique considering its focus on socio-biological perspective and its possible connection to experiences of student- mothers during distance learning. There are socio-biological theories that are related to teenage pregnancy

and parenting [22]. In this study, the researchers tried to frame the narratives of the student-mothers to sociobiology, Kin Selection Theory, Evolutionary Life History Theory, and Self-Regulation Theory to make the narratives of the participants more meaningful.

As such three compelling reasons why the researchers were inspired to explore the topic are given here. First is the rising cases of teenage pregnancy and parenting in the Philippines; second is the continuous dropping out of student mothers from basic education; and third, which is perhaps the most challenging aspect, is the very limited studies on distance learning experiences of student mothers in Philippine settings during the pandemic anchored on socio-biological foundations. A more enriched qualitative research was generated from this study and contributed to the much better understanding of the lived experiences of student-mothers and how their daily experiences, decisions, ambitions, and lifestyle are anchored from an evolutionary standpoint.

Literature Review

According to WHO (2004), teenage pregnancy, also known as adolescent pregnancy, is pregnancy in a female under the age of 20. In developing countries, there are an estimated 12 million girls aged 15-19 years that give birth each year [23]. Philippines, on the other hand, have seen a slight decrease in teenage pregnancy rate. From 10% in 2008, it decreased to 9% in 2017 [24]. However, the Philippines still has one of the highest adolescent birth rates among the ASEAN Member States. This entails that more than 500 Filipino adolescent girls are getting pregnant and giving birth every day [25].

Government programs are continuously implemented to address the problems associated with teenage pregnancy. In fact, Department of Education, Department of Health, and Commission on Population and Development jointly initiated the Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Adolescent Reproductive Health (CSE-ARH) Convergence to respond on the ongoing challenges of reproductive health issues among young people including adolescent pregnancies. Revilla [26] also filed “Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy Act of 2019” in the Senate addressing the concerns of teenage pregnancies and taking care of the welfare of teenage mothers. President Duterte also signed executive order (EO 141) announcing the prevention of teenage pregnancies a national priority of the country. Differing literature surfaced about the correlation of teenage pregnancy and education, although negative consequences outweigh positive ones. Predetermined pregnancy among 6 young individuals can compromise their education. However, in the study of Goodman and Reddy [27], many single student mothers pursue their education due to powerful motivation to improve the lives of their families and to be a positive example for their children. Their children serve as a consistent motivation for these student parents to persist in their education and career goals. According to Reichlin Cruse, Holtzman, et al., [28], as cited in the study of Pendleton and Atella [29], the median debt of undergraduate student parents is 2.5 much higher than the debt of those without children. This is primarily due to a lack of familiar support. They also added that teenage pregnancies cause young women to have different negative impacts on their studies, means of living and to their health.

According to the Philippine Statistics Office in 2019, Region IV-A (CALABARZON), recorded 344 live births in the civil registry among young ladies ages 10 to 14. Rizal province in 2019 ranked second in terms of registered live birth out of teenage pregnancy with 5,458 trailing Cavite province. In Cainta Senior High School, there are 58 cases of recorded teenage pregnancies that are currently enrolled for the school year 2021-2022. The issue of teenage pregnancy and parenting can be both viewed in the lens of biological and sociological dimension [30]. Sociobiology is a field of biology that aims to examine and explain social behavior in terms of evolution. Sociobiology is based on the premise that some behaviors (social and individual) are at least partly inherited and can be affected by natural selection [31]. In this study, the researchers framed the narratives of the student-mothers to sociobiology, Kin Selection Theory, Evolutionary Life History Theory, and Self-Regulation Theory to make the narratives of the participants more meaningful.

Evolutionary Life History Theory which was articulated by Stephen Stearns is anchored from the principles of Natural Selection by Charles Darwin. It essentially states that early reproduction can be correlated to harsh environmental conditions. According to this theory, girls who live in an environment where there is huge emotional stress will experience adolescence at an earlier age than her peers. In any situation where there is a threat of dying, there is also a pressure on the organism to reproduce. This is also supported by the notion that teenage childbearing has been the norm for most of human history especially in early civilizations [32]. Kin selection theory is the evolutionary strategy that favors the reproductive success of an organism's relatives, even at a cost to the organism's own survival and reproduction. The theory was also anchored from natural selection theory and popularized by Hamilton in 1963 and Smith in 1964.

