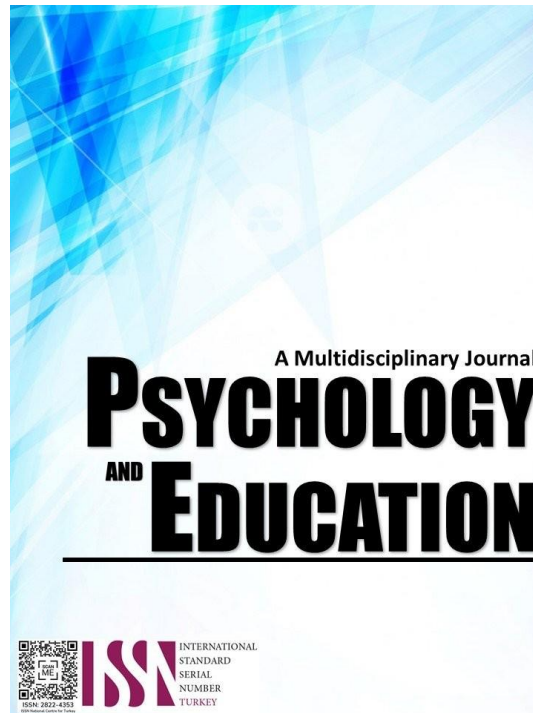


UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF TEENAGE PARENTS: THE CASE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE-OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH IN SITIO BUKAY-EEL



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume: 25

Issue 1

Pages: 147-154

Document ID: 2024PEMJ2342

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13738534

Manuscript Accepted: 07-27-2024

Understanding the Experiences of Teenage Parents: The Case of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth in Sitio Bukay-Eel

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Abstract

This multiple-case study explored the experiences of five Indigenous out-of-school youth teenage parents from Brgy. Landan, Sitio Bukay-eel, Polomolok South Cotabato. According to the data, themes emerged from transcribed audio-recorded interviews through qualitative template analysis. The study revealed participants' views, feelings, and realizations towards their experiences. Themes included unrequited plans, distress, adaptive environment, and differences in perspectives. Common feelings included babysitting difficulties, contraceptive awareness, and contentment. However, some participants had critically minded thinking, became regretful, hopeful, emotionally overwhelmed, role transition, and felt ashamed and disappointed. Realizations involved personal growth, prioritizing education, determined matrimony, dealing with maternal challenges, and dreaming continuously. It is important to note that the conclusions drawn from this research cannot be generalized based on the participants' experiences.

Keywords: *guidance and counseling, teenage parents, indigenous out-of school youth, multiple-case study, philippines*

Introduction

This study explored the complex issue brought about by teen pregnancy among Indigenous youth. This dilemma remains a significant local and global public health concern, as supported by the World Health Organization WHO (2023), which declared that adolescents face different risks and challenges, highlighting the alarmingly high rates resulting from limited healthcare access. This prevalence shows that the urgent need for a comprehensive reproductive healthcare program should be strengthened, especially in communities where resources are often limited. Consequently, it is an undeniable implication that adolescents' education, social relationships, mental and emotional well-being, physical health, and financial stability are disrupted by this multifaceted issue. Furthermore, it is paramount that the intersectionality of reproductive rights to uphold educational and reproductive freedom should be delivered with ease. However, despite legislative mandates and policies aimed at addressing this issue, gaps in research persist, in particular with educational contexts for Indigenous communities.

Consequently, DepEd Order No. 39 series of 2016 (cited in Llego, 2022) mandates educational institutions to conduct comprehensive research that sheds light on the Division's training, policy, and program development. One of the key areas addressed in this order recognizes that children's circumstances significantly impact their learning outcomes. Through both quantitative and qualitative findings, this research aims to address documented issues such as bullying, teenage pregnancy, various forms of adolescent addiction, and long-standing social issues like child labor.

