

## Padre De Escuela: Lived Experiences of Male Parent Student in Lingayen, Pangasinan

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**Abstract-** This study was conducted to understand the parenting styles and conflicting situations of male parent-students by examining their lived experiences. The qualitative method in an intrinsic case study approach was utilized as a method of investigation in this study. Six male student-parent participants were identified using purposive sampling and were interviewed to gather the needed data. The researchers used Thematic Analysis and Transcendental methods in analyzing and interpreting the raw data provided by the participants.

The findings showed that 2 of the student-parents are aged 22, while the other three participants are aged 23 and one participant is aged 25. The three participants are fourth-year, two are third-year, and one is a 2nd-year college. Four participants have one child, compared to one participant with two children. 2 out of 6 male parent-students used attachment parenting style while the 2 used permissive and authoritative parenting, and 3 had difficulty fulfilling their role as parent-student. Participants experienced different problems, such as time management, social relation, and financial and psychological challenges. 1 out of 6 participants suffer from psychological difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and stress; as a parent-student, 3 of the participants have difficulty fulfilling their roles. One of their primary problems is financial difficulties; 1 out of 6 participants mentioned that his source of financial support is his parents.

Furthermore, all the participants stated that their motivations in life as parent-student was their children. This study shows that the coping strategies in dealing with challenges as parent-student were faith in God and having a positive mindset. The participants stated that their teenage lives differed from their male parent-student situation. In addition, participants realized that their lived experiences are more challenging than those of ordinary fathers. The student's parents learned to stand firm, become independent, and realize that every decision has consequences.

**Keywords** – Parenting Style, Lived Experiences, Male Parent-Student

### INTRODUCTION

First-time parenthood is a major transition at any age, but it is particularly challenging for teenagers and young adults. When major changes occur in the lives of expectant and new parents, it is described as one of life's most difficult transitions (Council, 2005)

Parenting styles have a significant influence on all stages of a person's life. They are unable to manage their time effectively as students and male parents, which has an impact on their social, emotional, and academic

adjustment. Student-Parent will need additional support from their families as well as the higher education institution where they are enrolled to successfully resolve this dilemma. The new status of parent-student will create an initial shock in their immediate surroundings: family and university.

The circumstances of becoming a parent-student during university studies were revealed through a central theme: (1) emotions in conflict; (2) internal mobilization to address the situation; (3) positioning oneself in a new

role; and (4) need for support. (Lucchini-Raies, Doren, López, Valdés, & Rodríguez, 2018).

Parents-students redirect their lives in the new situations they encounter in life, it requires them to shift priorities and, in many cases, men tend to be more affected by this process. Positioning oneself in a new role, parents believe they must forego their professional ambitions to devote enough time to their families (Staff, 2021).

According to the 2019 Philippine Statistics, many registered births (452,406 or 27.0% for mothers and 420,018 or 25.1% for fathers) had parents aged 25–29. Babies born to adolescent mothers (180,916), those younger than 20 years old, outnumbered babies born to adolescent fathers (52,734) by more than three times. Twenty years of age or older made-up 59.47 percent of the fathers of teen moms and adolescents, compared to fathers under the age of 20, who made up 23.8 percent of the fathers. Fathers who were at least 20 years old made-up 63.5 percent of the population in 2018 (POPCOM, 2022).

According to a new analysis of data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2022), more than one in five college students, or 22% of all undergraduates, are parents. Of the 3.8 million students who are raising children while in college, roughly 2.7 million (or 70%) are mothers and 1.1 million (30%) are fathers. The 1.7 million single student mothers enrolled as of 2015–2016 represent more than two in five student parents (43 percent). Even though 62 percent of college-age mothers are single parents, many fathers are married (61 percent). In other words, student mothers are 1.6 times more likely to be single than married, while fathers are 1.6 times more likely to be married while in college.

In United States, about 5 million undergraduate students are also parents. Only 26% of student parents complete their degrees within six years. Many others drop out of school to pursue lower-paying professions. One reason for leaving college early is a lack of a strong enough support structure, which includes friends

and relatives who can pitch in and help when the student's parent needs to remain late on campus or when a child is sick. Others are unable to overcome the financial strain of attending college while raising a child. Many student parents work supplementary jobs when they are not in class (Gaytos, Lavilla, & Gaytos, 2019)

Studying the experiences of a Filipino college male student parent in Lingayen, Pangasinan would be an interesting and intriguing project. Their circumstances in society, particularly in academic institutions, may be clarified by the research in this field.

To better understand the parenting style of Male parents and students, this study will focus on the human side of the situation. It attempts to respond to the inquiry, "What is the experience of parent-students in Lingayen, Pangasinan, about their parenting style? And What are the problems that they encounter that may affect their academic performance as parent-students? How difficult is it to become a parent-student? What is my responsibility as a male parent-student?"

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### **Objective of the Study**

The research understands the Parenting styles and conflicting situations of Male parent-students by examining their lived experiences. Specifically, this study answers the following objectives.

1. To identify the demographic profile of the Male Parent-Student in terms of;
  - a. age,
  - b. year level,
  - c. civil status, and
  - d. number of children.
2. To determine the parenting style that they practice as a male parent-student.
3. To describe the problems that the male parent-student encountered in terms of:
  - a. Economic Factors;
  - b. Psychological Factors; and
  - c. Social Factor.
4. To identify the coping strategies used for their responsibility as male parent-student.
5. To describe the motivations to continue their studies amidst the challenge of being young parent.