Self-Regulation Theory as studied by Roy Baumeister explains that individuals operate like feedback systems, constantly regulating their relationships to the environment in order to bring their current state closer to their goal states. This theory involves concept on feedback system of self-regulation, coping procedures, and problem solving. They 7 also possess coping techniques where individuals are viewed as active problem solvers who tried to reach their desired goal.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study is guided by the following central research question: What are the significant experiences of student-mothers in Cainta Senior High School during distance learning? Specifically, the researchers would like to determine if the experiences of the participants can be analyzed through a sociobiological perspective.

Scope and Limitation

This study was limited only to the examination of the experiences of student-mothers during distance learning. This did not discuss the possible intervention strategies to curb teenage pregnancy; rather, this study is concentrated on examining the experiences of student-mothers in Cainta Senior High School during distance learning. This research is only concerned with Kin Selection Theory, Evolutionary Life History and Self-Regulation Theory. The data collection was

conducted with seven student-mothers currently enrolled at Cainta Senior High School on school year 2021-2022 using focus group discussion. This study was conducted from March-April 2022. Data gathering employed several instruments which were constructed and modified by the researchers. Findings of the study, therefore, were true only for the subjects concerned and for the given period of time, although this could be used as a basis for similar studies that would be conducted at different schools in the country.

Significance of the Study

The researchers considered that the body of knowledge that was produced from this study added to the better understanding of the distance learning experiences of student-mothers framed in socio-biological dimension. Additionally, the researchers believed that this study will be valuable to the following group of people:

Students

This research intends to help regular students be properly educated on the experiences of student-mothers to make informed life choices about their life.

Parents

This research can help parents in addressing the issue of their daughter who needs proper support and guidance as it is difficult to study and take care of a child at the same time. This study may give them an idea on what kind of support they should provide or offer to their daughter to help them lighten the challenges they are facing as student-mothers.

School Administrators

Data from this study would give school administrators a better perspective about the circumstances of the student-mothers. This study might be used as a guide in developing future projects which help them manage their dual roles without dropping out of school.

DSWD and GAD

Concerned individuals from these agencies may want to look into the theoretical foundations of this research to evaluate if their current programs for student-mothers are effective. This research may shed light, where necessary, in understanding the roots of why student-mothers behave the way they do and therefore could propose socially appropriate programs to empower them and protect their welfare.

Future Researchers

With the growing number of student-mothers dropping out of schools, it is vital to engage in research to examine this rising phenomenon. Specifically, more exploratory research is needed to understand this overlooked population.

Research Methodology

Sampling

Qualitative method of research, specifically phenomenological research, was used in this study. To realize this research design, specific, purposively chosen participants played a crucial role in the

data gathering procedure. This strategy is a kind of non-probability sampling technique, which targets a particular group of people [33]. Purposive sampling was used because the researchers believed that subjects were the most fitted to become respondents of the study. This type of sampling allowed the selection of participants who had experienced or were experiencing the phenomenon (teenage parenting) under study. This sampling technique also allowed the researcher to draw stories from student mothers about their actual life experiences [34]. In this study, the number of participants was seven (7). Morse in 1994 suggested at least six respondents for phenomenological research design. Manalang (2015) worked on a phenomenological study involving only three student-mothers. The increase in number of participants in this study was to ensure the richness of data that will be obtained from the focus group discussion.

