THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF A PREGNANT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

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Abstract

Using a semi-structured interview, the study found that the wealth of experiences of the informant regarding her illicit affair with her police boyfriend who is married with three children. The results revealed that the informant concealed her fear to people around her regarding her illegal relationship and unexpected pregnancy. Her innocence was exploited, and her emotions were played by those people around her. Now, she is slowly healing after this challenging phase of her life.

Introduction

The breath and soul bestowed upon us are precious and incomparable. The moment we open our eyes and start understanding something clearly at last in this world is the signal of the beginning of our journey towards finding our purpose and reason for our existence. Our short venture in God’s perfect creation is an amalgamation of different experiences and emotions. These experiences and emotions are brought by the different people, places, and things that we might encounter that would bring happiness or sadness to us. All of these bring meaning and purpose to life.

(Author’s own words)
A meaningful life entails meaningful experiences whether good or bad, painful, or not. Good experiences make people motivated and driven, inspire them and let them also inspire others, and bring them to a dimension which is worth lingering to. On the one hand, painful experiences are lessons which will make people strong, will allow them to assess and improve their lives, will provide opportunity for learning, and will let them grow and mature.

Pain is indeed inevitable, and anyone is at risk of experiencing it regardless of background. No one can escape pain, not even joy can avoid it. Pain is as precious as joy because without pains no value and meaning will be put upon laughter and happiness. Because of these pains, people become better, stronger, and wiser individuals.

Thus, the present study aims to delve on the painful experiences of the informant whom at a very young age went through a rough and challenging phase in her life as well as how she is coping with early and unexpected pregnancy.

Guiding Framework
The study is anchored on Carl Rogers’ self-theory which focuses on the notion of self or self-concept defined as the individual’s tendency to act in ways which actualize themselves, lead to their differentiation. It also involves a group of experiences differentiated and symbolized in conscious awareness as self-experiences which establishes the individual’s self-concept (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). Figure 1 shows the three terms which Rogers explained in his self-theory.

Figure 1. Rogers’ Self Theory.

Real-self (self-image)
It includes one’s perceptions of themselves as beautiful or ugly, good, or bad people. Self-image directly impact on how a person feels, thinks, and acts in the world. Rogers (1954, as cited in Ismail & Tekke, 2015) claimed that the ‘real self’ is initiated by the actualizing tendency, follows organismic valuing, needs, and receives positive regard and self-regard. The real self is related to the inner personality. It is the self that feels most true to what and who one really is.

Ideal self
It briefly represents one’s dynamic ambitions and goals. It is the self that is borne out of influences outside of oneself. It is the self that holds values absorbed from others; a culmination of all those things that people think they should be, and that they feel others think they should be (Ismail & Tekke, 2015)

The conditions of worth and self-worth
For Rogers (1959, as cited in Ismail & Tekke, 2015), a person who has high self-worth can cope with the challenges in life, tolerate failures and sadness at times, and is open with people. An individual with self-worth may keep away from the challenges in life and can tolerate life which can be troublesome and distressing at times. Rogers highlighted the importance of early childhood experience by mother and father to affect positively the feelings of self-worth. Interaction with outer environment will be effect on self-worth as child grows older (McLeod, 2007).

These three terms must be congruent which means they must be working together so that an individual will have a better view about life. A person who knows himself or herself, who can see through the values and characteristics of others, and who is supported by the significant people around him or her is an individual who can easily hurdle and withstand all the challenges and trials of life.
Statement of Purpose
This study explores the experiences of the informant regarding her unexpected pregnancy along with her feelings and emotions with what she has been through in her life brought by her illicit affair with her police-officer boyfriend who is married with three children.

Significance of the Study
This study hopes to benefit the following sectors of the society:

1. **Students/Minors.** Students especially minors will be enlightened on the effects of early pregnancy. The study would bring awareness regarding the consequences of such behaviour.
2. **Parents.** Through this study, parents will be informed to support their roles and responsibilities for their children.
3. **Schools.** This study would bring about the vital role of schools in enriching the minds and hearts of their students for a better future. Schools are responsible in guiding their students to take the right direction, in bringing awareness of the strength of education, and in molding them to become responsible citizens.
4. **Community.** This study would create awareness on the role of the community in promoting the values embedded at home and in school to their community members specifically students.
5. **Other Researchers.** The study would be a good starter in enriching the research problem by studying other components not mentioned in this paper.