**METHODS**

The research study intends to analyze young parents' perspectives, namely how it feels to be a parent and a student at the same time. To address the research issue, the study utilizes a qualitative-case study methodology. A case study is a research methodology that aids in the analysis of a phenomenon within a specific context using diverse data sources. It also undertakes the exploration via a range of lenses to disclose multiple features of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researchers compiled and analyzed the responses for the interpretation of the data with the use of Transcendental Methods. According to Moustakas 1994, this philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeks to understand human experience (Sheehan, 2014). The researcher seeks to obtain an unbiased description of the raw data.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following are the presentations of the cases of the six participants. For purposes of confidentiality and ease of reference, initials were given to each participant.

**Demographic Characteristics**

Table 1 presents the profile of the six parent-student in Lingayen, Pangasinan who were identified using the Purposive Sampling method.

**PROFILE OF THE MALE PARENT-STUDENT**

**Table 1**

Profile of the Participants

MALE PARENT-STUDENT	AGE	YEAR LEVEL	CIVIL STATUS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
(MPS)				
MPS 1	22	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Single	1
MPS 2	23	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Married	1
MPS 3	22	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Married	1
MPS 4	23	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Single	1
MPS 5	23	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Single	2
MPS 6	25	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Single	1

**Age**

The participants of the study were 22–25-year-old young parents who are currently enrolled in higher education. Two participants were aged 22, while there were three participants with an age range of 23 and one participant who was aged 25. This implies that most of the parents and students are aged 22 and 23.

Sexual addiction begins at the age of 18. At that point, their behavior becomes reckless sexually. This explains why many young parents are 22 years old now, because they engage in sexual activity when they are 19 or 20 years old, when they are curious and have an active sexual life. They are now 22 and 23 years old because most of them have a one-year-old child (Cleveland Clinic, n.d.).

**Year Level**

The table shows the total number of years in school among the six participants. Based on the table, three participants are currently in their 4<sup>th</sup> year, followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> year participants, who consist of two of the total population, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year with only one participant.

13.9 million Filipino students are also parents, according to the Trade Union Congress of 2016 (Lenon, Nidea, Engayas, Castro, & Escalante, 2020). According to the analysis of data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, parents comprise 22 percent of all undergraduates, or more than one in five college students (Ascend Aspeninstitute Org, n.d.).

**Civil Status**

Based on the demographic data, 4 out of 6 parent-students are Single, while 2 participants are Married.

The very reason for not getting married, according to the participants, is the financial cost. This is supported by the data from the 2013 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS), which reveals that close to half (46 percent) of Filipino youth aged 15 to 24 cited economic concerns as the main reason they lived together and did not formally marry. Previous

research suggests that these economic reasons could refer to the cost of the actual marriage ceremony, including securing the marriage license and other requirements.

In the United States today, one in four parents who are raising a child are not married. This represents a significant shift from a half-century ago, when less than one in ten parents were unmarried (7%), driven by losses in marriage overall as well as increases in births outside of marriage (LIVINGSTON, 2018). Fathers who live together have lower levels of education than fathers who live alone. Approximately 60% of fathers who live together, compared to 51% of fathers who live alone, have a high school diploma or less in education. In contrast, only 12% of fathers who live together hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 21% of fathers who live alone. Moreover, the high percentage of cohabiting parents (65%) who have never been married is also a result of their being relatively young, which means that most of their children were born outside of marriage (LIVINGSTON, 2018).

#### Number of Children

Male parent-student (MPS) 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 have only 1 child, while MPS 4 has 2 children.

Nearly 80% of student parents have one or two children, and more than half of them are preschoolers or younger (53 percent have kids under 6). Asian student parents are most likely to have children in this age range (64 percent) (Ascend Aspeninstitute Org, n.d.).

#### Theme 1: Parenting Style

Parenting styles are concepts that are used to describe the various methods parents often use to raise children. These parenting philosophies cover actions, attitudes, and the emotional atmosphere in which parents raise children. Children who were reared in very different surroundings can end up having very similar personalities to make look like adults. On the other hand, children who live together and are raised in the same setting might develop totally diverse personalities as adults (Cherry, 2022).

According to *MPS 1*, attachment parenting is the parenting style that suits him since his child is still an infant. The researchers asked how he utilized attachment parenting? *"I play with him. When I walk with him, I observed that he is extremely excited, and when I ride him on the tricycle, he is very happy as well..."* he said. Do you frequently watch over him? He answered *"Yes, I cannot take off my eyes on him because babies need extra attention and care."* (*MPS 1*)

*MPS 2*, states that he also practices attachment parenting, this is practically practice since a child needs care, especially an infant. How do you utilize attachment parenting?

*"When I got home from school, I took him from my mother, my mother is the one who looks after him while I am at school. I usually took my child and took the time to take care of him, I feel that I get better when I am with my child, I feel no stress when I see my child, Taking care of my child serves as my bonding moment with him. I see to it that I pay attention to the needs of my son, I change his diapers at night, and I also prepare formula milk for him."* (*MPS 2*)

*MPS 3* answers attachment parenting when it comes to giving his child attention, love, and care. How do you utilize attachment parenting? Do you frequently accompany him when you don't have school or work?

