

Self –Appraisal, Interpersonal Relationship, and Life Satisfaction of Teenage Parents

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Abstract

Designed with descriptive-correlational research, the study conducted in Pulong Sta.Cruz, City of Sta.Rosa, Laguna determined the relationship among fifty (50) teenage parents' level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction. Based on the data gathered, the respondents had high level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction. Meanwhile, a significant relationship was noted between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and interpersonal relationship which indicated that the higher the level of self-appraisal, the higher is the level of their interpersonal relationship. Similarly, there was a correlation between their level of interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction which suggested that the higher the level of interpersonal relationship, the higher is the level of their life satisfaction. Finally, a significant relationship was also observed between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and life satisfaction which showed that higher level of self-appraisal was related to the respondents' higher level of life satisfaction.

Key words: self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, life satisfaction, teenage parents

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence and young adulthood are periods of rapid biological, psychological, and social change (Arnett, 2006; Viner, 2005). Despite the popular idea that these phases of life are inevitably associated with storm and stress, evidence suggests that the majority of young people progress through adolescence and young adulthood with few major difficulties (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). A proportion of young people, however, do experience significant life challenges that threaten their ability to achieve their full potential.

In the Philippines, people are born in a conservative culture. Teenagers before were very conservative, obedient and spent more time with their family. As time rolled, teenagers seem to be totally different as before. Nowadays, having a child at a very young age is no longer surprising. Some are already parent as they enter their teenage life. To date, the number of teenage parents is continuously growing. Staggering facts support this call for concern. Recent data from the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) reveal that every hour, 24 babies are delivered by teenage mothers. According to the 2014 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) study, around 14 percent of Filipino girls aged 15 to 19 are either pregnant for the first time or are already mothers—more than twice the rate recorded in 2002. Among six major economies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies and is the only country where the rate is increasing, per the United Nations Population Fund (Van der Hor, 2014).

Being a teenage parent is not without problems and challenges. Woodward, Horwood and Fergusson (2001) assert that being a teenage parent is often accompanied by

significant personal growth and satisfaction. Many young parents indicate that having a child motivated them to cease risky or antisocial behaviors and lifestyles, and imbued their lives with a newfound sense of purpose, maturity, and responsibility. Additionally, teenage parents may face many of the same challenges as other parents. Thus, the child rearing supports and strategies recommended will often be the same for all, requiring the same intervention regardless of the parent's age. However, young parents are not only undergoing major developmental changes, but are also facing stressors that are not experienced to the same extent by other parents (e.g. social stigma) considering the young age when they enter parental status.

Woodward, Horwood and Fergusson (2001) argued that teenage parenthood is one challenge that can have a considerable impact on a young person's life and is associated with a number of adversities. They asserted that it is more likely to occur for young people from a low socioeconomic background, who are underachieving in their education, who misuse drugs and/or alcohol, or who engage in antisocial behaviour. In turn, young parenthood can act to further entrench some of these problems and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage for both the young parent and their child like by limiting the young parent's ability to engage in education leading to further underachievement in education (Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Jaffee, 2002). Additionally, young parents often face substantial social stigma. For example, many young mothers report experiences of judgment or even hostility in their dealings with social service institutions, education providers, and health care facilities (McDermott & Graham, 2005).

Meanwhile, Stephens, Wolf, & Batten (2003) argued that young parents and their children are both at critical points in their lives, when their life courses can be shaped

toward healthy development, stability, and productivity, or toward lifelong poverty and dependency. Efforts to improve outcomes for these young families must take advantage of every opportunity to connect them with the services and support that will help them move toward positive growth. Research has found that some people believe teenage parents should get married and the mother should serve as the primary caretaker while the father should work to support his family. Evidence suggests that these actions may actually decrease the teenagers' educational attainment . Instead, policies could be considered that include financial aid packages similar to those in the higher education system as one way in which to provide resources to teenage parents (Mollborn, 2007).

Moreover, Kost, Henshaw and Carlin (2010) pointed out that for young parents who lack support from their own parents, the experience of being an early parent can be even more daunting as they seek support in adult-oriented systems, which even older parents may find challenging. Teenage parents—or students with children, as they are also referred to in the literature—are parents between the ages of 13 and 19. Often these students drop out of school because of the pressures they experience, including stigmatization associated with early parenting; isolation from peers; and lack of needed support from family, friends, schools, social service agencies, and other organizations. Socio-economic outcomes have been the traditional focus of research on teenage parents, often finding a negative impact on employment and earnings (Beutel, 2000).