Criteria were set to choose the possible respondents: a) student-mother; b) 16-20 years old; c) currently enrolled in school, d) willingness to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Health research has already accepted a qualitative type of methodology in the past years [35]. Authors identified the effectiveness of qualitative methodology in bringing out the greater depth of understanding on the complex phenomena faced by patients living with long term conditions [36]. One field under qualitative research is phenomenological research. This approach allows the researcher to frame significant themes from participants' narratives and descriptions regarding the phenomenon [37]. This study utilized phenomenological research design. In gathering necessary data in realizing this design, focus group discussion (FGD) using an interview guide was done. The interview guide was adapted from the study of Erk [38] and modified by the researchers to fit the current study. Informed consent form for participants, permit letter for the parents of 9 participants who are under 18-year-old, and permit letter to conduct the study addressed to research adviser were prepared to address ethical issues regarding the FGD that took place. When the study was approved, the researcher talked to target participants and explained to them the nature, objective, and significance of the study. Once the target participants agreed to the interview, they were given an informed consent form. For participants who did not want to participate in the study, the researchers showed gratitude accordingly.

One (1) focus group was created. This focus group was composed of 6 (six) participants who participated in a focus group discussion (FGD). The date, time, and platform (whether face to face or virtual) of FGD was negotiated with the participants for their convenience. FGD started after the informed consent form and permit letter to the parents were filled out completely. As an opening activity to focus group discussion, the researchers asked the participants to draw their perception on themselves as student-mothers. The respondents were told that they can edit, add, or start the drawing over during the discussion. This technique was used to enrich the verbal narrative and "break the ice" between participants and researchers. Questions in FGD were also sent to one participant via electronic mail after confirming that there was a conflict on schedule. Responses were sent back to researchers a day after.

Data Analysis

There was a large amount of data obtained in the qualitative interview conducted and it was necessary to use a structured framework. Therefore, collected narratives were examined using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA intends to look at details of how respondents are making sense of their personal and social world. According to Smith and Osborn [39], IPA aims to explore in detail how participants were making sense of their personal and social world” which captured and explored the life of the participants assigned to their experiences. The steps in IPA were summarized as follows: a) reading transcripts; b) taking notes of significant statements; c) statements to codes; d) grouping clustered codes to themes; e) making table of themes.

To validate the findings, researchers adopted the seventh step on Collaizi’s Seven Step Method [40]. Participants were asked to validate the themes that were extracted from their narratives through their personal messengers.

Ethical Issues

Before the start of study, the researchers sought permission for conducting the study through a letter given to the research adviser. Since the study concerns a subject that is considered sensitive, several potential ethical issues were addressed. For purposively chosen participants, the entire consent form was given to them. This action allowed them to carefully read the purpose of the study, risks and discomfort the group discussion may bring, benefits of the 10 studies, and confidentiality of the information. Consent letter for the parents of participants was also given to ensure that the parents of the minors allowed them to partake in the said study. The focus group discussion was held at the most convenient time of the participants. The researcher also explained to each of the participants that participation in the study is not compulsory, and they may stop the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. Before conducting the FGD, the researcher reviewed the consent form and reminded the participants that the discussion will be tape recorded.

In the manuscript, participants were tagged as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, and so on for anonymity.

Discussion of Results

This phenomenological study primarily aimed to explore the experiences of student-mothers in Cainta Senior High School during distance learning. The result and discussion section was presented with identifying themes from participants’ narratives and sociobiological dimensions where narratives were framed. According to Auerbach & Silverstein [41], themes may emerge as a result of the repeating concepts which are mutually shared by participants.

It is found out that the identified themes were congruent to the central research question as follows:

1. Struggles in Managing their Dual Roles
2. Motivation for Success through Education
3. Prioritizing Baby’s Welfare
4. People Involvement Before, During and After Pregnancy

These four identified themes are also congruent to Kin Selection Theory, Evolutionary Life History Theory and Self-Regulation Theory in which narratives are framed. The artistic representations of the respondents on how they view themselves as student-mothers also reflected the themes that emerged from the narratives of the participants. As the student-mothers used their art to represent themselves, themes emerged organically from the art that reflected the student-mother’s lived experience during distance learning. The art itself conveyed emotion, priorities, and struggle and provided another way of communicating their lived experience as a student-mothers. Five out of six participants included their child in the portrait. Five out of six participants included their different roles in life. Four out of six participants also included studying or education (Figure 1).