*"Yes, always take care of him, I make it a point that no matter how busy I am throughout the day, I still have quality time with him."* (*MPS 3*)

*MPS 4*, attachment parenting is a style he does when it comes to his baby's needs. How do you utilize attachment parenting?

*"Just like other father, I do the same, every morning I change her clothes and her diaper when she feels uneasy and when she cries, I also took her to sleep, I also make her laugh, which is usual to infants."* (*MPS 4*)

Attachment parenting, according to Dr. Sears, 2020, is a significant commitment that should not be handled primarily by mothers. Fathers also help raise their children by loving and supporting their wives. Without an involved

and supportive father, attachment parenting is less effective (Sears, 2020). The father creates a loving environment that allows the mother to concentrate on the baby. Fathers are not the only stand-in mothers who fill in for the real mother when she is absent. Dads contribute to their children's development in their own unique way.

According to Miller & Common's study, A behavioral developmental view of the benefits of Attachment Parenting for infants and children, when dealing with negative emotions such as crying, anguish, fear, and rage, parents of infants and young children encounter numerous problems. If children experience such feelings regularly and their parents do not intervene, evidence suggests that the stress can cause lasting brain damage. These changes can raise the probability of major developmental issues in children. According to Attachment Parenting International, parents should "take what works and leave the rest." There is a lot of evidence that attachment parenting is good for kids. It appears to shield youngsters against the consequences of toxic stress as well as assist them in developing resilience in the face of adversity. It may help lower a child's likelihood of developing behavioural issues and boost moral thinking. So, evidence in favor of "sensitive, responsive parenting" doesn't tell us that every associated practice is the best choice for every family. If we want to know the effects of a specific practice, we need controlled studies that target that practice. (Dewar Ph.D., 2019).

As claimed by a study on attachment parenting, a father can also build his attachment to his child. By being responsive to his baby's language and comforting his baby when he or she cries, a father can build his own strong attachment to his baby.

We asked MPS 5 about what parenting style he applies; he answered Attachment and authoritative parenting for his 2 children. How did you utilize the two parenting?

*"When I got home from school, I immediately took my second child, which is still an infant, and I also took him for a nap or sleep. By giving them the right love, teaching them the*

*right manners, and telling them what's right and wrong if they do something bad, because that's how my parents raised us even though we're a broken family, for example, when my first born show not so good behaviour like sometimes disobeying us, when she quarrel someone, I tell to her that it is wrong or tell that it is not good to be a quarrelsome, but I see to it that when I reprimand her, I talk to her in a right way."* (MPS 5)

In a study entitled Parenting in the Philippines: A Review of Research Literature from 2004 to 2014, the researchers discovered that the most practiced parenting style in the Philippines is the authoritative parenting style.

Based on the data in the US, 18% use the permissive parenting style, and 10% use the neglective parenting style, while roughly 46% of parents use the authoritative parenting style and 26% use the authoritarian parenting style (ISHINEBRIGHT, n.d.)

The authoritative parenting style has traditionally been characterized as the most successful and useful for a kid; nevertheless, research reveals that parents should deploy parenting strategies flexibly based on their personal goals and the specific characteristics of each child. While authoritarian parents have high expectations, they are also likely to be flexible. Extenuating factors will cause authoritative parents to change their attitude (Cherry, 2022).

According to a study by the UCLA Canter for Mental Health (2017), Authoritative parents are known for making fair requests and being extremely responsive. They have high expectations and set fundamental boundaries, all while listening to and validating their child and ensuring the child has the necessary support and guidance to succeed and be autonomous. They apply discipline fairly and communicate the logic behind it as well as how to modify future behaviour. They value children's rights as well as individual diversity. And they consistently portray concern, affection, and warmth. Furthermore, children raised by authoritative parents are more likely to become autonomous, self-reliant, socially accepted, academically

competent, well-behaved with good emotional control and regulation, and have better dispositions.

Lastly, *MPS 6*, uses permissive parenting in raising his child since children learn and grow from the advice of their parents. How did you utilize permissive parenting?

*"I gave my child precisely what he needed, yet I am not strict. It's only that I specified what a child's special needs are, and I make certain that I'm not spoiling my child."* (*MPS 6*)

Like Lorraine Bunag's study on parenting practices in the Philippines, permissive parenting is characterized by low expectations for children and a lack of rules by Filipino parents. In contrast to the adults in control, they would rather be friends with their children. They take their kids' worries and opinions into account while making important decisions (Bunag, 2022).

According to Kendra Cherry's research on permissive parenting, these parents tend to be nurturing and loving toward their children, ask for their input on important decisions, prioritize their freedom over responsibility, and have few rules or standards of behaviour. And they do have are inconsistent. They may also resort to bribery, such as using toys, gifts, and food to coerce a child into doing something (Cherry, 2022).

Based on the data in the US, 18% use the permissive parenting style, and 10% use the neglective parenting style, while roughly 46% of parents use the authoritative parenting style and 26% use the authoritarian parenting style (ISHINEBRIGHT, n.d.).

Permissive parenting is a parenting style distinguished by minimal expectations and strong attentiveness. Permissive parents are the opposite of so-called "helicopter parents." Instead of watching over their children's every move, permissive parents are extremely loose and seldom set or enforce any form of rule or structure. Their mantra is often "kids will be kids," and while they are typically warm and caring, they make little or no effort to manage or discipline their children. According to Baumrind

in his theory, "Permissive parents are more responsive than demanding; they are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow significant self-regulation, and avoid confrontation." Permissive parenting is often referred to as indulgent parenting. Parents using this parenting style place little demand on their children. Discipline is uncommon because these parents have minimal expectations for self-control and maturity (Cherry, 2022).