The challenge of keeping teenage mothers in school has consistently been more successfully met by school-based programs (Seitz & Apfel, 2000). Williams and Sadler's (2001) study found evidence that social support and school-based programs that provide counseling, health care, health teaching, and education about child development to

teenage parents can help to alleviate many of the problems associated with adolescent pregnancy and parenting. In their study, a 100% success rate was achieved for high school graduation or continuation. In addition, Brownson (2009) found that student mothers receiving school-based childcare and support fared better than peers who did not receive these supports.

New Zealand research conducted by Boden et. al., (2008) has identified that early motherhood remains a risk factor for educational underachievement and poor economic circumstances, even after controlling for confounding factors. However, the associations between early motherhood and later mental health difficulties can largely be accounted for by child, family and other circumstances that existed prior to parenthood.

Young adulthood marks the beginning of more nuanced ways of thinking psychological especially in regard to complex social and ethical issues (Bennett & Baird, 2006; Labouvie-Vief, 2006). In psychological factors, postpartum (or postnatal) depression is very common among young mothers. Research indicates that over half of adolescent mothers exhibit depressive symptoms within the first 3 months of motherhood (Hudson, Elek, & Campbell-Grossman, 2000; Logsdon, Birkimer, Simpson, & Looney, 2005). Low self-esteem and feelings of loneliness are also common problems for young parents, especially for those who have limited social support (Hudson et al., 2000).

From the biological point of view, the optimal child-bearing age for women is from 20 to 35 years old. Any number lower or higher than these given numbers is said to present risks associated with biological age. In effect, the medical world is saying that teenage pregnancy and late pregnancy are both not highly recommended and that the ideal age for pregnancy is somewhere in between. There are also studies that suggest

that late fatherhood increases the risk in children in relation to the occurrence of genetic disorders. A man and a woman therefore are said to be physically ready for parenthood once their physical development is deemed complete. There is a common presumption that a person matures psychologically as one advances in age , thereby providing the capacity to accept the role of a spouse and a parent and making them able to respond accordingly to the accompanying responsibilities. Although this is generally true, it is not absolute since the level of maturity is always subject to upbringing and the environment. A man and a woman are said to be psychologically ready for parenthood when they are willing to shift their priorities from themselves to their spouse and children (Malin & Morrow, 2009).

Considering the foregoing issues and concern, the researcher undertook this study with a view of determining the relationship among level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction among teenage parents in Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta.Cruz, City of Sta.Rosa, Laguna.

Arronson (2005) clarified that self- appraisal theories of emotion are perspectives stating that all emotion result from people's interpretation and explanation of their circumstances even in the absence of physiological arousal. There are two basic approaches: the structural approach and process model. These models both provide an explanation of appraisal of emotions and explain in different ways how emotion can develop. Self-appraisal can mean respect from oneself as a person. It is crucial and is a cornerstone of a positive attitude toward living. It is very important because it affects how one thinks, acts and relates to other people.

Sullivan (2013) explained that the concept of interpersonal relationship involves associations, connection, or affiliations between two or more people. Such person may interact overtly, covertly, face to face or may remain effectively unknown to each other (as in virtual community whose members maintain anonymity and do not socialize outside of a chat room). He further stated that interpersonal relationships are dynamic systems that change continuously during their existence. Like living organisms, relationships have a beginning, a lifespan, and an end. They grow and improve gradually, as people get to know each other and become closer emotionally, or they gradually deteriorate as people drift apart, move on with their lives, and form new relationships with others. He also enumerated the three types of self: The (1) 'good me' versus the (2) 'bad me' based on social appraisal and the anxiety that results from negative feedback and (3) the 'not me' which refers to the unknown, repressed component of the self. He concluded that good relationships require management, effort, and attention, but the investment pays off in many ways. Special bonds with other people are important for both mental and physical health. Research supports the idea that if we have strong, caring relationships with others, we are more likely to be healthy and live longer. Satisfying relationships with family and friends promote career success and we feel more protected as well as happy. Poor relations, on the other hand, may promote depression, drug abuse, weight problems, and other mental health problems (Sullivan, 2013).

