

Research Article

THE LIVED EXPERIECES OF STUDENT-PARENTS(MAKE IT –EXPERIENCE)

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ABSTRACT

This study was focused only on the lived experiences of student parents as perceived by the students of Bataan Peninsula State University S.Y 2022-2023. It involved the challenges and privileges they are experiencing. There were 5 respondents who had dependent children and has special stories to tell (included and revealed in the chapter 4). Moreover, this study sought to know how student parents deal with their responsibilities of being a parent and also a student. This study includes the narrative inquiry qualitative approach as research design and has output of info graphic material in a form of a video to highlight the challenges and privileges of the participants.

Keywords: Lived Experiences, Student-Parents, Challenges, Privileges.

INTRODUCTION

"Student-Parents" are parents who are enrolled in school at the moment and has dependent children. They bear responsibility for both students and parental duties, potentially placing them under pressure to balance several obligations. Coronel, B. 2020b. The barrier in Student-parents' lives have brought about problems and adjustments. Lots of Because of the repercussions, parents with children quit their studies. that their children would not receive any inheritance, per a recent evaluation conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (2014).

Many women who become pregnant while attending college eventually leave, either permanently or temporarily. Even though they are aware that it is challenging to balance their studies and the responsibilities of parenthood, some student parents continue their education in order to fulfill their goals and aspirations. They do this since someone will be responsible for their children. Despite their significant need for assistance, undergraduate student parents continue to be one of the most "invisible" groups in higher education, even though one in five college students are parents (Miller, 2019; Reichlin *et al.*, 2019).

This cohort is under identified and underserved, especially at four-year colleges, due to a number of important issues, including a reluctance to self-identify, institutional preconceptions about student demographics, and a clear concentration on normally aged students living on or near campus. One in five college students are parents who are enrolled in undergraduate programs. They are more likely to be older, women, people of color, first-generation college students, and those from poorer socioeconomic origins than those who are not parents (Goodman & Reddy, 2019).

Compared to undergraduate students who are not parents, undergraduate student parents report higher financial difficulties and have lower financial resources (Goodman & Reddy, 2019; Miller, 2019; Reichlin *et al.*, 2019; GAO, 2019). The most important requirement, according to student parents, is easily available and

reasonably priced child care (Goodman & Reddy, 2019). Although financing and availability to childcare are essential, there is evidence that other important variables also affect pupils.

Only one-third of parents of undergraduate students complete college within six years (Miller, 2019). Compared to 32% of non-parents, 52% of parents of undergraduate students leave college within six years after enrollment (GAO, 2019). Although prior research indicates that undergraduate student parents had higher GPAs than non-parent students, student parents may have a lower likelihood of graduating on time or continuing their education (Reichlin *et al.*, 2019). According to earlier studies, student parents are highly driven to achieve academic success despite the difficulties they encounter (Goodman & Reddy, 2019). The well-established short- and long-term beneficial intergenerational advantages that their pursuit of higher education will have on their children are what drive student parents, especially single moms (Goodman & Reddy, 2019).

Mothers with higher levels of education are more likely to provide an example for their children's success in higher education, use parenting techniques that integrate learning, and provide excellent home learning settings (Magnuson, 2007; Monaghan, 2016). Furthermore, the financial benefits of a parent's college education may result in more stable family circumstances and a greater capacity to support their children's academic endeavors (Monaghan, 2016).

Compared to children of moms with only a high school diploma or less, children of educated mothers exhibit superior academic results, higher test scores, and greater cognitive development (Magnuson, 2007). Children of highly educated moms may have better health outcomes because women with college degrees are also more inclined to invest in actions that promote their children's health (Prickett & Augustine, 2016). Children with educated moms are more likely to complete high school, enroll in college, and complete college themselves as adults (Monaghan, 2016). As a result, salaries rise and a cycle of family financial security is established that lasts for generations (Reichlin Cruse, Holtzman, *et al.*, 2019; Reichlin Cruse, Milli *et al.*, 2019).

In light of these challenges facing undergraduate student parents, previous research has delineated key institutional practices that support student parents' needs (Goodman & Reddy, 2019).

Research indicates that funding student parent support programs yields a high return on investment. Colleges and universities' efforts to advance equality in educational access and results must include improving the outcomes for parents of undergraduate students (Reichlin Cruse, Holtzman, *et al.*, 2019). Higher education institutions must know what evidence-based strategies are available to meet the needs of this broad group of historically underrepresented students as parents in order to enhance outcomes (such as graduation, retention, and GPA) for them (Pendelton and Atella, 2020).