Children raised by permissive parents watch more than 4 hours of television or other electronic devices every day, which is five times higher than children raised by other parenting styles. Permissive parenting styles produce more contradictory findings in studies on children's emotional and behavioural states than any other parenting style. According to an evidence-based study of Parenting styles and their effects on Children, children of permissive parents have very low self-esteem in comparison to their peers, whereas another study finds that they have great self-esteem. One reason for this could be that permissive parenting closely mimics the "gold standard" in parenting: authoritarian parenting. Both forms are distinguished by warmth, nurturing, and responsiveness to the child's needs and aspirations; however, permissive parenting is distinguished by a lack of boundaries, and authoritative parenting is distinguished by clear, hard boundaries. (Pamela, 2022)

Permissive parenting has been linked to deviant peer connections and delinquent behaviours due to its lack of boundaries (Frazier, 2019).

## **Theme 2 Challenges of Being a Male Parent-Student**

### **SUB THEME 2:1 FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES**

Fathers are taught that their purpose is to provide for the family financially; hence, money plays a significant role in masculinity and fatherhood. To show their love for their family, they must be able to work and make a living; if they are unable to do so, they are failures (Jatau, 2021.).

*"Since I'm still studying, I still don't have the ability to meet or provide my child's need, sometimes my parents are providing my baby's needs" (MPS 1).*

*MPS 3 also encountered financial difficulties of being a parent student and balancing work and studies.*

How do you survive as a parent-student when it comes to financial difficulties?

*"Because I work, my wife and I sell barbeque in front of our house, I also sell some stuffs and I also tried to be a delivery boy, I find it difficult to balance my studies and work but it's okay, I guess it's just the willingness and if you're motivated you can do it all and there is no difficult if it is for my son." (MPS 3)*

Problems with money can arise because of having a child, which can strain the family budget and cause difficulties in a couple's relationship (Pennells S., 2008). Furthermore, Financial problems are the major problem that young parents encounter in terms of their parenting (Garcia, Manghoig, Onia, & Quebada, 2009).

Additionally, according to Kat Kathryn Grant, financial problems are one of the most stressful things that can happen to a family, and they're also very common (Abrams, 2022).

Over half of undergraduate students are single parents, with 22% of them raising children while attending school. Parenting students are also more likely than non-parenting students to report having fewer financial resources to fund their education. At the same time, parenting students are more likely to struggle with basic needs such as food and housing insecurity and homelessness. Limited resources coupled with high financial and familial obligations put these students at a greater risk of leaving school without completing a degree (Niznik, 2022).

### **Sub Theme 2:2 Time management**

Time Management is the art of arranging and scheduling your time so that you may divide it up between different tasks. Even when time is limited and pressured, effective time management enables you to work smarter, not

harder, to complete more tasks in less time. Being ineffective and stressed-out results from poor time management (Maligi, n.d.).

The researchers asked a question about the time management difficulties to the participants.

*"As a parent-student, I can't maintain my passing grade in school... I can't even do the things I used to like bonding with my friends ..." (MPS 1)*

*"As a parent-student and being busy with work, sometimes I can't do the school requirements, I can't even maintain my passing grade in school..." (MPS 2)*

*"I don't submit my assignments and projects on time because of my responsibilities to my son and my work, but despite that, I'm still doing my best for my studies and for our future" (MPS 3).*

*"I can no longer do the things I used to do before because of my responsibilities now" (MPS 4).*

*"Being students, I also find it difficult to balance my studies with work" (MPS 5).*

According to information from the 2015–2016 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study, over 22% of all undergraduates are parents. So, just how many students across the country are parents? The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) notes that of the 20 million college students in the U.S. enrolled during the 2019–2020 academic year, 4.3 million are raising a child (National University, n.d.).

Parent students confront a variety of unique problems that set them apart from many of their traditional, frequently younger peers when it comes to striking the correct balance between work, life, and school. This group may find it difficult to attend physical classes on set days and hours, even late at night after work. In addition to their employment commitments, they might also need to care for their own families or elderly parents (Fairbanks, 2021).

It's difficult juggling school and life as a parent. When compared to other students, student parents frequently face additional

barriers to earning a bachelor's degree (National University, 2020).

### Sub Theme 2:3: Psychological Challenges

The mental health of parents and children is connected in multiple ways. Parents who have their own mental health challenges, such as coping with symptoms of depression or anxiety (fear or worry), may have more difficulty providing care for their children compared to parents who describe their mental health as good (Wolicki et al., n.d.).- 2021

One of our participants faced depression, which led him to attempt suicide.

*"...It came to a point that I nearly planned to commit suicide because of the problems with my family... especially when I found out that I'll be having a child, I felt the pressure and felt scared, but when my child came into my life, that negative feelings were turned to the happiest moment in my life. Though I also felt quitting school, I realize to continue it for my son and my family. I want to have a good future for them" (MPS 2)*

When it comes to an individual's psychological well-being, depression is a significant factor. It influences a person's mental, physical, and emotional abilities (Wanyoike, 2014)

Suicide is one of the most well-known reasons for death among young parents. Adolescents who become parents outside of marriage and consider suicide as a solution to an unresolved issue face a greater risk (Musyimi, n.d.).