Struggles in Managing their Dual Roles

Student mothers have experienced a lot of struggles that may lead to interrupt their academic accomplishments [42]. It is similar to the experience of one participant in which she shared her experiences in distance learning. According to her,

“Actually po, mahirap para sa akin kasi nagtatrabaho na tapos nag-aalaga pa, tas mag-aaral ka pa siguro nagsasagot na lang ako ako kapag walang ginagawa saka kapag hindi masyadong pagod saka kapag tulog yung baby ko tapos ngayon nga medyo late na ako sa mga activities pero kailangang habulin kasi hindi ako makaka graduate. Kailangan ko maka graduate kasi gusto ko na makahanap ng mas maayos na trabaho, yun lang.” (Respondent 2; 00:42:58-00:43:31)

She also shared her experiences in deciding what to prioritize to her obligations. She commented,

“Ako po kasi sa tingin ko kasi sa lahat ng bagay kailangan kang may isa kang isasakripisyo, para sa akin dumadating kasi ako sa point na malapit na yung pasahan ng module tas nagrurush din kami ng mga tahi tapos andiyan pa yung baby na aalagaan. Kailangan ko talagang may isa munang hindi gagawin kaya ang ginagawa ko na lang since pwede namang malate ng konti sa pasahan yun na lang muna yung ano hindi ko muna ginagawa tapos kapag may time na ako yun na yung ginagawa ko. Yung doon po sa pag-aaral or pagiging magulang syempre nasimulan na yung pagiging magulang kaya itutuloy na po yon, kasi yung pag-aaral pwede mo namang ulitin pero yung pag-aalaga 12 alagaan mo hanggang baby pa siya kasi kapag lumaki na siya hindi mo na siya maaalagaan gaya nung baby pa siya.” (Respondent 2; 00:46:22-00:47:00)

Evidence pointed out that student mothers have trouble towards their academic journey during the implementation of distance learning. It was exemplified by one participant who shared her her daily routine in distance learning. According to her,

“Ganon din po lagi yung routine ko everyday kapag syempre sa morning po asikaso po muna ng baby and then kapag medyo okay na po nakatulog na po siya, saka lang din po ako gagawa ng modules ko and lahat po ng schoolworks. Kapag face to face naman po uhm iniwan ko din po siya sa parents ko po para po makapasok. Saka okay na din po yung half day lang po yung pasok para po maalagaan ko din po siya pagkauwi ko.” (Respondent 4; 00:42:13-00:42:48)



Figure 1: Collage of Student-Mother Portraits.

Struggling with their varied roles also prompted three respondents to suggest that school may help them with their situation especially, time management if they will be given using printed modules or Learner’s Packet (LeaP). As one respondent suggested,

“Para po sakin siguro ano po kung yung ibabalik po yung may printed module po kasi po pag sa online po kumukuha parang ang hassle po kasi minsan syempre po minsan yung iba walang panload. Although po may libreng wifi sa school pero paano naman po yung mga walang pamasaha, hindi po kayang mamasaha, hindi po kayang magload? Yung iba po kasi nakikisabay lang po ng module diba, nakikipasa lang.” (Respondent 6; 01:09:56-01:10:28)

Motivation for Success through Education

Participants stated that they continue studying for their child’s future as well as to provide their needs and serve as their child’s role model. As stated by Goodman and Reddy, single mother-students demonstrate exceptional determination to overcome obstacles to their education, and they are powerful role models for their children where their children serve as a consistent motivation for them to persist in their education and career goals. One participant said that,

“So as a single mom po, syempre po mas gugustuhin ko pong ipagpatuloy po yung pag-aaral ko kasi para po mas mabigyan po ng mas magandang future yung baby ko na kahit wala akong katuwang e mapupuna ko po yung mga pangangailangan niya at the same time po mafufullfill ko rin po yung ano yung dreams ko po na makapagtapos at makahanap ng magandang trabaho para sa po sa kanya.” (Respondent 4; 00:55:25-00:56:20)

