

# Self–Appraisal, Interpersonal Relationship, and Life Satisfaction among Teenage Mothers

Leomar S. Galicia

Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, Sto. Nino, City of Binan, Laguna, Philippines. E-mail: [leomar.galicia@yahoo.com.ph](mailto:leomar.galicia@yahoo.com.ph). Tel.: 049-520-8288.

Received 16 May, 2016

Accepted 20 June, 2016

Teenage pregnancy has undeniably reached a ballooning rate in the Philippines. To date, teenage pregnancy has a huge rate especially among the poor wherein 2/3 of Filipinos, who give birth before age 20, belong to the low class society, a condition that may affect their life quality. Although literature and studies show that teenage parents face a great deal of struggle in their personal and social lives as brought by early responsibility of rearing a child; nevertheless, it is they who are still in control of their lives and the way they look at things like their self-worth, social relationship, and life contentment. Driven by this reality, this descriptive-correlational research looked into the self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction among fifty (50) teenage mothers purposively chosen in Pulong Sta. Cruz, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Philippines. The findings revealed that the respondents have high level of self-appraisal ( $\bar{X}=3.02$ ), high level of interpersonal relationship ( $\bar{X}=2.99$ ) and high level of life satisfaction ( $\bar{X}=2.89$ ) despite the fact that they got pregnant and became mothers at a young age. The study concluded that a significant relationship ( $p$ -value: 0.049) exists between the respondents' self-appraisal and interpersonal relationship. The same thing is true between their interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction ( $p$ -value=0.000), and finally between their self-appraisal and life satisfaction ( $p$ -value= 0.012). Future researches are exhorted to replicate this study by looking into the significant differences in the respondents' self-appraisals, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction based on their demographic profile in terms of socio-economic status and educational background, among others.

**Keywords:** Self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, life satisfaction, single teenage mothers.

## INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, having a child at a very young age is no longer surprising because some are already parents as they enter their teenage life. According to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), teenage pregnancy has a huge rate in the Philippines, especially among the poor wherein 2/3 of Filipinos, who give birth before age 20, belong to the low class society (Youth Problems in the Philippine Society, 2015). Data from the National Statistics Office of the Philippines showed that 8 percent among 1.7 million babies born in 2004 were born to mothers 15 - 19 years old. Another recent data from the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) revealed that every hour, 24 babies are delivered by teenage mothers. Results of the 2014 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) study, around 14 percent of Filipino girls aged 15 to 19 are either pregnant for the first time or are already

mothers—more than twice the rate recorded in 2002. It is worth noting that among six major economies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies and is the only country where the rate is increasing, per the United Nations Population Fund (Van der Hor, 2014).

## Literature Review

Being a teenage parent has pluses and pitfalls. Woodward *et al.* (2001) assert that being a teenage parent is often accompanied by significant personal growth and life satisfaction. They argue that many young parents indicate that having a child motivated them to cease risky or antisocial behaviors and lifestyles, making them to be more interpersonally active and sensitive, and

imbue their lives with a new found sense of purpose, maturity, and responsibility as well as happiness. Stephens *et al.* (2003) also argued that young parents and their children are both at critical points in their lives, when their life courses can be shaped toward healthy development, stability, and productivity, or toward lifelong poverty and dependency, either of which can affect their life satisfaction which is very important to be achieved but serves as a big challenge for teenage parents considering their unplanned and unexpected responsibility. Veenhoven (2003) clarified that life satisfaction, referring to both contentment and enjoyment, is one of the indicators of apparent quality of life. It is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads together with the indicators of mental and physical health, indicating how well people thrive. Satisfaction, as a state of mind, is an evaluative self-appraisal of something. As such it covers cognitive as well as affective self-appraisals. Arronson (2005) argued that self-appraisal is an important perspective stating that all emotion result from people's interpretation and explanation of their circumstances. Self-appraisal means respect from oneself as a person and is a crucial cornerstone of a positive attitude toward living. It is very important because it affects how one thinks, acts and relates to other people.