In addition, studies by Knapman (2018) have shown that fathers have a nearly 5% chance of committing suicide after their partners give birth. Studies show that 1 in 10 fathers struggle with postpartum depression and anxiety as well. As previously stated, people who suffer from depression are more likely to commit suicide than people who do not, and it is now well-established that fathers and partners, like new mothers, can experience postnatal depression (also known as PND) (Mayers, n.d.).

### Sub Theme 2:4: Social Relationship

Social relations are extensively characterized as any relationship or collaboration between at least two people (Cash & Toney-Butler, 2018).

The researchers asked a question "Do you also have problems when it comes to your social relationship?" *"I don't have a very good relationship with my classmates and teachers...because after our class, I go home immediately to take care of my business and also to make time for my wife and child". (MPS 2)*

*"...I also don't have a good relationship with my classmates and teachers at school and so I can't balance being a father and a student". (MPS 3)*

*"I could no longer do the things I used to do, if others can still socialize with friends, play basketball, play the computer games, but for me I need to immediately go home to take care of the children and work. And I no longer have a good relationship with my classmates and teachers at school because I often don't participate in activities at school". (MPS 5)*

*"I don't have good relationship with my in-laws" (MPS 6)*

Do you live in your wife's house now? How do you socialize with your in-laws every day?

*"Yes, sometimes at their house, sometimes at our house. It's hard for me to get close to them because of course I understand them because we were young and were still studying when we had a child but I'm doing my best so that they can accept me fully so I'm studying so that when I get a job, I have something to be proud of to them and for my son" (MPS 6)*

Two people's relationships are already difficult enough on their own. However, in-law relationships are established by someone else. Both men and women reported having more conflict with their in-laws than their parents, and mothers indicated having more conflict with their daughters-in-law than their daughters (Carnegie, 2022).

According to Dr.Ramani Durwasula, In-law relationships are notoriously difficult to manage for a variety of reasons, but they really



boil down to two main issues: expectations and boundaries in families can be quite bizarre" (Gould, 2018).

According to The Atlantic 2020, when you have a child, you might find that you spend more time with some friends than with others. In a survey of 2,025 parents, 54 percent admitted to feeling "friendless", while another survey emphasized that this was a problem for young parents (Alfasi, 2020).

### **Theme 3: Approach to Conquering the Challenges**

Due to their circumstances and responsibilities, student parents face difficulties, such as a lack of flexibility in their ability to pursue their academic goals due to class scheduling, family responsibilities, childcare duties, and additional financial demands (Rhijn, 2016).

#### **Sub Theme 3: 1 Support System**

Teenage fathers acknowledged the support network, particularly their parents. As a source of all kinds of support—emotional, physical, material, financial, and informational—the family was very important. To cope with becoming a father, family support was essential (Jover & Marasigan, 2022).

*"For me, my strategy when it come to school is, first make friends and be friendly because it will be easier for you to study if you have friends who will help, understand and make you happy... another thing is that I have loving parents who never excluded us because they are very happy that they have a grandchild." (MPS 2).*

Do you ask your parents for help? *"Yes, seldom." (MPS 5).*

According to **MPS 2**, Having a friend and friendly personality in school is one his strategy to make his school journey easy. He also mentioned that your friend who are helpful, understandable and someone makes you happy when you have problem. Having a parent also who are happy to have a grandson and a parent who doesn't want to be separated with their children. While the **MPS 5** mentioned that he is still asking for help on his parent sometimes.

In the study of Caycho (2016), the results suggest a relationship between interaction patterns among parents and children and coping strategies, which are important variables in the adaptation of adolescents. However, it is necessary to study how the fact that a style prevails over another one depends on the adjustment between the psychosocial conditions in which the family lives, the education scenario built by parents or careers, and their characteristics. In addition, in this study, it says that using more tactics in the instance of the father, characterized by a shift in positive mood, is linked to a lower level of parental aggressive control.

By stepping up and filling in for instances where new parents may fall behind, extended family can significantly enhance the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of those parents. For instance, your baby's aunt can help with the laundry and meal preparation. Your siblings, parents, and in-laws have a deeper understanding of your tastes and can fill in where others might feel inadequate. Grandpa may also offer words of support from his recollection of previous transitions. Moreover, the infant gains (Magee-Womens, 2019).

#### **SUB THEME 3:2 FLEXIBILITY**

*"Time management, of course you need to know how to manage time. I work, every weekend, then on other times or days, for example, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, I attend to school." (MPS 3).*

Do you struggle with balancing your time? What kind of challenges are these? What scenario or experience do you have? How do you make time for your child?

*"Yes, actually that's my problem as parent-student, time management. For example, especially when I have a job and a lot of work at school, but like what I've said, even if I don't balance my time very well, I still can't neglect my studies, and when it comes to my son, I also make it a point that I also give enough time for him. If no one will take care of the son because my girlfriend is also at work sometimes, I also bring with me my son to school. But at home,*

*especially at night, I give enough time for my son". (MPS 3).*

Based on the responses of the participants, it can be inferred that to successfully juggle as a student and as a parent, there is a need for more flexibility in managing their time. Most of the participants mentioned multitasking and maximizing their available time when they do not need to take care of their child. Others also set a time limit on their tasks so that they can monitor and make sure that they are not taking too much time on them.

