

08 - 10 August 2025
Berlin, Germany

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Adolescent Parenting in the Philippines: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Teen pregnancy represents a significant public health challenge that has captured the attention of both governmental and non-governmental organizations at local, national, and international levels. It raises grave concerns regarding its social, economic, and health implications for adolescents and their families. The key drivers and adverse psychosocial effects of teenage pregnancy have been extensively studied in its geographical contexts. However, the underlying consequence of unplanned parenthood as experienced by adolescents is little understood. In particular, an exploratory study of its essence and meaning is overlooked as experienced and viewed by adolescents in the Philippines. To address this knowledge gap, the current study adopts a descriptive phenomenological approach to exploring a parenting phenomenon experienced by purposively selected adolescent parents (n=24). Using an inductive thematic analysis of the content of the entire data set, we identified one predominant theme: "Rise where you stumbled," along with four sub-themes of adolescent parenting experiences, namely, "a child turns our world upside down," "beating the odds," "in good company," and "our hope and joy." This study presents a cautionary narrative for adolescent parents in comparable circumstances. It reveals its multifaceted challenges and opportunities for effectively navigating its dynamics, emphasizing the psychosocial factors that facilitated the desired behavior and the underlying motivations that drove their forced transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Keywords: adolescence, thematic analysis, phenomenology, qualitative psychology, adolescent parenting