Another participant also shared her insight

“Dati po yung rason mo kung bakit ka nag aaral is para makatulong sa pamilya, ngayon po ang iniisip ko na yung future ng anak ko yung para den sa family ko para pagdating ng 13 araw kung may maganda na kong trabaho mabigay ko at masuklian ko den yung mga hirap ng magulang ko na kahit maaga ako nagkaanak pinupush pa rin nila na makatapos ako.” (Respondent 6; 00:52:15-00:52:43)

Prioritizing Baby’s Welfare

Wilson and Cox [43] found out despite the fact that student-mothers understood the value of their schooling for the benefit of their family, their children were their top priority. One of the participants explained that her time in a day isn’t enough to complete her daily responsibilities. According to her,

“Ako po kasi sa tingin ko kasi sa lahat ng bagay kailangan kang may isa kang isasakripisyo, para sa akin dumadating kasi ako sa point na malapit na yung pasahan ng module tas nagrarrush din kami ng mga tahi tapos andiyan pa yung baby na aalagaan. Kailangan ko talagang may isa munang hindi gagawin kaya ang ginagawa ko na lang since pwede namang malate ng konti sa pasahan yun na lang muna yung hindi ko muna ginagawa tapos kapag may time na ako yun na yung ginagawa ko. Yung doon po sa pag-aaral or pagiging magulang syempre nasimulan na yung pagiging magulang kaya itutuloy na po yon, kasi yung pag-aaral pwede mo namang ulitin pero yung pag-aalaga alagaan mo hanggang baby pa siya kasi kapag lumaki na siya hindi mo na siya maaalagaan gaya nung baby pa siya.” (Respondent 2; 00:46:22-00:47:00)

On the other hand, another participant shared that the other mothers would surely agree. She said,

“Mas pipiliin ko po maging ina, at alagaan ang aking anak dahil isang beses lang po sya bata at kailangan nya pong matutukan.” (Respondent 7)

People Involvement Before, During and After Pregnancy

In the course of pregnancy until child rearing, several individuals play crucial part on student-mothers life. When a teenage daughter gets pregnant, parents are usually disappointed (Furstenberg, 1980 as cited by East, 1999). One of the participants mentioned how her parents have high expectations from her, but suddenly it leads to disappointment when they find out that she got pregnant. She said,

“Actually honor student po ako since elementary and high school. In fact, I graduated when I was in grade 6 as the 5th honorable mention of our batch. Sobrang laki ng expectations sakin ng family ko, kaya nung nabuntis ako sobrang laki din ng disappointment nila sakin. Nagka boyfriend po ako when I was in grade 10 and sya din ung father ng baby ko now. Nakatira po kami sa parents ko now pero planning na lumipat.” (Respondent 2; 00:32:54). 14

While other participants shared her experiences by frequent socializing with her friends before getting pregnant. According to her,

“Dati po nung bago ako manganak, bago po ako mabuntis ano po mabarkada po talaga ako marami po akong kaibigan tapos yung partner ko po ano na po talaga siya nagtrabaho na po siya working student po talaga siya eh ngayon ano po hindi po kami nagsasama dun pa din po ako sa bahay namin nakatira kasi po nagpapatuloy po ako ng pag-aaral ngayon hopefully po na makatapos po ako this year magsasama po kami, maghahanap na rin po ako ng trabaho, siya din po kasi mahirap po talagang maging ano nag-aaral ka tapos may anak ka mahirap pong pagsabayin.” (Respondent 6; 00:28:28-00:29:16)

Regardless of the failure or judgements they had encountered, student mothers still want guidance and care from their family. Anwar and Stanistreet [44] supported those teenage moms depend mostly on their family, trusted friends, to the people who are always on their side and who they feel can support them. Participant also gave advice from the other student's mother who experienced the same treatment. She added,