Moreover, studies emphasize the importance of parental involvement in supporting the academic progress of teenage parents. School administrators and teachers should consider families' actual circumstances, work, and educational background when designing programs to increase parental involvement, particularly among low-income families. However, it is worth noting that the role of parental involvement in areas such as communication, learning at home, and financial support has yet to be extensively explored despite the established positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievements across various measures. These aspects require utmost attention as they have yet to be thoroughly examined in traditional academic and community settings (Muller & Kerbow, 2018).

This lack of empirical evidence restricts the development of contextual interventions and support systems for the affected adolescents. In this study, teen pregnancy pertains to pregnancies happening to adolescents aged 10 to 19 years old. Guided by principles of equity, social justice and academic independence, this research seeks to uncover the inherent factors contributing to disrupted education among teenage mothers through an in-depth multiple-case study.

Literature Review

2.1 Views of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents

According to The National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021), early marriages and household chores are the primary reasons girls drop out of school. Just over 13% of the over 21,800 girls who dropped out of school before the 2019-2020 school year did so because they were required to do housework, and only 7% did so because they were married off, even though child marriage is against the law. Regarding paid work, the number of young men who exited for work is higher than that of young ladies (Pandit, 2022).

A study done in New Zealand discovered that in comparison to the rest of New Zealand's population, the indigenous Mori people have higher rates of adolescent pregnancy. They frequently have lower median personal incomes than the national average and live in

socioeconomically deprived areas. The study also found that if given the proper support and direction, adolescent mothers can achieve their intended goals and objectives (Pio & Graham, 2018).

Similar research was done on young Mori women's experiences with pregnancy, childbirth, and parenthood by Adcock et al. (2019); the study focused on the influence of cultural traditions, familial support, and healthcare services in molding the experiences of young Mori women during their pregnancy, delivery, and early parenthood.

Moreover, compared to different ethnic tribes in the United States, Native American youngsters have the highest adolescent pregnancy and motherhood fees. To cope with the trouble, Kenyon et al. (2019) designed and performed a culturally relevant teenage pregnancy prevention software for Native youngsters, emphasizing cultural relevance, community participation, and child empowerment.

In addition, Indigenous girls who were pregnant and delivered as adolescents in Canada have long-term mental health repercussions, including trauma, depression, and anxiety. Looking at the lengthy-term intellectual health outcomes of juvenile pregnancies and parenting among Indigenous teens, Xavier et al. (2018) emphasized the need to address the root causes of the problem, along with colonialism, poverty, and racism.

In the context of the Philippines, Gregorio (2018), the significance of elucidating the impact of adolescent males on the sexual behavior of adolescent females is noteworthy in this particular context. Educating one's sexual partners is indicative of the tendency for young men to possess a hegemony over sexual knowledge, thereby providing them control over their partners' sexual autonomy. Sexual education in the basic curriculum must be improved to promote family planning and contraception; the study also states that it should be introduced as early as elementary school, according to Pepito et al. (2022) and Tabei et al. (2021) found no indication that media-disseminated contraception and family planning messages reduce teenage pregnancy rates. As it reduces adolescent pregnancy, internet access and use must be increased.

Furthermore, Libo-on et al. (2021) suggested that guidance counselors should oversee the well-being of female students within all educational institutions, including schools and universities. Consistent consultation and support are valuable resources for mothers seeking to rectify their primary remorse of not completing their education and realize their aspirations for gainful employment. It is imperative to employ all available channels of communication to effectively engage the wider community in raising awareness regarding the underlying factors and outcomes associated with adolescent pregnancy.

2.2 The feelings of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents

Teen pregnancy has a massive effect on young moms' bodily, mental, and social well-being. Lofgren and Manni (2020) indicate that pregnant adolescents may bring about bad health outcomes for both the mother and her child and financial and social problems for the young mom. In addition, younger mothers may face stigma and prejudice due to their age and function as single parents, resulting in social isolation and a loss of help.