The main research question of the present study is: What are the Challenges and privileges that student parents have experienced? Exploring the difficulties that student-parents face as a result of the several identities for which they are accountable helps us to understand the Challenges and Privileges they experience.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of student-parents and know what were the challenges and privileges they are experiencing. Furthermore, this study aimed to determine the following:

1. How may they lived experience of student-parents be described through their challenges and privileges?
2. What infographic material may be identified from the study?

Conceptual Paradigm

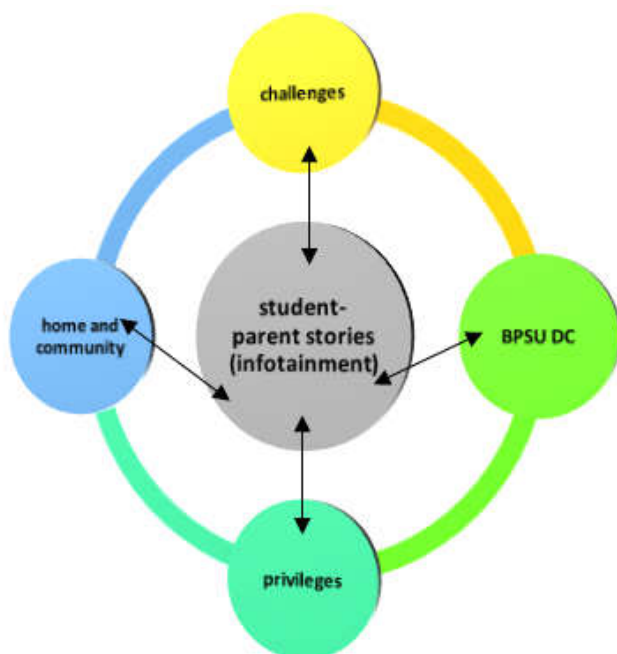


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm of the Study

METHOD AND TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY

The primary research design employed in this study was qualitative design narrative inquiry. Define and describe the entire situation and status scenario as part of the study design. According to Francis (2018), narrative inquiry documents the experiences of a single person or small group, exposing the lived experience or unique

viewpoint of that person. This is often accomplished mostly through the interview, which is then documented and arranged chronologically. frequently documented as a biography, life narrative, or oral history in the case of older/ancient traditional tale recording. The five participants in this study were chosen from various areas and years. The primary requirements include having a dependent kid, which means they are the ones with children under the age of eighteen.

Likewise, the student-parent must be willing to join the study and much willing to express themselves to the researcher without any doubt.

The purposive Sampling Technique is to be used as obviously seen on the criteria to be set for the participants. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are to be met prior to the final data gathering. With this, the student-parents must be enrolled in the BPSU-DC, has dependent children regardless of age and biological sex. Regardless also of gender preference. They must be mentally adept with the challenges and issues of life since there will be questions about the challenges they have experienced.

The instrument which was used as the tool in gathering pertinent data in order to answer the question posed in this study is to be supported by interviews and individual face-to-face interview discussions both for the student-parents and the researcher. Likewise, in finding the correct tool for the data, the researcher gathered information from books, articles, and internet references, same with theses and dissertations which are relevant and related to the current study in order to construct specific questions. The questions were taken for the read literature and studies for the development of the studies. Narrative methods involve constructing a series from historical documents to identify the reason and/or the quantities associated with a particular change in a variable.

According to this narrative technique, life history has traits with other qualitative inquiry types that set narrative apart, such as participant remarks being narrated. Because of these traits, narrative and life history methodologies are appropriate for some qualitative research paradigms but not for others. Life history and narrative are not consistent with the post positivist research paradigm, which holds that rigorous data collection and analysis procedures can yield approximations of reality, due to their emphasis on subjectivity and co-constructed understandings (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

The following are sample questions for the participants:

1. What are your challenges in life as a student-parent?
2. Are there/Were there some privileges about being a student-parent?