Veenhoven (2003) clarified that life satisfaction is one of the indicators of 'apparent' quality of life. Together with indicators of mental and physical health, it indicates how well people thrive. Satisfaction is a state of mind. It is an evaluative self-appraisal of something. The term refers to both 'contentment' and 'enjoyment'. As such it covers

cognitive as well as affective self-appraisals. Satisfaction can be both evanescent and stable through time. Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads. Current synonyms for life satisfaction are: 'happiness' and 'subjective well-being'. The word happiness is also used to refer to an objective good; especially by philosophers. Further, the term life satisfaction has the advantage over the label of 'subjective well-being' is that life satisfaction refers to an overall evaluation of life rather than to current feelings or to specific psychosomatic symptoms.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents of the Study

The study was conducted at Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta. Cruz, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Utilizing descriptive-correlational research design and employing convenience sampling technique, it covered fifty (50) teenage parents whose age ranged from 13-19 years old.

The teenage parents who were qualified for the study were those who fell under the category of being a teenager with at least one child and who permitted the researcher to conduct the study among them for the AY 2014-2015. Prior to the distribution of the research questionnaire, the researcher had initial interview with the respondents to determine those who were teenage parents.

Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire was considered as the most appropriate data gathering instrument for this descriptive-correlational research study about self-appraisal,

interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction among teenage parents of Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta. Cruz, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna. A self-made questionnaire with three parts was utilized in the study. Part 1 covered the respondents' level of self-appraisal while Part 2 included statements about the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship. Finally, Part 3 dwelt on the respondents' level of life satisfaction. To test the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers presented the questionnaire to the panel of experts in the fields of psychology, research and statistics for their corrections, suggestions and recommendations.

Data Gathering Procedure

In preparation for data gathering, the researcher presented a letter addressed to the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna to obtain permission to conduct the study. Another letter was presented to the Barangay Chairman of the aforesaid locale prior to the survey. Before conducting the survey to the selected respondents, the researcher mentioned the instructions and explained the importance of the study to the respondents. The researcher personally conducted the survey and the answered questionnaires were retrieved right after they had been answered by the teenage parents. The answered questionnaires were tallied, tabulated, and subjected to statistical treatment for analysis and interpretation.

Data Treatment and Analysis

The researcher used following statistical tools: Weighted Mean was used to determine the respondents' (a) level of self-appraisal, (b) level of interpersonal relationship, and (c) level of life satisfaction; Pearson r was utilized to determine if there

was significant relationship between the respondents' (a) level of self-appraisal and interpersonal relationship, (b) level of interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction, and (c) level of self-appraisal and life satisfaction.

Ethical Consideration

Stages of communication were strictly considered in this paper by sending letter of request to the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences of UPHSL, Barangay Chairman of Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta. Cruz, Santa Rosa, Laguna as well as to the respondents who were teenage parents. Confidentiality of the respondents' identity and responses was strictly maintained as they were informed that the pieces of information that they provided were used for research purposes only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal

Table 1 presents the respondents' level of self-appraisal, the computed weighted mean, as well as the verbal interpretation and rank of each indicator.

Table 1

Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. I am open- minded when it comes to changes.	3.16	Agree (High)	2
2. I feel I have much to be proud of.	2.92	Agree (High)	9.5
3. I think I am good at developing my abilities.	3.08	Agree (High)	3
4. I certainly feel useful.	2.96	Agree (High)	6
5. I take positive attitude toward myself.	3.18	Agree (High)	1
6. I feel that I have number of good qualities.	3.06	Agree (High)	4
7. I am able to do things that most people can do.	2.94	Agree (High)	7.5
8. I never feel that I am a failure.	2.92	Agree (High)	9.5
9. I know that I can achieve my goals.	3.04	Agree (High)	5
10. I feel that I am a person of worth.	2.94	Agree (High)	7.5
Average Weighted Mean	3.02	Agree (High)	

Table1 presents the respondents' level of self-appraisal. Indicator 5 which states “I take positive attitude toward myself” got the highest weighted mean score of 3.18 and ranked 1st followed by Indicator 1 stating “I am open-minded when it comes to changes” with a weighted mean of 3.16 and ranked 2nd. Meanwhile, Indicator 3 which states “I think I am good at developing my abilities” got a weighted mean of 3.08 and ranked 3rd whereas Indicators 2 and 8 which state “ I feel I have much to be proud of” and “I never feel that I am a failure” respectively obtained a weighted mean of 2.92 and ranked 9th and 10th while Indicators 7 and 10 stating “ I am able to do things that most people can do” and “ I feel that I am a person of worth” got a weighted mean of 2.94 and ranked 7th and 8th respectively.

To sum up an average weighted mean of 3.02 revealed that the respondents had high level of self-appraisal which indicates that even they were already parents at a young age, they still deemed themselves as persons of worth who could still be productive. The findings support the study made by Arronson (2005) asserting that self- appraisal can mean respect from oneself as a person which is crucial and is a cornerstone of a positive attitude toward living. He asserts that it is very important because it affects how one thinks, acts and relates to other people.