Despite these challenges, some teen mothers feel their experience has had positive aspects. In a study by Libo-on et al. (2021), some teen mothers reported feeling that motherhood gave their lives greater purpose and meaning. However, the study also revealed that many teen mothers experienced difficulties completing their education and finding employment, impacting their financial stability and prospects.

Tetteh et al. (2020) found that many teenage mothers in African countries reported experiencing physical violence, including sexual violence, from their partners or family members. This violence often went unreported due to fear of retaliation or social stigma and could have long-lasting physical and emotional consequences for the young mother. Poverty, poor educational attainment, and early sexual engagement were major predictors of adolescent pregnancy in Indonesia; according to Rohmah et al. (2020), this research found that teen moms felt shame and humiliation as a result of their circumstances, which harmed their mental health and self-esteem.

Moving on to strategies for prevention and support, Pepito et al. (2022) discovered that exposure to family planning messaging was related to a decreased risk of adolescent pregnancy in the Philippines. Consequently, the research also underlined the need for comprehensive sexual education and access to contraception for young people. Similarly, Tabei et al. (2021) investigated the connection between familial characteristics and adolescent pregnancy in the Philippines, indicating that characteristics such as parental education, family size, and family planning behaviors are interconnected with adolescent pregnancy. Hence, interventions that address these familial characteristics may be successful in lowering the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy, as suggested by the authors.

Of particular importance, the initiative is a response to the alarmingly high rate of teen pregnancies in the Philippines, which endangers both the mother and her child. Insufficient access to comprehensive sexuality education in Philippine educational institutions is one of the contributing factors to this issue. Education is essential for enabling girls and women to make autonomous decisions and choices about their health and future, and teen pregnancy and early marriage should not be viewed as a solution to financial difficulties or as a lack of personal desire. Instead, they are issues that need proper knowledge, assistance, and care.

2.3 The realizations of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents

As the Philippines continues to navigate through the aftermath of the pandemic, it is essential to emphasize the wishes and ambitions of young people, especially people who are most at risk of the outcomes of poverty, early marriage, and adolescent pregnancy. Investing



in their schooling, fitness, and empowerment is critical for creating a more inclusive and equitable society for everybody. Similarly, an article from Raising Children Network (2023) found that as a teenage mother, facing challenges is inevitable, but it is crucial not to give up on education. Completing school is essential, not just for the future but also for the child. It can increase the chances of getting a job and supporting the family. Additionally, staying connected with friends, teachers, and school counselors can offer tremendous support. In practice, educational institutions can offer tailored solutions, including flexible scheduling, reduced study loads, classroom support staff, and access to guidance counselors. Additionally, arrangements can be made for teenage mothers to study from home during pregnancy or after giving birth. Furthermore, schools can facilitate the return of teenage mothers either on a full-time or part-time basis, allowing them to work towards completing their 12th-grade certificate (Jackson, 2020).

Undoubtedly, through the local lens, cultural practices and traditions of the T'boli, B'laan, and Manobo people significantly impact the experiences of teenage parenting in their communities. These practices and traditions shape how families and communities view marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing, which can influence the experiences of teenage parents (GMA News, 2022; Casal & Bueza, 2020). Teenage parents may struggle with the expectations and pressures of their families and communities, as well as the financial and emotional burdens of raising a family at a young age. However, the rich spiritual belief systems, traditional practices, and craftsmanship of these Indigenous communities can provide comfort, support, and guidance for teenage parents.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a multiple-case study research design. It focused on highlighting specific historical or situational contexts in which experiences unfolded rather than seeking universally applicable findings. Additionally, qualitative research integrated inquiry with methods that encouraged researchers to reflect on their influence on the research process, commonly called reflexivity or self-examination (Levitt et al., 2018). As proven, Indigenous research knowledge and methodologies have existed for centuries. However, it was only recently that scholars from Indigenous backgrounds have been able to challenge the dominance of Western institutions and reclaim sovereignty in the research field. Despite the abundance of quantitative research in various areas, more exploration of the value added through the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and methodologies is needed.