As to disadvantages, young parents, who are still undergoing major developmental changes, are also facing stressors that are not experienced to the same extent by other parents (e.g. social stigma) considering the young age when they enter parental status. Moreover, Kost and Henshaw (2010) pointed out that for young parents who lack support from their own parents, the experience of being an early parent can be even more daunting as they seek support in adult-oriented systems, which even older parents may find challenging. They further stated that teenage parents experience stigmatization associated with early parenting, isolation from peers, and lack of needed support from family, friends, schools, social service agencies, and other organizations. Furthermore, Woodward *et al.* (2001) also argued that teenage parenthood is one challenge that can have a considerable impact on a young person's life and is associated with a number of adversities. They asserted that it is more likely to occur for young people from a low socioeconomic background, who are underachieving in their education, who misuse drugs and/or alcohol, or who engage in antisocial behaviour. In turn, young parenthood can act to further entrench some of these problems and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage for both the young parent and their child like by limiting the young parent's ability to engage in education leading to further underachievement in education (Jaffee, 2002). Additionally, young parents often face substantial social stigma. For example, many young mothers report experiences of judgment or even hostility in their dealings with social service institutions,

education providers, and health care facilities (McDermott and Graham, 2005). As can be seen, young parents, specifically mothers, may find challenges in their interpersonal relationship which is essential to one's life. Sullivan (2013) states that interpersonal relationship is very important as it involve associations, connection, or affiliations between two or more people. He supports the idea that if we have strong, caring relationships with others, we are more likely to be healthy socially, physically and mentally, and live longer. Satisfying relationships with family and friends promote career success and we feel more protected as well as happy. Poor relations, on the other hand, may promote depression, drug abuse, weight problems, and other mental health problems. Finally, he adds that good relationships with others require management, effort, and attention, but the investment pays off in many ways like in overall life satisfaction. He further asserted that special bonds with other people are important for both mental and physical health of individuals like teenage parents. Although the foregoing literatures and studies show that teenage parents, particularly teenage mothers, face a great deal of struggle in their personal and social lives as brought by unexpected and unplanned responsibility of rearing a child; nevertheless, it is they who are still in control of their lives and the way they look at things like their self-worth, social relationship, and life contentment. This drove the researcher to undertake this study with a view of determining the level of and relationship among self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction of fifty (50) selected teenage mothers in Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta. Cruz, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Philippines.

## METHODOLOGY

### Respondents of the Study

The study was conducted at Sitio Aratan, Pulong Sta. Cruz, City of Sta. Rosa, Laguna in the Academic Year 2014 - 2015. Utilizing descriptive-correlational research design and purposive sampling technique, it covered fifty (50) selected teenage mothers whose age ranged from 15 - 19 years old. Specifically, the teenage mothers who were purposively sampled for the study were chosen based on the following criteria: those who had at least one child, belonged to lower or middle socio-economic class, high school or college students during the conduct of the study but who stopped studying to take care of their child or children.

### Instrumentation

A self-made close-ended questionnaire with three parts was utilized in the study. Part 1 covered the respondents' level of self-appraisal while Part 2 included statements about the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship.

Finally, Part 3 dwelt on the respondents' level of life satisfaction. To describe the respondents' level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction, the following scale was used: 4 (3.50 - 4.00) is strongly agree or very high; 3 (2.50 - 3.49) is agree or high; 2 (1.50 - 2.49) is disagree or low; and 1 (1.00 - 1.49) is strongly disagree or very low. To test the validity of the research instrument, the researcher presented the questionnaire to a panel of experts in the fields of psychology, research and statistics for their suggestions and the recommended corrections were effected before the commencement of the study.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Consent was obtained from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna (UPHSL) as well as the Barangay Chairman of the covered area prior to the survey. Further consent was also secured from the parents of the respondents because they were still minors. During the actual survey at the respondents' homes, the researcher instructed the respondents what to do and explained the importance of the study. Confidentiality of the respondents' identity and responses was strictly maintained as they were informed that the pieces of information that they provided were used for research purposes only.