2. Respondents' Level of Interpersonal Relationship

Table 2 presents the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship, the computed weighted mean, and the interpretation and rank for each indicator.

Table 2

Respondents' Level of Interpersonal Relationship

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. I look for closer relationship.	2.96	Agree (High)	8
2. I am happy sharing my experiences with others.	2.98	Agree (High)	7
3. I have fulfilling relationship with my partner and his/her family.	3.02	Agree (High)	5
4. I have fulfilling relationship with my family members.	3.10	Agree (High)	1
5. I understand that people have different beliefs and opinion.	3.06	Agree (High)	3.5
6. I am still happy socializing with others though I am already a parent at a young age.	2.68	Agree (High)	10
7. Being a teenage parent is not a problem in my social life.	2.94	Agree (High)	9
8. I still can get along well with others like my friends as a teenage parent.	3.08	Agree (High)	2
9. I regard social relationship as an important part of my life.	3.06	Agree (High)	3.5
10. It is easy for me to open up my thoughts and feelings to others, especially to my loved ones and friends.	3.00	Agree (High)	6
Average Weighted Mean	2.99	Agree (High)	

Table 2 shows the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship. Indicator 4 which states " I have fulfilling relationship with my family members" obtained a weighted mean of 3.10 and was ranked 1st followed by Indicator 8 which states " I still can get along well with others like my friends as a teenage parent" with a weighted mean of 3.08 and ranked 2nd. Both Indicators 5 and 9 which state " I understand that people have different beliefs and opinion" and " I regard social relationship as an important part

of my life” respectively shared the 3rd rank with a weighted mean of 3.06. Meanwhile, Indicator 1 which states “ I look for closer friendship” ranked 8th with a weighted mean of 2.96 followed by Indicators 7 and 6 which state “ Being a teenage parent is not a problem in my social life” and “ I am still happy socializing with others though I am already a parent at a young age” ranking 9th and 10th with a weighted mean of 2.94 and 2.68 respectively.

To sum up, an average weighted mean of 2.99 revealed that the respondents had high level of interpersonal relationship. This means that despite the fact that the respondents were teenage parents, they still managed to deal with others well. The findings support the study made by Fergusson (2001) stating that good relationships require management, effort, and attention, but the investment pays off in many ways like in overall life satisfaction.. He further asserted that special bonds with other people are important for both mental and physical health of individuals like teenage parents.

3. Respondents’ Level of Life Satisfaction

Table 3 presents the respondents’ level of life satisfaction, the computed weighted mean, its interpretation and rank on each of the given statements.

Table 3
Respondents' Level of Life Satisfaction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. I can find contentment with my present situation.	2.82	Agree (High)	7
2. I am able to accept my present situation.	2.96	Agree (High)	3.5
3. I am satisfied with my life in general.	3.00	Agree (High)	1.5
4. I always feel loved.	2.92	Agree (High)	5
5. The conditions of our life are satisfying.	2.78	Agree (High)	9
6. I am happy as a young parent.	3.00	Agree (High)	1.5
7. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	2.78	Agree (High)	9
8. I am satisfied with the protection given by my partner.	2.96	Agree (High)	3.5
9. In most ways my life is close to my ideals.	2.86	Agree (High)	6
10. I am satisfied with my sexual life.	2.78	Agree (High)	9
Average Weighted Mean	2.89	Agree (High)	

Table 3 shows the respondents' level life satisfaction. Indicators 3 and 6 which state “ I am satisfied with my life in general” and “ I am happy as a young parent” both obtained a weighted mean of 3.00 followed by Indicators 2 and 8 stating “ I am able to accept my present situation” and “ I am satisfied with the protection given by my partner” which obtained a weighted mean of 2.96. Meanwhile, Indicators 5, 7 and 10 which state “ The conditions of our life are satisfying” “So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life” and “I am satisfied with my sexual life” consecutively got a weighted mean of 2.78.

To sum up, an average weighted mean of 2.89 revealed that the respondents had high level of life satisfaction indicating that despite their status as teenage parents, they are still highly satisfied with their lives.

The results concur with the perspective of Veenhoven (2003) clarifying that life satisfaction is one of the indicators of ‘apparent’ quality of life and together with indicators of mental and physical health, it indicates how well people thrive. Satisfaction is a state of mind and an evaluative self-appraisal of something. The term refers to both contentment and enjoyment and as such it covers cognitive as well as affective self-appraisals.