Consequently, this was the most appropriate exploration technique because the main pressing issue is to realize how individuals figure out their lives. Understanding what these Indigenous teenage parents experienced on their quest to endure parenting at a young age as they dreamed of pursuing education after realizing its worth. This emphasized that in-depth research into participants' perspectives on the phenomenon within its natural context and case study research is essential. To reduce information, formal data analysis began after in-depth interviews with my informants yielded numerous pages of transcribed texts. Beginning with comprehending and familiarizing oneself with the transcribed interview audio data. The responses and transcripts, written in the vernacular, were translated into English to ensure that the concepts and thoughts were retained in the same context. The participants were five indigenous teenage mothers whose education was disrupted due to untimely pregnancies. These participants were selected from the specific location where they resided and had previously attended the school. The number of participants in this study aligned with the recommendation by Creswell and Creswell (2018), who suggested that researchers choose a range of 3 to 25 individuals who had experienced the same phenomenon for in-depth interviews.

The first participant was coded MCS1. She is 19 years old, a young mother at seventeen, thriving with her strong personality, loves to watch Korean novels, and is a God-centered individual. With her, MCS2, 19 years old, had her firstborn at sixteen, followed by MCS3, 18 years old, who married out of her rebellion towards her parents and gave birth at the age of seventeen; MCS4, 19 years old, curiously explored her sexuality, giving her a responsibility to raise a child at seventeen; and lastly, MCS5, the youngest at fourteen, who mistakenly met up with a guy who sexually abused her while she was illegally detained in his residence and unfortunately had her firstborn at thirteen. The experiences of these adolescent mothers and their teen pregnancy comprised their views, feelings, and realizations. These details were gathered through an in-depth interview using expertly validated guides, ensuring all responses were captured on voice recorder equipment. The gathered information was then coded and formed into initial frameworks exhibiting patterns further analyzed to define emergent themes. Furthermore, these themes were systematically compared and contrasted in each case to identify similarities and differences.

Results and Discussion

The preceding tables provide a contextual background of the responses to teenage pregnancy, showing their similarities and differences as they relived their experiences that provided realizations in their pursuit of higher education.

The study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) How do the participants describe their experiences as teenage parents? (2) What similarities and differences exist in the participants' views, feelings, and realizations regarding their experiences as teenage parents? The items outlined in the tables represent the views, feelings, and realizations from their experiences as indigenous teenage parents.

Table 1. Similarities and Differences in the VIEWS of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents

Similarities	Differences
Unrequited Plans	Babysitting Setbacks

Distressed Life
Environment-Adaptive

Increased Responsibilities
Role Conflict
Parental Responsibility
Marriage Responsibility

All the participants shared experiences as evidence that, given their age, they were unprepared to become parents. They were disheartened on the grounds that, in the event that they had not committed some unacceptable decision, they would have headed off to college and accomplished their plans in life. They may have lists of goals in life at hand, but sometimes, due to different circumstances, some of them are unrequited. As Lofgren and Manni (2020) points out, teenage parents frequently face a number of difficulties, including social stigma, financial difficulties, and a lack of support from family and friends, all of which can make it difficult for them to provide for themselves and their children.

Four out of five participants shared this theme. As MCS1, MCS3, MCS4, and MCS5 declared, now they know for sure that the situation has had a significant impact on their lives and that the romance they experienced at the beginning of the relationship with their husband and partner could not almost withstand the difficulties they faced, at times almost asking themselves why they chose to marry. Given these circumstances, they stopped complaining about the consequences, chose to be proactive with whatever may come, and became adaptive and used to their situation.