“Ako naman po maadvice ko sa kanila is wag silang makikinig sa mga sinasabi nung mga chismosa ganun marites, wag silang maniniwala na “ay nabuntis yan ng maaga kasi ang landi landi niyan” ganun. Kasi ganun yung mindset nung ibang tao porket nabuntis ng maaga malandi ka na agad. Yun po yung wag nating inormalize kasi hindi naman po totoo yun na porket nabuntis ka ng maaga malandi kana. Kasi may mga iba na bumababa yung self confidence dahil dun kasi nagpapadala sila sa mga sinasabi ng iba. Kaya advice ko lang talaga sa kanila wag silang maniniwala dun, paniwalaan nila yung sarili nila, sa pamilya nila kasi lagi nilang tatandaan na nandyan yung pamilya wag silang maniniwala jan sa mga wala namang ambag sa buhay.” (Respondent 6, 00:57:39-00:58:34)

Two respondents mentioned their family members who are taking care of their child while they are busy with schoolworks. They said,

“Nagagawa kopong pag sabayin kapag po tulog sya o di kaya naman ay aalagaan sya ng lola nya.” (Respondent 7).

“Ako naman po, yung baby ko po iniwan ko sa family ko po, sa mama ko lalo na kapag nagsasagot po ako ng module or assessment.” (Respondent 5).

Sociobiological Dimensions of Participants' Experiences

Sociobiology is the systematic study of how natural selection shapes the biological basis of all social behavior. Sociobiology was used to frame the narratives of the participants in the study.

Sociobiologists predict that mothers will care for their children more than fathers (they have more invested in them and are more certain of their maternity. All of the student mothers in 15 this study have the custody of their child providing nourishment and support to the child, consistent with the findings of Craig [45] which exemplifies that those mothers were more likely to do more multi-tasking, more physical labor, more responsibility for their care than the fathers. Women often perceived as more nurturing in the society and many people thinks that women are better at taking care of children than men are (Craig, 2006).

Sociobiologists also predict that helping decreases with kinship distance in what known as kin selection theory. Kin selection theory asserts that humans are predisposed to ensure the survival and replication of their genes which they share with their offspring [46] Caring and helping is evident when it involves children, parents, spouses, or other close relations. This sociobiological perspective is evident in the narratives of the student-mothers; whether they said that they wanted to finish studies or wanted to work, this shows deep care and affection. Likewise, kin selection theory can be seen in one theme of study which is prioritizing their baby's welfare. It shows that student-mothers wanted to take care the needs of their baby first before anything else, a good manifestation of kin selection theory. Life situations wherein student-mothers do not have internet load to download necessary learning materials, do not have transportation allowance to go to school for school requirements, struggle with their time and finances, are confused with their roles, sacrifice one task to perform the other, needs to work while taking care of the child and studying all points out to the postulates of Evolutionary History Theory which correlates early pregnancy and parenting to hardships in life. Juntereal [47] wrote that several studies have already proven that too-early childbearing has several negative impacts for young women including poverty and lower educational attainment.

Evolutionary Life History Theory also postulates that in the animal kingdom, investing in one's growth may mean that an animal attains a larger body size before reproduction, allowing them to acquire better mates, a larger territory, or more resources. For humans, self-investment may mean delaying reproduction to further one's education to secure a higher income in the future. This postulate is in contrast with the lived experiences of student-mothers who experienced early pregnancy and therefore have the difficulty in providing the needs of their child. Self-Regulation Theory can also be traced from the narratives of the respondents. Student mothers became problem solvers when face with difficult situations such as balancing their time

with their child and academics. One respondent shared that there are instances that as student-mother, they should sacrifice something. Schooling, in this sense, does not win over taking care for the baby. Welfare of the baby comes first before anything else.