Scope and Delimitation
The informant of the study is a Grade 12 senior high school student studying in a private institution in Manila. Only one informant was interviewed because of her rich experience with what she has been through. Other key players in the life of the informant were not included because of the limited time given to accomplish the study. The data from the informant were collected using an interview method with the help of a cellphone, earphones, a notebook, and a pen. Since the study is qualitative in nature using phenomenological design, an interview was employed. The interview was conducted in the 2nd semester of school year 2017-2018 at the faculty room and in one of the classrooms in the said private institution.

Methodology

Research Design
The study made use of a phenomenological approach using a semi-structured interview. Phenomenology emphasizes a focus on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. It also refers to a person’s perceptions of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists externally to that person (Van Manen, 1990, as cited in Del Rosario-Garcia, Jerusalem, Palencia, & Palencia, 2017).

Locale
The informant was studying in a private institution in Manila. The said institution offers education from kindergarten to college. Because of the implementation of the K-12 in the Philippines, the said school also offers different strands in senior high school where the informant studied. These strands include the following: STEM, ABM, HUMSS, ICT, TVL, SPORTS, and GAS.

Sampling Technique
Convenience sampling was employed in identifying the informant because the informant is a student of the researcher. A convenience sample consists of people who are easy to reach (Del Rosario-Gracia et al., 2017).

Gathering of Data
In gathering the data from the informant, the following procedures were performed:

1. A permission was secured from the informant explaining to her the nature and the flow of the interview.
2. The researcher assured the informant of the confidentiality of her responses and her identity.
3. The study made sure that the informant would not be harmed or hurt during the interview by giving her liberty not answering questions which she was not comfortable with.
4. No alterations or modifications was made when the responses of the informant were coded and transcribed.

Instrumentation
The following were the instruments used in the study:

1. Guided questions were prepared prior to the interview.
2. A cellphone and earphones were used in recording the responses of the informant.
Note taking was performed during the interview to record the expressions of the informant. The audio file was transferred to a laptop so that the interview could be heard clearly. The interview was transcribed with the use of an iPad.

Results and Discussions

First Reflection
The informant is an 8-month pregnant Grade 12 senior high school student who passionately fell in love with a 39-year old married police with three children. This informant exteriorly highlights her strength and courage through her frankness and truthfulness in what she has been through in her life, but she cannot conceal her pain in her heart as shown in her reactions whenever she encounters the legal wife of her boyfriend. She is managing to hurdle her stumbles and falls in her life and she is exerting much effort to build the foundation of her inner core which was crumbled by her errors in the aspect of love. The wound in her heart serves an impetus for her to strive for a better life with her angel, her unborn baby boy.

Second Reflection
The following themes encapsulate the experience of the informant:

1. Pretentious Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>even if, even if, he didn't take responsibility of my pregnancy</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because he has his own family</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I'm already aware at the start of our relationship.</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>He's 39.</td>
<td>32-33</td>
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<td>because maybe his wife has already learned about me because maybe we live in one area</td>
<td>63-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>He told me that someone saw us in a car and his wife found out about me on Facebook</td>
<td>77-78</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>but I'm stubborn, sir, I kept on posting things about us on Facebook</td>
<td>81-82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I told my mom.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
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<td>She said that she had already warned me</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
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<td>but still I was stubborn and pursued the relationship.</td>
<td>126-127</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I've already told my mom about him and we've met the three of us</td>
<td>127-128</td>
<td></td>
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<td>My mom talked to him and reminded him that I was still young, and a minor so kindly understand her behavior.</td>
<td>131-132</td>
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<td>At the beginning, my mom would often reprimand me, interrogating me about my boyfriend.</td>
<td>150-151</td>
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<td>I felt that I don't need to explain myself to our neighbors, to these gossipers; I don't really care about them.</td>
<td>156-157</td>
<td></td>
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<td>my mom would often beat us.</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Simple mistakes she would immediately beat us.</td>
<td>234-235</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>because even when we were younger she would normally beat us, and her words are hurtful.</td>
<td>239-240</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I started going with my boyfriend, she would call me whore.</td>
<td>245-246</td>
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<td>Even when she's furious towards us, we would just ignore her because we're used of her.</td>
<td>247-248</td>
<td></td>
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<td>My father would question my mom for beating and hurting us</td>
<td>257</td>
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<td>I told him that we need to talk.</td>
<td>295-296</td>
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</table>
It has something to do with my posting on social media because I really like posting things there.