### **SUB THEME 3:3 POSITIVE MINDSET**

*"...As long as it is accompanied by actions, everything will be okay." (MPS 1)*

What action do you mean? Can you give an example, scenario or problem and how you give it action?

*"Every time I/we run out of budget, I look for extra work or sometime barrow money and pay it as soon as I have enough. I don't want my parents to bear the burden, but when they have extra money, they give me and my child little amount for our expenses at home, even they still support my brother's expenses in college" (MPS 1).*

*"...One of the things I'm doing is to make my sales/business grow because it makes our lives easier if we have enough money, you will never get worried for the coming days if you have money to spend ..." (MPS 2).*

*"Find Money. Of course, if you don't have money and if you don't have a job, you can't take care of your families, and you won't have enough money for daily needs as well". (MPS 5).*

Based on the responses of the participants, you need to be a strategic person and have a positive mindset, especially when handling problems. The MPS 1 mentioned that they should take immediate action to solve the problems so that everything will be okay. MPS 2 also mentioned that he needs to be industrious, make more strategies to widen his business, and not procrastinate. With this, he can make more money to sustain the needs of his family and, most especially, the needs of his child. The MPS

3 has unique coping mechanisms because he believes that having the ability to earn money and having work is important because without the money, you cannot provide for the needs of your family.

The fathers had a harder time seeing the positive side of the situation, the lower their educational level. These fathers are less likely to employ tactics aimed at resolving a problem in a constructive way while accepting the facts (Calero, Martínez, & Sevilla, 2020). In addition, according to the study by Elster (2013), they found that the fathers were more likely to cope directly with the situation rather than try to reduce emotional stress.

In preparation for parenthood, the fathers involved themselves by finding jobs to improve their financial situation. Most of the fathers cope by engaging in activities like buying baby clothes or fixing rooms for the baby. Many of them observed and inquired about parenting from other parents. Few of them coped by shifting their lives away from previous social activities, such as partying, and saw parenting as a sign of maturation.

In addition, in this study, it says that using more tactics in the instance of the father, characterized by a shift in positive mood, is linked to a lower parent's aggressive control (Caycho, 2016).

### **Sub Theme 3:4 Faith in God**

*"God, [and] Pray then you won't realize you've overcome it [and] you've solved it." (MPS 1)*

Why did you say that? Do you believe that God will help you, especially with your problem as a father and a student?

*"Faith in God because no matter how hard life is, I believe that God will help you as long as the action comes from us. Our thesis is just an example, I thought at that time we would reconduct again. I thought about our expenses, which would be wasted, I even borrowed it to buy more essentials for my baby and then the efforts and time that would be wasted, but fortunately we found a solution to our major*

*problem. God will help us according to his will". (MPS 1)*

*"Maybe just pray to the Lord, so everything will be okay." (MPS 4)*

Your attachment and faith in the Lord are strong. In what way does faith help you? Do you believe that God will help you, especially with your problem as a father and a student?

*"Yes, because I believe that there is nothing that God cannot do to help us, because sometimes God gives a solution to my problem or ours, sometimes we don't expect it. Because with God, if you are true and sincere in everything you pray for, He will give it to you. Sometimes, the solution given by God is not good, but when you look at what he gave, you will think aahhh! That's why that solution or answer was given...Isn't it always like that because God is different". (MPS 4)*

Some of the participants claimed that one of their coping mechanisms for solving their problems was having faith in God. These participants asserted that they must place God at the center of their family and include Him in whatever they do. And some participants mentioned that they pray to God for his help in growing stronger so that they can handle any challenges that arise in their lives.

The results of the studies suggested that adolescents who reported a high level of positive religious coping saw fewer negative effects from mental health difficulties, including stress and depression. Evidence suggests that adolescents who view religion as crucial to their lives turn to it as a compass when making decisions (Rose et al., 2014).

#### **Theme 4. Inspiration in Life**

##### **Sub Theme 4.1 Future of the Children and Family**

Motivation is a significant driver of behavior, explaining why we do the things we do the way we do them. Motivation is the psychological drive or aspiration to work towards a desired outcome or goal. A focus on motivation to attend school is required to understand student parents' behavioral choices and experiences. (Forbes, 2021)

*"Of course, one of the reasons why I continue my studies is because of my child and my parents because they are also one of those who support me... this is also for the future of our family". (MPS 1)*

*"It's for the future of our family, my baby and my parents who became my inspiration... so that they can be proud of me". (MPS 2)*

*"...my inspiration to continue my studies is my child because this is also for my future". (MPS 3)*

*"My parents and my baby are my motivation, ...because they are the reason why I keep moving forward". (MPS 4)*

*"My motivation is my child and also my parents... because I am also thinking of their future, so that I can also make up for my parents." (MPS 5)*

*"My inspiration is also my child and my parents so that I can give them a good life" (MPS 6)*

As mentioned by *MPS 1*, their motivators give them the strength to continue their dreams. While *MPS 2* stated that it is also to make their family proud.

According to a study by the Human Sciences Research Council, early parenthood, though demanding, provides a window of opportunity for efficient work. Fatherhood at a young age does not imply that young men are or will always be negligent. Indeed, fatherhood frequently brings about life changes that are essential to becoming a more responsible parent (Swarts, Bhana, & Versfeld, 2013).