Even when there are cases where submission of school requirements is not prioritized, all of the student-mothers want to finish their studies to support their child's future. This situation exemplifies that all actions of the student-mothers are for the attainment of their desired goal – for their child to have a good future. This situation is also a classic manifestation of Self-16 Regulation Theory where individuals regulate their relationships / responsibilities to the environment to achieve their goals. In a study by Wilsey [48], student-mothers pushed through with their education and professional growth despite the challenges to realize their self-fulfillment. They also have seen that education is relevant to their lives in order to achieve their human goals.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the narratives, this phenomenological research framed in sociobiological perspective, affirms that student-mothers are struggling with their multiple roles in life. Academic institution may offer considerations in their academic workloads such as providing printed modular program, lessening requirements and homework, and counselling services. Basic education services, especially in junior high school and senior high school may provide support groups that could serve as assistance and information resource of these student-mothers. Future studies may concentrate on best practices schools may give to improve the welfare of student-mothers. Further research could be done to the sociobiological foundations of this paper especially if the experts and policy makers would like to possibly apply the results of this research in crafting interventions to curb school dropouts due to adolescent pregnancy and parenting.

References

- UNESCO (2020) Reopening schools: When, where and how?
- Orlanday D, Jennifer R (2020) Inside the world's longest and strictest coronavirus lockdown in the Philippines. *The Telegraph* ISSN 0307-1235.
- Viner RM, Russell SJ, Croker H, Packer J, Ward J et al. (2020) School closure and management practices during Coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: A rapid systematic review. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. 4: 397-404. [crossref]
- Aguilar, Krissy (2020) DepEd moves opening of classes to October 5. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.
- Nugraha R (2020) Nadiem Makarim Launches Online Learning Internet Quota Subsidy. *Tempo.co*.
- Cohen AM, Brawer F (2008) *The American community college* (5th ed.)
- Daquiaoag JL (2021) *NRCP-DOST*. Retrieved from What Causes Early Pregnancy in the Philippines during the Pandemic?
- Okumu J (2020) Erk, T (2013) Effects of Teenage Pregnancy on the Academic Performance of Girls in Secondary Schools in Ukwala Ward, Ugenya Sub County Siaya County, Kenya.
- World Health Organization (2020) Adolescent Pregnancy.
- Reganit J (2019) Retrieved from DepEd highlights need for RH education in public schools. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Taukeni S (2014) The Main Challenges Student Mothers Experience to Manage Their Dual Roles. *International Journal of Advances in Psychology* 3: 94-98.
- Egenti MN, Omoruyi FEO (2011) Challenges of Women Participation in Continuing Higher Education Programme: Implications for Adult Women Counselling and Education. *Edo Journal of Counselling* 4: 131-143.
- Adofo S (2013) Challenges and Coping Strategies of Student Nursing Mothers in Tertiary Institutions in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.
- Najjuma S M, Kyarugaha DT (2006) Studying and Parenting: Experiences of Student Mothers in Ugandan Universities. Monograph Series.17: 1-22.
- Amoabea J E, Abigail O Y, Adei H V, Yaa ANN (2020) Marriage, family and schoolwork: A case of married female undergraduate students at the University of Ghana *Gender & Behaviour* 18: 15476-15486.
- Bruening M, Argo K, Payne-Sturges D, Laska MN (2017) The Struggle Is Real: A Systematic Review of Food Insecurity on Postsecondary Education Campuses. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 117: 1767-1791. [crossref]
- Smith S (2019) Student-Mothers in Community College: A Populous and Overlooked Demographic in Critical Need for Support and Understanding. *Doctoral Dissertation*.
- Gatbonton RR (2021) Educational Experiences of Adolescent Mothers. *IAFOR Journal of Education: Inclusive Education*, 41-58. [crossref]
- Manalang D (2015) The Lived Experiences of College Student Mothers in Managing their Dual Roles. Retrieved from *ResearchGate*.
- Shaik AS (2018) Lived Experiences of Teen-aged Maguindanaon Student Mothers in South Central Mindanao. *International Journal of Engineering Trends and Technology* 64-65.
- Dankyi J K, Dankyi L A, Minadzi VM (2019) Struggles and Coping Strategies of Student Mothers at the University of Cape Coast Distance Education, Ghana. *Creative Education*, 10: 2484-2494.
- Brindis CD, Sattley D, Mamo L (2005) From Theory to Action: Frameworks for Implementing Community-Wide Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Strategies. *Bixby Center for Reproductive Health Research & Policy*.
- Girlhood, not motherhood: Preventing adolescent pregnancy (2015) *UNFPA*.
- Pinilla B, Muñoz S (2005) Educational opportunities and academic performance: A case study of university student mothers in Venezuela. *Higher Education* 50: 299-322.
- POPCOM (2021) POPCOM calls for prevention of repeat teenage pregnancy. *The Philippine Information Agency news*
- Revilla R (2019) Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy Act of 2019. Quezon City, Philippines.
- Goodman S, Reddy M (2019) No matter what obstacle is thrown my way: Report from the single mothers' career readiness and success project. The National College Transition Network, World Education, ECMC Foundation.
- Reichlin CL, Holtzman T, Gault B, Croom D, Polk P (2019) Parents in college by the numbers. *Institute for Women's Policy Research*.
- Pendleton V, Atella J (2020) Academic Outcomes of Undergraduate Student Parents Served by the University of Minnesota's Student Parent Help Center.
- Rozman, Anna (2015) Life History Theory and School-Age Pregnancy: Review and Application. *Honors Scholar Theses* 425.
- Wilson, Edward O (2000-03-24), *The Social Insects*. Sociobiology, Harvard University Press.397-437.
- Stearns S (1992) *The Evolution of Life Histories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell JW (2008) *Educational Research*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Polit D, Beck C (2008) *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (8th ed.) Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Murphy E, Dingwall R, Greatbatch D, Parker S, Watson P (1998) Qualitative methods in health technol-ogy assessment: A review of the literature. *Health Tech-nol Assess.2*: 16. [crossref]
- Neergaard M, Olesen F, Andersen RA, Sonder-gaard J (2009) *Qualitative description— The poor cousin of health research? BMC Medical Research Methodology* 9: 52-57. [crossref]
- Sanders C (2003) Application of Colaizzi's method: Interpretation of an auditable decision trail by a novice researcher. *Contemporary Nurse* 14: 292-302. [crossref]