### Data Treatment and Analysis

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

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, indicator 5 which states "I take positive attitude toward myself" got the highest weighted mean score of 3.18 and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> followed by indicator 1 stating "I am open-minded when it comes to changes" with a weighted mean of 3.16 and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meanwhile, indicators 7 and 10 stating "I am able to do things that most people can do" and "I feel that I am a person of worth" got a weighted mean of 2.94 each and equally ranked 7<sup>th</sup>. To sum up, an average weighted mean of 3.02 revealed that the respondents had high level of self-appraisal which indicates that even though they were already single mothers at a young age, they take positive attitude toward themselves, are open-minded to changes, and believe they are good at developing their abilities.

The findings support the idea of Arronson (2005) who argued that self-appraisal is an important perspective stating that all emotion result from people's interpretation and explanation of their circumstances. Self-appraisal means respect from oneself as a person and is a crucial cornerstone of a positive attitude toward living. It is very important because it affects how one thinks, acts and relates to other people.

From Table 2, indicator 4 which states "I have fulfilling relationship with my family members" obtained a weighted mean of 3.10 and was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> followed by indicator 8 which states "I still can get along well with others like my friends as a teenage parent" with a weighted mean of 3.08 and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>. Indicators 7 and 6 which state "Being a teenage parent is not a problem in my social life" and "I am still happy socializing with others though I am already a parent at a young age" ranking 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> with a weighted mean of 2.94 and 2.68 respectively. To sum up, an average weighted mean of 2.99 revealed that the respondents had high level of interpersonal relationship. This means that despite the fact that the respondents were mothers at a young age, they still managed to deal with others well in terms of having fulfilling relationship with their family members and friends, and possessing a positive attitude toward the importance of social relationship as well as understanding the differences of people's opinion and beliefs when dealing with them. Sullivan (2013) states that interpersonal relationship is very important as it involves associations, connection, or affiliations between two or more people, supporting the idea that if we have strong, caring relationships with others, we are more likely to be healthy socially, physically and mentally, and live longer.

From Table 3, indicators 3 and 6 which state "I am satisfied with my life in general" and "I am happy as a young parent" both obtained a weighted mean of 3.00 were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>. Meanwhile, indicators 5, 7 and 10 which state "The conditions of our life are satisfying" "So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life" and "I am satisfied with my sexual life" respectively got a weighted mean of 2.78 and were ranked 8<sup>th</sup>. To sum up, an average weighted mean of 2.89 revealed that the respondents had high level of life satisfaction indicating that despite their status as teenage mothers, they are still highly satisfied with their lives. The findings support Woodward *et al.* (2001) asserting that being a teenage parent is often accompanied by significant personal growth and life satisfaction. They argue that many young parents indicate that having a child motivated them to cease risky or antisocial behaviors and lifestyles, making them to be more interpersonally active and sensitive, and imbue their lives with a new found sense of purpose, maturity, and responsibility as well as happiness.

As shown in Table 4, for the relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of interpersonal relationship, a Pearson  $r$ -value of 0.280 was obtained and a  $p$ -value of 0.049 which was lower

**Table 1:** Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal.

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

**Table 2:** Respondents' Level of Interpersonal Relationship.

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

**Table 3:** Respondents' Level of Life Satisfaction.

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

**Table 4:** Relationship between the Respondents' Level of Self-Appraisal and Interpersonal Relationship, Interpersonal Relationship and Life Satisfaction, and Self-Appraisal and Life Satisfaction.

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Level of Self-Appraisal and Level of Interpersonal Relationship	0.280	0.049	Significant
Level of Interpersonal Relationship and Level of Life Satisfaction	0.602	0.000	Significant
Level of Self-Appraisal and level of Life Satisfaction	0.351	0.012	Significant