If she sees me, she would crash my face. [laugh]

At first, I was infuriated when I read her messages, so I kept posting things.

I just laughed about it and I continue posting online.

That's what I do [laugh] so that she would get annoyed.

I wanted to avenge myself for all the hurtful and threatening words she has thrown at me.

The informant has a tough personality which is quite evident when she was sharing her story with her police boyfriend (7-8, 11, 16-17, 56, 120). Despite the huge age gap with her boyfriend (32-33), she was fearless in entering such illicit relationship. Whenever she goes out with him speaks volume of her inner strength and power ignoring the marital status of the police officer (77-78). Her courage to continue their relationship was supported by her mother and grandmother (120, 127-128, 131-132). She did not care what other people would think or say about her if she is beside him (77-78, 156-157). Her nightmarish childhood experience could also be attributed to her current behavior (228, 234-235, 239-240, 245-246, 247-248, 257). However, the informant conceals her fear by acting that she was strong by bullying her boyfriend’s wife (432-433, 443, 449-450).

2. Agonizing Vulnerability

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agonizing vulnerability</td>
<td>I fell in love with him because when we're together he acts as if he’s single [smiling].</td>
<td>21-22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He told me that knows me so he added me on Facebook and started chatting me, going out and eating.</td>
<td>47-49</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I fell in love with him because of how he treated me, and I feel he’ll do everything for me even leaving his works for me.</td>
<td>49-50</td>
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<td></td>
<td>He told me to take care so that no one would know.</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>had an argument with his wife and he told me that they were about to separate</td>
<td>62-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but even before we’ve been chatting at that time I don’t have any relationship then with his husband.</td>
<td>78-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He even told me that if I end my relationship with my wife I don’t want you to be the cause of it so that people would not think negative about you.</td>
<td>78-81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the numerous signals that she was fooled by her boyfriend, she informed all of them and chose to be happy beside him (47-49, 49-50, 62-63, 78-81). Her innocence allowed the predator-police to exploit her through his flowery words which lured her to continue in the relationship. Her weakness was easily explored and abused. All these lies are unveiled when she revealed to her boyfriend that she was pregnant; all the good scent disappeared.

3. Emotional Entanglement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional entanglement</td>
<td>He even told me that if I end my relationship with my wife I don’t want you to be the cause of it so that people would not think negative about you.</td>
<td>78-81</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I only had my monthly period once</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>I asked a pregnant woman in the hospital</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I had this inkling that I might be pregnant.</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I had this inkling that I might be pregnant.</td>
<td>95-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We went to Watson and bought something [pregnancy test kit],</td>
<td>99</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I was surprised after.

After that, I became lazy attending school.

She advised me to tell mom.

it took me one month because I was scared.

That was October, sir, and I was about to have my debut then when they found out my pregnancy.

My mom reminded him also that she doesn't want their neighbors to know that I'm a mistress of him.

They were always glaring at me.

Sometimes I would ponder about what they might be thinking about me.

I just ignore them since they won't be contributing anything good to me.

I avoided going to my father's house

I'm ashamed of what happened.

I'm embarrassed to see him.

I avoided him because I'm ashamed of it.

Even if he would summon me, I really couldn't see him.

I'm scared and ashamed and I didn't know what to tell him.

my mother explained it him that my boyfriend is married

When I opened up that I haven't had my monthly period, he was shocked and in disbelief.

I've also thought of it since I really didn't know what to do,

so, I thought of aborting baby

I'm still a student and I don't want to get pregnant.

That is really want he wanted me to do.

He told me to jog, drink alcoholic beverages, and go up and down the stairs at home since according to him our house is too high.

I wanted to listen to him because I'm also scared

I felt that was the right thing to do.

I followed what he told me to do: I went up and down our house, I jogged, and drank alcohol for months.

At first, my parent wanted to abort the baby inside me as well.

There were days that my mom and my grandmother would tell me to take medicine to relieve myself from the problem.

I also thought of it because that's the easiest way to solve this problem.

I really wanted to abort the baby so that I would eliminate this problem in my head.