38. Erk T (2013) The College Student as Mother: A Phenomenological Examination of Community College Student Experiences. Doctoral Dissertation.
39. Smith J, Osborn M (2007) Interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. SAGE 53-80.
40. Colaizzi P, Valle RS, King M (1978) Psychological research as a phenomenologist view it. *Existential Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*.
41. Auerbach C F, Silverstein LB (2003) *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York University Press.
42. Taukeni S (2014) The Main Challenges Student Mothers Experience to Manage Their Dual Roles. *International Journal of Advances in Psychology*, 3: 94-98.
43. Wilson K B, Cox EM (2011) No kids allowed: Transforming community colleges to support mothering. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 4: 218-241.
44. Anwar E, Stanistreet D (2015) 'It has not ruined my life; it has made my life better': A qualitative investigation of the experiences and future aspirations of young mothers from the northwest of England. *Journal of Public Health (Oxford, England)* 37: 269-276. [[crossref](#)]
45. Craig L (2006) Does Father Care Mean Father Share? A Comparison of How Mothers and Fathers in Intact Families Spend Time with Children. *Gender and Society* 259-281.
46. Palomo-Vélez G, Buczny J, Van Vugt M (2020) Encouraging Pro-Environmental Behaviors Through Children-Based Appeals: A Kin Selection Perspective. *Sustainability* 12: 748.
47. Juntereal C (2019) POPCOM: Teenage pregnancy may cause 'intergenerational poverty'. Retrieved from *Manila Bulletin*.
48. Wilsey SA (2013) Comparisons of adult and traditional college-age student mothers: Reasons for college enrolment and views of how enrolment affects children. *Journal of College Student Development* 54: 209-214.

Citation:

Jovellanos KF, Reyes KC, Villaganes KCC, Martos GS (2023) Experiences of Student–Mothers during Distance Learning: A Sociobiological Perspective. *Psychol J Res Open* Volume 5(1): 1-8.