As stated by (Cerven, 2013), having children has a significant impact on a student's motivation to persevere and complete their education. The remaining participants believe that their success is driven by their motivation.

##### **Sub Theme 4.2 Personal Dreams**

Even though they started having families early, this did not stop them from dreaming. Being a parent can be stressful and make one feel like their life has ended, but it just takes longer than usual. Their aspirations and objectives in life make up their dreams.

*"I am still studying so that I can achieve my dreams and for our future as well". (MPS 1)*

*"Of course, to reach my dreams... including my dreams for my child that's why I am doing my best." (MPS 2)*

*"To finish school so that I can give my child a good life..." (MPS 3)*

*"To finish my studies... because that is really my goal even before. To finish studies and to work in the profession I graduated from". (MPS 4)*

*"Of course, to graduate and to find a good job. It's not just my dream that depends on this, but also my dream for my baby and my family." (MPS 5)*

*"I still want to reach my dreams... because I want my child to have a good life". (MPS 6)*

According to MPS 4, he wants to finish his studies. MPS 2 **and** 6 stated that they want to achieve their dreams in life.

Based on the book "Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City," it points out that an unintended pregnancy does not necessarily result in an unwanted child. Indeed, the emergence of a new generation can be transformative, offering a vital sense of identity and significance besides opening opportunities and hopes to improve one's chances in life. (Edin & Nelson, 2013).

Despite the difficulties they experienced, many student parents are more driven than their peers without children. (University, n.d.). The rest of the participants stated that they would like to finish their studies to provide for their families. Stenquist (2020) noted an additional motivational factor: parents who earn a degree are likely to have children who earn a degree. Most student parents go to college to improve their lives and their chances of finding a job. (Targos, n.d.).

## **THEME 5: Self-Realization and Disappointment of being a Male-Parent Students**

### **Sub Theme 5:1 Regrets in being a Parents-Students**

*"There is a little bit, but it's only a little because there are disappointments from the parents and I can't do what I used to, like hanging out with friends, sightseeing, and so on. But soon I got used to it and realized that my baby is the best thing that came into my life. I learned to fight more in life, and this is where I really understood the word responsibilities" (MPS 1)*

*"Yes, of course there is, because it's not something to be proud of when you have a child early, right? Of course, the consequences of what you did, you must stand up for, you must do the consequences of the action you did". (MPS 1)*

*"Yes fifty-fifty, of course it's fun at first, it's good but when it's there it really difficult..." (MPS 3)*

What do you mean by its only fun at first? And why is it only fun at first?

*"At first it was happy because all I felt was love, but when that love brings some fruit, the hardship, the sacrifice, the regret for what you did will comes next". (MPS 5)*

According to a study "in the population of the Polish parents between the ages of 18 and 40, 13.6% of the parents claimed that if they could once again make the decision, they would choose a life without children (Piotrowski, 2021). When it comes to having children, some parents struggle with tremendous regrets that they can't seem to get rid of. Other parents might feel regret or thoughts that pass more quickly. The reality is that nearly all parents have at some point contemplated how much simpler their lives may have been without having children (Pagila, 2022). Fathers who are still in their teens experience regret and disappointment. Being a parent at a young age is stressful. It's not a prank (Jover & Marasigan, 2022).

Most of them responded negatively, including with shock, stress, fear, denial, and disappointment at the outcome. Many adolescent fathers were initially scared and shocked due to their partners' unintended pregnancies. They feared the results of their activities—for example, how to tell their folks and how to raise and support their own loved ones. They were not

ready to become fathers. There are numerous obstacles to overcome. Unquestionably, being a dad is truly tiring, particularly when you are not prepared and youthful. However, despite the difficulties of being a teenage father, some participants showed positive traits. As indicated by them, seeing their child grinning made them blissful and tranquil. Their child turned into their wellspring of solidarity and satisfaction (Jover & Marasigan, 2022).

Based on the responses of our participants, they regret what they did and feel bad about it. They already can't accomplish a lot of the practice that they did before because they had a child at an early age. They are not proud to have a child at such a young age, and they add that first and foremost it is cheerful, yet it changes sooner or later. But since they cannot take back the action they have taken, they must accept it and uphold their responsibility as parents.

#### **Sub Theme 5:2 Parent-Student Having no regrets**

Couples between the ages of 19 and 25 are biologically ready to have children, but this does not necessarily mean that they are ready for the responsibilities that come with being parents. Couples are expected to have completed their education and be working for a living before getting married and starting a family (Martinez, 2012.).

*“I have no regrets at all, my daughter is so beautiful”.* (MPS 2)

*“Nothing, maybe so there’s a bit, because we didn’t expect that we would have a child to come... So just accept what the Lord has given you”.* (MPS 4)

*“Nothing, because I love my wife and my child. For me, the person who regrets having a child at an early is cowardly and selfish. Ever since I found out that my wife was pregnant, I was very happy. Because I’m not the one who immediately loses hope when life’s trials come.”* (MPS 6)

Children make some happy and others miserable, the rest fall somewhere in between. Many people would have had happier lives and

marriages had they had chosen not to have kids—yet they still describe parenthood as the “best thing they’ve ever done” (Bloom, 2021).

Based on the responses of our participants, even though they are not yet at the right age to have a family, they have no regrets about what they have done. They accept the result of their action, and they are proud of it; they are happy to have a child. They recognize their child as a blessing from the Lord. The participants also said that “he will not lose hope in life’s trials.