than the significance level of 0.05 showed that there is significant relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of interpersonal relationship. This means that the higher the level of self-appraisal, the higher is the level of interpersonal relationship of the respondents. Meanwhile, for the relationship between respondents' level of interpersonal relationship and level of life satisfaction, a Pearson r value of 0.602 was obtained and a p- value of 0.000 which was lower than the significance level of 0.01 showed that there was significant relationship between the respondents' level of interpersonal relationship and level of life satisfaction. This means that the higher the level of interpersonal relationship, the higher is the respondents' level of life satisfaction. Finally, for the relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of life satisfaction, a Pearson r value of 0.351 was obtained and a p- value of 0.012 which was lower than the significance level of 0.05 showed that there was significant relationship between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and level of life satisfaction. This means that the higher the level of self-appraisal, the higher is the respondents' level of life satisfaction. The findings support Woodward *et al.* (2001) asserting that being a teenage parent is often accompanied by significant personal growth and life satisfaction. They argue that many young parents indicate that having a child motivated them to cease risky or antisocial behaviors and lifestyles, making them to be more interpersonally active and sensitive, and imbue their lives with a newfound sense of purpose, maturity, and responsibility as well as happiness.

## Conclusion

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

interpersonal relationship and life satisfaction which showed that higher level of their interpersonal relationship related to their higher level of life satisfaction. Finally, a significant relationship was shown between the respondents' level of self-appraisal and life satisfaction which suggested that higher level of respondents' self-appraisal meant higher level of their life satisfaction.

## Recommendations

Teenage parents education program can be added to school curriculum to help adolescents understand the issues, challenges, and problems that go along with being an early parent. Although the results of the study showed respondents' high level of self-appraisal, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction, Barangay officials of Pulong Sta. Cruz, Santa Rosa, Laguna, Philippines with the support of City government could provide extension program to the teenage parents by giving them livelihood assistance or scholarship grants for those teenage parents who wish to continue their education. The leaders of their community may likewise encourage teenage parents to join organizations for young parents so they can take part in improving their well-being as well as their children's. Mass media should include an intensive awareness program on teenage couples and how they can cope with their condition while giving warning to the young generation as to the disadvantages that spring forth from being a teenage parent. Future researches may replicate this study by considering the demographic profile of the respondents since no significant differences in the respondents' self-appraisals, interpersonal relationship, and life satisfaction were looked into by this research.

## References

- Arronson J (2005). Self-Appraisal theory. Retrieved May 15, 2015 from <http://www.psych-it.com.au/Psychlopedia/article.asp?id=349>.
- Jaffee O (2002). Young parents in education. Retrieved May 10, 2015 from [http://www.dcyu.gov.ie/documents/publications/The\\_Invisible\\_Student\\_-\\_Young\\_Parents\\_in\\_Education.pdf](http://www.dcyu.gov.ie/documents/publications/The_Invisible_Student_-_Young_Parents_in_Education.pdf).
- Kost AM, Henshaw J (2010). The roots of ego-control in young adulthood: Links with parenting in early childhood. *Journal of*

- Personality and Social Psychology, 75, 1062–1075.
- McDermott J, Graham S (2005). The nature of adolescent competencies predicted by preschool delay of gratification. *J Person Soc Psychol*, 54: 687–696.
- Stephens J, Wolf U, Batten S (2003). Development and Validation of a Life History Index of Adult Adjustment for Women. *J Person Assess*, 53: 308–318.
- Sullivan M (2013). Psychodynamic Theories: Interpersonal Theory. Retrieved May 14, 2015 from [http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072316799/student\\_view0/part2/chapter8/chapter\\_outlin.html](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072316799/student_view0/part2/chapter8/chapter_outlin.html).
- Van der Hor C (2014). Teenage pregnancy among today's Filipino youth. Retrieved April 30, 2015 from <http://opinion.inquirer.net/74517/teenage-pregnancy-among-todays-filipino-youth>.
- Veenhoven R (2003). The Study of Life Satisfaction. Retrieved May 3, 2015 from <http://www2.eur.nl/fsw/research/veenhoven/Pub1990s/96d-full.pdf>.
- Woodward D, Horwood R, Fergusson R (2001). Quantifying Construct Validity: Two Simple Measures. *J Person Soc Psychol*, 84: 608–618.
- Youth Problems in the Philippine Society (2015). Retrieved June 12, 2016 from <http://youthproblemsinthephilippines.weebly.com/teenage-pregnancy.html>.