4. Relationship Between the Respondents’ Level of Self-Appraisal and Level of Interpersonal Relationship

Table 4 presents the relationship between the respondents’ level of self-appraisal and level of interpersonal relationship.

Table 4
Relationship between the Respondents’ Level of Self-Appraisal
and Level of Interpersonal Relationship

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Level of Self-Appraisal and Level of Interpersonal Relationship	0.280	0.049	Significant

0.05 level of significance

As shown in Table 4 for the relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of interpersonal relationship, a Pearson r -value of 0.280 was obtained and a p -value of 0.049 which was lower than the significance level of 0.05 showed that there is significant relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of interpersonal relationship. This means that the higher the level of self-appraisal, the higher is the level of interpersonal relationship of the respondents.

The findings support the study made by Krueger (2009) revealing that relationships are important for individuals develop a sense of self. The relational self is the part of an individual's self-concept that consists of the feelings and beliefs that one has regarding oneself that develops based on interactions with others. In words, one's emotions and behaviors are shaped by his/her relationship with others. Thus, relational self theory posits that prior and existing relationship with others influences one's emotions and behaviors in interactions with new individuals, particularly those individuals that remind him or her of others in his or her life.

5. Relationship Between the Respondents' Level of Interpersonal Relationship And Level of Life Satisfaction

Table 5 presents the relationship between the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship and level of life satisfaction.

Table 5

**Relationship Between the Respondents' Level of Interpersonal Relationship
and Level of Life Satisfaction**

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Level of Interpersonal Relationship and Level of Life Satisfaction	0.602	0.000	Significant

0.01 level of significance

As shown in Table 5 for the relationship between respondents' level of interpersonal relationship and level of life satisfaction, a Pearson r value of 0.602 was obtained and a p- value of 0.000 which was lower than the significance level of 0.01 showed that there was significant relationship between the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship and level of life satisfaction. This means that the higher the level of interpersonal relationship, the higher is the respondents' level of life satisfaction.

The findings are in consonance with the study made by Fergusson (2001) stating that good relationships require management, effort, and attention, but the investment pays off in many ways like in overall life satisfaction. He further asserted that special bonds with other people are important for both mental and physical health of individuals like teenage parents.

6. Relationship Between the Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal and Level of Life Satisfaction

Table 6 presents the relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of life satisfaction.

Table 6

Relationship Between the Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal and Level of Life Satisfaction

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Level of Self-Appraisal and level of Life Satisfaction	0.351	0.012	Significant

0.05 level of significance

As shown in Table 6 for the relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of life satisfaction, a Pearson r value of 0.351 was obtained and a p-value of 0.012 which was lower than the significance level of 0.05 showed that there was significant relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of life satisfaction. This means that the higher the level of self-appraisal, the higher is the respondents' level of life satisfaction.

The findings align with the perspective of Veenhoven (2003) clarifying that life satisfaction is one of the indicators of 'apparent' quality of life and together with indicators of mental and physical health, it indicates how well people thrive. Satisfaction

is a state of mind and an evaluative self-appraisal of something. The term refers to both contentment and enjoyment and as such it covers cognitive as well as affective self-appraisals.

Conclusion

The data gathered revealed that the teenage parents had high level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction. A significant relationship was noted between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and interpersonal relationship which indicated that higher level of respondents' self-appraisal meant higher level of their interpersonal relationship. Similarly, a significant correlation was observed between their level of interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction which showed that higher level of their interpersonal relationship related to their higher level of life satisfaction. Finally, a significant relationship was shown between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and life satisfaction which suggested that higher level of respondents' self-appraisal meant higher level of their life satisfaction.

Future Directions

Teenage parents education program can be added to school curriculum to help adolescents understand the issues, challenges, and problems that go along with being an early parent. Although the results of the study showed respondents' high level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction, barangay officials of Pulong Sta. Cruz, Santa Rosa, Laguna with the support of city government could provide extension program to the teenage parents by giving them livelihood assistance or scholarship grants for those teenage parents who wish to continue their education. The

leaders of their community may likewise encourage teenage parents to join organizations for young parents so they can take part in improving their well-being as well as their children's. Mass media must include an intensive awareness program on teenage couples and how they can cope with their condition while giving warning to the young generation as to the disadvantages that spring forth from being a teenage parent. Future researches may be conducted considering different research design like qualitative phenomenology or with higher number of respondents from different locales.

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