On the contrary, the participants had different views of their experiences. MCS1 viewed her encounters differently, just like a mother requiring the capacity to perform various tasks. This made her realize that her daily errands were hindered by her responsibility to babysit her child. Another variation observed among the participants occurred when MCS2 stated that now that she is a mother, it led her to increased responsibilities due to the complexities of parenting at a young age.

The next dissimilarity observed among the participants is when MCS3 remarked parenting always denotes role conflict with her belief that having children comes with more responsibility and stress than any other tasks; however, there is no paycheck, no sporadic bonuses, and no other form of money-related compensation. At the same time, by looking at how financially deprived her family is, she wanted to work and provide for the family. More probably, she needs clarification about the jobs of being a parent and a provider, asking herself which two she ought to think about first. Another variation came from MCS4 when she expressed that having a child is a huge responsibility when she realized that she needed to give up her freedom as an adolescent because she needed to attend to all her child's needs.

Differently, MCS5 learned that the environment is adaptive for the good of her child. She is now assessing what should be prioritized so that she can avoid repeating the same mistake. Instead of venting, she is now taking chances to assist her husband in providing for their daily needs. These emergent themes were claimed by authors when they said that marriage is unquestionably a turning point for everyone. The participants' lives are significantly impacted. It includes how they see their independence, worth, and purpose as wives and mothers. Libo-on et al.(2021) called attention to understanding the viewpoint of teen moms and the effect of teen pregnancy on their lives, which is vital to creating mediations delicate to their exceptional necessities and encounters. Teen parent's well-being and their children's overall well-being can be enhanced by this, which can help reduce social isolation and financial hardship. To address the complex issues surrounding teen pregnancy and develop effective interventions that support their health, well-being, and future opportunities, it is essential to comprehend the experiences of teenage parents.

Table 2. *Similarities and Differences in the FEELINGS of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents*

<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
Babysitting Difficulty	Became Critically Minded
Contraceptives Awareness	Became Regretful
Happy and Contented	Hopeful
	Emotionally Overwhelmed
	Role Transition
	Felt Ashamed
	Felt Disappointed

The in-depth discussion declared with conviction that the joy of motherhood had removed all of their suffering. Generally, they are content and happy when they witness their children flourish in their presence. This coheres with the authors Cox et al. (2019), wherein they conducted a randomized controlled experiment to evaluate the efficacy of a parenting and lifestyles competence intervention for adolescent mothers, showing that their experiences significantly improved certain aspects of their well-being.

Conversely, they also felt disturbing emotions due to difficulties adjusting to babysitting; one became sad about the painful circumstances that led them to feel disappointed. This is in line with various authors Xavier et. al (2018), who declared that Indigenous women who experienced teenage pregnancy and parenting face long-term mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and trauma. In similar views, after dealing with the complex emotions of being a mother, they are now eager to use contraceptives. They

learned that the difficulties they experienced before their realization drive them to avoid repeating the same error, such as getting pregnant again at the wrong time. All of these feelings made them eager to learn about the essential purpose of birth control in marriage. As Tabei et. al (2021) examined the connection between teen pregnancy in the Philippines and family factors. Teen pregnancy was linked to factors like parental education, family size, and family planning practices, according to the study.

Furthermore, the conversation findings show that the participants had differences. Some felt that even though they were young, they were equally capable of transitioning to become good parents. In detail, MCS1, the only participant, felt that she should have been adequately critical to make choices that benefit her and her children. She became regretful that marriage resembles messing everything up.

On the contrary, as different participants felt hostile toward their encounters, MCS2 felt it unexpectedly; she became critically minded and believed that the only thing we can rely on to continue flourishing in a world filled with uncertainties and hardships is hope. These changes gave them responsibilities. This theme is in line with what the authors said that adolescent mothers frequently have lower median personal incomes than the national average and live in socioeconomically deprived areas; however, if given the right support and direction, they are capable of achieving their intended goals and objectives (Pio & Graham, 2018).