When the informant discovered her pregnancy, worry and fear started to run in her veins (91, 99, 174, 310). Her appetite of going to school dwindled (103). The glares of her neighbors started to run in her head (166, 167-168). Her unexpected pregnancy and the important people's advice to abort her baby worsen her feelings (317-318, 345-346, 346-347). Because no one wanted to keep her baby, she thought aborting the pregnancy (347-348, 358-359). She also avoided seeing her father because of fear and embarrassment of what she has done in her young life (185-186, 191-192, 201-202). These emotions that the informant went through only showed the different challenges and obstacles that she needed to overcome to protect herself and her baby.
4. Approaching Emotional Maturity

<table>
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaching emotional maturity</td>
<td>when I got pregnant, that ended.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slowly both my parents have accepted what happened.</td>
<td>205-206</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Although I didn't want to talk to my father, he would still monitor me if I regularly see the doctor for checkup and would want to know my delivery date.</td>
<td>206-207</td>
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<td></td>
<td>my grandmother has told me that after giving birth she'll hire a maid to monitor the baby so that I can go to back to school.</td>
<td>382-384</td>
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<td></td>
<td>That's my grandmother's plan. I'm really her favorite granddaughter</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don't want that to happen</td>
<td>405</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now, he's asking me to accept him again in my life as if nothing happens.</td>
<td>412-413</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I really don't like to go back to my boyfriend even if sometimes he would ask to eat together.</td>
<td>451-452</td>
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</table>

The informant is slowly approaching maturity by doing the right decisions in her life (412-413). The support she is currently receiving from family members and friends is helping her heal (205-206, 206-207, 382-384). Now that she is near her due date, she tries to take away negativity around her (412-413) and the support and love she receives from family members are so helpful to her healing and her moving on.

Third Reflection

A Wounded Blossoming Flower
I was blossoming when he came in,
    He watered me darkly.
Wind and sunlight swayed with him,
    Birds chirping against me.

    Soil I stood was strong,
I was wrong. Flaunting strength,
    Weakness engulfs in me,
Believing I'm his only flower.
    Water pollinates, fear,
The wind, the sunlight combat with him,
    Quiet, the sun avoided me.
Affected, dejected, my earth crumbled.

    Touched by a hand, I survive.
The wind dances, sunlight sways,
    Sun’s rays fill me.
I see the light slowly.

The poem above summarizes the nightmares of the informant and how she is managing to pick up the pieces in her life. The title alone encapsulates the zest of her story. The word *wounded* pertains to the stabs and pains that she went
through because of her illicit affair with her police officer boyfriend, the word *blossoming* represents the beginning of her maturation, and the *flower* is the symbol for the informant.

The poem has four stanzas which represent the four themes of this study. The first stanza talks about the encounter of the informant with the police officer. The pronoun *he* pertains to the police. The two important people in her life which are represented by the two elements, *wind* (grandmother) and *sunlight* (mother), are essential to the growth of the flower (informant) were in support of the police. The *birds* represent the neighbors who were constantly affecting the emotional state of the informant because her fear that her relationship with the police officer would be spilled in public. The second stanza shows the toughness of the informant and her fears. There is fear in her heart because she knows that her boyfriend is married and must go through the rigors of legal matters before she can have him. The third stanza talks about the unveiling of the informant’s pregnancy, how it affects her and how it affects the people around her. Her grandmother (wind) and her mother (sunlight) along with her boyfriend who encourage the informant to abort the pregnancy. The *sun* which represents her father is waiting for the her to talk to him. All these emotions have crumbled the emotional state of the informant. The fourth stanza comes enlightenment. After her conversation with her doctor, the informant decided to keep the baby and all the people around her started accepting and supporting her.

**Future Direction**

The support and guidance of family members and other significant people in people’s lives are undeniably of great importance and weight. Without these, they will not be able to stand firmly on the ground especially during the trying times of their lives.

Communication is essential in a family or in any relationship. If family members will not communicate to one another, they will not build a strong and healthy relationship. A mark of a good family is the willingness of all members to share their joy and laughter, sorrow and pain, and hearts and souls.

_A relationship which is built wrongfully and evilly will never flourish. Engaging in an illicit affair with anyone who is married or in a relationship is a relationship which is bound to end tragically. If the love is real, the right things must be done first before continuing the relationship._

Author’s own words

**References**