Part I. Lived Experiences of the student-parents through their challenges and Privileges

Self-Reliance is a Must

The participants agreed that in times of need, one of their challenges is self-reliance. Most of them, during the times when they have to fetch their children while having their classes at BPSU-DC, have to make the decision for themselves for them to pick up their children on their own; they are not asking anything from their parents or even significant ones. Most of them, because they are single parents, have to endure the pain of being alone in terms of decision-making. This made them feel weak and always feel the self-pity. They always see themselves as different from other people since they are doing

parental tasks, and this is not an easy job since the children that they have are all dependent. It is always hard also to think, according to them, to multi-tasking, some are doing their job outside the institution, and some are breadwinners. It was not easy, and all they have to do is to rely on themselves.

Bounded by Time, by Responsibilities

They agreed that being in the situation of a parent means more than just being a parent, especially during the pandemic. They were tested, and their faith in God has also been tested. They thought of many avenues to identify and to make to fulfill their dreams and continue with financial sustenance for their young ones and their children, but most of them could not easily get jobs since they were still studying. They are mostly bounded by time as a student, and this makes it more challenging for them. Another thing that makes their job not easy-peasy has tasks that are special, just like being in a world of autism, where the child is autistic and has special needs while the mother of the participant is 63 years old.

The Beam of Balance: Tool for Success

Whenever they juggle with one or two tasks at the same time, the participants revealed that they are feeling obnoxious. Their feelings of happiness are all removed, and they think of getting more and more assistance from other people, but balancing the beam, as they say, requires perseverance and toughness, not just physically but also especially emotional strength. While some might give up, the participants always look at how they had been balancing their lives, although this time, and this made them stronger and more powerful, their mindset is a giveaway strength for them. They think that there are other people who are feeling the same way, and they are happy about it. They love being a parent. Yes, it is a challenge, full of sacrifices, but in the end, success is what it may bring.

In terms of the privileges, there are highlighted themes which were reflected below:

So that Others May Learn from It

"Others might learn from our story," as one of the participants stated. Their stories, including the story of the researcher herself, are a success story that others may wonder and marvel at. Others might see and feel that in everything that we do, being a strong individual has its consequences, and being positive requires more than just accepting one's own faith it is being a strong individual who accepts their fate in life and doing positive things about it, that is a great privilege that others may learn from it.

Education begets Education

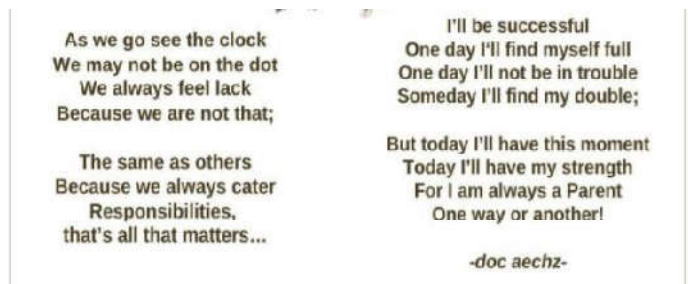
Since the BPSU DC caters the Education, its core values and mission through education offers varieties of comprehension for the situation they had with them. They believed that Education begets Education since their teachers are very considerate and give them all the understanding they can get. They are also privileged to become part of the institution, and it's also exciting for them to think that they will soon have their own terms, which they will become teachers of their own and they will have their own tasks and may forward the blessings which they can give to others in times of needs through Education.

Opportunities to Graduate and Become Professional

They are given the set of skills in the institution amidst what they have, and even though their challenges, problems, and issues are

skyscraping, the institution is there; they are determined to assist the student-parents. This makes them more positive and more determined to fight the challenges in life, and they consider being in the BPSU DC a privilege, always a privilege.

Part II. Infographics Material gathered from the Data(A Short Poem)



CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the Lived Experiences of the student-parents through their challenges and Privileges, the themes presented are *Self-Reliance is a Must; Bounded by Time, by Responsibilities; The Beam of Balance: Tool for Success*. In terms of the privileges, there are highlighted themes which were: *So that Others May Learn from It; Education begets Education; Opportunities to Graduate and Become Professional*

In terms of the Infographic Material gathered from the Data, this represents heartfelt stories of the experiences of the student-parent through their challenges and privileges

Recommendations

1. A new set of participants might be included in the student-parent studies to explore more variations and responses.
2. Using an ethnographic approach, the qualitative design might be included in the study for more highlights and a deeper connection of the data.
3. Use the infotainment/infographic tool to deliver awareness and make this another set of studies for orientation/information dissemination.

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