However, this is not the way MCS3 felt; she shared that being a parent definitely brings happiness but that it is also normal to feel overwhelmed by negative emotions like anxiety, chaos, disappointment, and discouragement. As a young mother, she was faced with obligations that were beyond her capabilities. Surprisingly, all these feelings towards her experiences improved her personality. This time, she felt the changes due to the role transition and the transformation from a carefree teenager into a more responsible adult. Her characteristics as a young but equally capable parent have clearly transitioned, with all changes anchored in responsibility. This proves the suggestion of the authors Libo-on et al. (2021) that it would be beneficial for guidance counselors to oversee the well-being of female students within all educational institutions, including both schools and universities. Consistent consultation and support are valuable resources for mothers seeking to rectify their primary remorse of not completing their education and realizing their aspirations for gainful employment. The dissemination of information and educational campaigns in schools, universities, and communities can facilitate the achievement of this objective.

Differently, only MCS4 felt ashamed to be judged among the five participants, and she explained that she grew up disregarding what others said or did to her. Having her own family demands that she refrain from engaging in imprudent actions that may bring her family to shame. Lastly, MCS5 stated that failure follows an undesirable arrangement; inaccurate planning produces complications, which induces worry and disappoints her. As she said before, she is a rape victim. She had deep affection for an individual she thought loved her, and because she was young, she did not know how to fight for her rights. Even more distressing, her parents are more concerned with their family's reputation than with her rights as a woman. If she had known that her decision to meet the man would result in this plethora of difficulties, she would not have gone through with it. This proves the claim of Tetteh et al. (2020), wherein they said that many teenage mothers are experiencing physical violence, including sexual violence, from their partners or family members. This violence often went unreported due to fear of retaliation or social stigma and could have long-lasting physical and emotional consequences for the young mother.

Table 3. *Similarities and Differences in the REALIZATION of Indigenous People-Out of School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents*

<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
Personal Growth	Determined Matrimony
Prioritize Education	Maternal Challenges
	Dream Continuously

The table shows the similarities and differences in the realization of Indigenous people-out-of-school youth on their experiences as teenage parents. From the gathered participants' experiences, MCS1 and MCS2 similarly arrived at a common theme of "Personal growth," and all five of them, including the latter participants, together with MCS3, MCS4, and MCS5 identically realized to "Prioritize Education." In a closer look, MCS1 affirmed that committing mistakes is similar to our chance to re-attempt.

As we repeat the process in these instances, we determine which aspects require improvement. In comparison, MCS2 personal growth is a better version of herself for her child based on her experiences and insights. She further states that if she could recount her experiences, she would experience feelings of self-pity, regret, disappointment, and doubt about her own worth.

Another similarity between MCS1, wherein she expounded, is that she would have completed her schooling; however, the conditions did not let her. With her encounters, one of her acknowledgments is to focus on schooling. She accepts that once you are educated, all you will encounter will make sense. In either case, MCS2 noted that despite all of her experiences, particularly those that have been adverse, she is particular about her capacity to prioritize education, which now includes her children's. She also stated that ignoring the importance of education before realizing its value has pushed her to prioritize her child's education from now on.

Comparatively, MCS3 realized that despite all of her experiences, particularly those that were negative, she still believes she will achieve her goal of putting education first, which now includes the education of her children. She now prioritizes her child's education

because she ignored the significance before realizing its value. Furthermore, MCS4 confirmed the latter information with a similar realization that education is important because, despite the challenges she faced, education is one way she can provide for her child adequately in the future. Sadly, she realized it too late, for she had to go through many intricacies first. Finally, MCS5 concluded that education should take precedence over all other requirements. The difficulties around you will fall like dominoes into places you never intended when you lose your chance with it. She constantly reminds her siblings to avoid the situation she is in now because of the experiences she has had. These realizations align with an article from Raising Children Network (2022) stating that as a teenage mother, facing challenges is inevitable. However, it is crucial not to give up on education. Completing school is essential, not just for the future but also for the child. It can increase the chances of getting a job and supporting the family. Additionally, staying connected with friends, teachers, and school counselors can offer tremendous support.