#### **Sub Theme 5:3 Difference of Ordinary-Father and Parent-Student**

The ability of a father to provide for his family is linked to his sense of duty, identity, and manhood (Tift, 2020). Duty to Provide: This is one of the father's most important responsibilities. The society has placed this role majorly on the father: to help the family buy a house, buy necessities, pay for school, health care, and other necessities (Chukwuemeka, 2022).

*“What makes me different from an ordinary father is, of course, that part of me is more challenging than them, because they only think about work and earning money, while me, I work, I am earning money and I also focus on being a student”.* (MPS 3)

*“In life with a child, the time is a little bit different because of course as an ordinary father your only responsibility is your child, as for a student with a child, your time is divided between working and caring”.* (MPS 4)

*“The difference between us is that they only think about work, while I also think about studying”.* (MPS 5)

*“We are not different because we are doing the same thing to make our family better”.* (MPS 6)

But as a Parent-Students, balancing school, work, and the responsibility of being a parent is not always easy. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to become successful because parents are having to balance their child’s life with their own (Santos, 2007).

Just like most of the answers of our participants, being a father as a student is different from being an ordinary father. Parenting while studying is more difficult and challenging. In addition, according to them, having a job and providing for the needs of their child are the only duties of ordinary male parents. On the other hand, those like them who are studying while performing parenthood have more challenges to face. They need to find work, provide for the needs of their children, and focus on their studies at the same time.

### Sub Theme 5:4 Self-Realization

*"...when I give it up for, I'm not the only loser, but my baby will suffer too. There are consequences in my choices, so I need to get better and for those who don't believe that I can do it". (MPS 1)*

*"...I also know the consequences of having a child at an early age, but I did not feel fear when I found out that I would have a child, but I was happy/satisfied because I knew that even though I was still studying I could raise a family for myself. It is a blessing that my son came into my life... when I found out that I was going to have a child, my life suddenly changed, I became more positive when I woke up every morning and I had a plan in my life." (MPS 2)*

*"...being a young parent, it's challenging but also fulfilling in the sense that you can fulfil those two obligations at the same time...it's not something to be proud of to have a child early, right? Of course, the consequences of what you did, you must stand up for, you must do the consequences of the action you did... I believe that all problems have a solution, so when I'm struggling! I'm just thinking that tomorrow is another day, tomorrow the problem will be over..." (MPS 3)*

*"...the child is not expected to come so just accept what the Lord has given you." (MPS 4)*

*"...at first it's fun at first it's good but when you get to the point of difficulty that's when you realize the difficulty of being a parent." (MPS 5)*

*"...the person who regrets having a child at an early is cowardly and selfish." (MPS 6)*

How did you say that sir?

*"Because you are the reason why you are in such a situation and you are not the one who will suffer at the end, your son and wife also". (MPS 6)*

By accepting the consequences, we show that we are willing to take responsibility for our actions and learn from our mistakes. We also demonstrate our commitment to doing what is right, even when it's difficult (Pandey, 2022). Moreover, according to literature, every parent can develop better parenting skills through a cycle of planning, action, and reflection. You have a problem, you find a possible solution, you try it out, and you reflect to see what worked or didn't work (Smith, n.d.). While some of the participants said that they were happy to have a family at a young age and viewed it as a blessing, which can be confirmed based on the verse in the Bible that states, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3-5),

Most of the participants admitted the consequences of what they did and accepted the hardships they would face in their lives. Being parents also made them fight harder, persevere more, and have a plan in life.

### GENERALIZATION

Considering the findings of the study, the following generalizations were drawn:

Two of the participants are young parents aged twenty-two years old who are actively studying while taking care of their children. Three of the participants are currently 4th-year students, and the others are second-year and third-year students. Four of the male parents the participants are single, while the two participants are married. Five out of six participants have only one child, while only one participant has two children.

Four out of six male parent-students used attachment parenting style while the two used permissive and authoritative parenting.

One of participants also suffers from psychological difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Three of the participants stated that they are having difficulty fulfilling their roles as a student and parents. Furthermore, one of their primary problems is financial difficulties. Since the financial issues are the main problem of being a parent-student all the participants mentioned that they wanting to work a decent and nice job to provide for the family.

All the participants said that their children became their motivation. Participants also stated that having faith in God and having a positive mindset are some of their coping strategies to get rid of their problems. For financial problems, one of the sources of financial support that male parents-student receive was from other people and from their parents.

The participants stated that their teenage lives were different from their situation as male parent-student. The participants realized that having a family early, affects their lives. The participants realized that their lived experiences are more challenging than the ordinary father's. The student parents learned to stand firm and become independent. Five of the participants realized that every decision they make has consequences.

Based on the study findings, the research recommendations are as follows.

The Government may involve youths to participating in activities. It is recommended that DOH and DSWD may have created a program that gives education awareness about having an early family, especially in all school institution but not only for public schools.

To provide financial support for Male parent-students, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Local Government Units, and other concerned organizations may think about developing and promoting a scholarship program. It is recommended to instill a sense of understanding and respect among parent-students in all academic institutions, allowing them to confidently pursue their aspirations in life.

Future researcher may conduct a related study about this research with a broad and deep topic. It is recommended that future researchers may apply quantitative or mixed methods.

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