Three themes reflect the different realizations of Indigenous out-of-school youth regarding their experiences as teenage parents and their pursuit of higher education. To detail, it was only MCS3 who declared she never regretted past decisions for her being determined matrimony; on the contrary, it was only MCS4 who expressed that she had to deal with maternal challenges, and finally, MCS5 realized that she should dream continuously.

MCS3 acknowledged that she chose to follow her choices because of eccentric family circumstances, yet she never thought twice about it. What it will be, it will be. She was aware, as she elaborated, that she would encounter many obstacles; she might experience various drawbacks and fall along the street; however, she is resolved that she has not lamented her choices therefore, she never regrets her past decisions. On the other hand, only MCS4 mentioned that the strong love she felt for her spouse was not even half of the intense anxieties she had about continuing her studies while pregnant. Furthermore, she was forced to discontinue her studies owing to the multiple intense changes she had endured, such as the feeling of humiliation caused by people's comments about her unexpected pregnancy, the challenging route she had to travel to get to school, the morning sickness, and much more. All these, when combined, she realized that she needed to deal with maternal challenges.

The last theme that emerged differently is from the responses of MCS5, in which she stated that one of her realizations was that she should dream continuously, which was the final theme that emerged differently. She stated that she went to see the father of her child and that the following day, all of her plans for the rest of her life were shattered for a single night. She has experienced a variety of difficulties, including being friends with disappointments and marrying not just her spouse but also misery, but seeing her child inspired her to keep dreaming. These themes are in line with the claims of the authors (GMA News, 2022; Casal & Bueza, 2020) that the cultural practices and traditions of the T'boli, B'laan, and Manobo people significantly impact the experiences of teenage parenting in their communities. These practices and traditions shape the way families and communities view marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing, which can influence the experiences of teenage parents who may struggle with the expectations and pressures of their families and communities, as well as the financial and emotional burdens of raising a family at a young age. However, the rich spiritual belief systems, traditional practices, and craftsmanship of these indigenous communities can provide a source of comfort, support, and guidance for teenage parents

Conclusion

The researcher arrived at a recommendation based on the findings of the study. On the views of Indigenous People-Out-of-School Youth on their Experiences as Teenage Parents, the researcher recommends cultural sensitivity training be initiated for the schools and the neighboring Indigenous communities to understand better the challenges teenage parents encounter in order to offer an inclusive environment and provide adequate support. On the feelings of Indigenous people—out-of-school youth—on their experiences as teenage parents, the researcher recommends a standardized monitoring strategy to uphold the emotional well-being of teenage parents, which fosters early intervention as needed. Finally, to support their realizations, the researcher recommends that there should be a collaboration between social workers, community organizations, and educational institutions to deliver comprehensive support for the educational and personal needs of teenage parents arriving at contextualized career and educational planning tailored to their aspirations, addressing socio-economic barriers that may inhibit their pursuit of education after their stumble.

In conclusion, the diverse experiences of five adolescent parents as out-of-school youth guardians reveal intricate challenges influenced by personal, cultural, social, economic, and familial factors. Financial and emotional struggles and societal pressures often burden teenage parents. Support services availability affects mental health outcomes, while designated help programs, comprehensive sex education, and contraception access are vital. Despite obstacles, some find motherhood fulfilling. However, many face education and employment barriers, impacting financial security and future prospects. Indigenous community values offer solace, yet interventions addressing social determinants of well-being are essential. Understanding and addressing teenage parents' needs are crucial for their health, well-being, and future opportunities. The anchor theory supports the findings of the Parent Role Development Theory (PRDT) (Mowder, 1991), which seeks to elucidate the transformation of individuals' perceptions of parenting as it unfolds over time. It is especially pertinent to understand the experiences of parents who embark on their parenting journey at a young age.

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