

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Memoirs of Yesterday: The Lived Experience of Individuals with Separated Parents

Zahro Vevien S. Quijote¹, Bernadette May P. Jamora¹,
Cher Lynn B. Lauglaug¹, Mary Nathalie T. Flores¹, Laurence L. Garcia²

Abstract

Separation issues have been rampant, and a significant rise in union dissolution cases in the Philippines has been observed. This certain occurrence should be given particular attention because it may alter the individual's way of living, particularly in perceiving and dealing with relationships. This study explores the lived experience of individuals who have undergone parental separation. The study utilized a Hermeneutic Phenomenological Design, which involved ten (10) respondents using a semi-structured key informant interview guide. The respondents were selected based on criteria as follows: (1) Have parents who have decided on the dissolution of marriage (annulled or informal) living separately; (2) 18 years of age and above; (3) Residents of Central Visayas; permanent or transient in Cebu City and; (4) Able to understand and express ideas in Cebuano dialect or English language. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis anchored on van Manen's six-step interpretive phenomenological approach with management and analysis done manually created a poem titled "Memoirs of Yesterday," which incorporates three (3) major themes: (1) Into the Tunnel: Etiology of Separation, (2) The Darkness in the Tunnel: effects of the dissolution of marriage to children- emotional, psychological and academic status and (3) The Light After the Tunnel: attitude of the child and parent towards relationships and separation. The study implies that nurses should recognize the importance of assessing family concerns in rendering holistic and individualized client care. Thus, nurses should use assessed needs in advocating for the creation of more programs on awareness and counseling to families and, most especially, children.

Keywords: *Parental Separation, Marriage Dissolution, Family care, Holistic Care, Hermeneutic Phenomenological Design*

Introduction

Separation issues have been rampant, and a significant rise in union dissolution cases in the Philippines has been observed (Abalos, 2017). This gives rise to more children adjusting due to parental separation every year (D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019). This certain occurrence may alter the children's way of living, particularly in perceiving and dealing with relationships later on in life.

Marriage has not always been a "happy ever after" in the Philippines (Kahambing et al., 2019). Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority indicated that one out of five marriages in the country is in disarray. In 2012 alone, 10,528 cases were filed for the nullity and annulment of marriages, equaling 28 cases of nullity every day. Due to the long and complex legal procedures, these statistics excluded couples who just decided to live individually without going through legal separation because the

outcome is uncertain and the costs are high (Kahambing et al., 2019). This scenario can be seen in many communities in the province and the region. However, this type of living condition has been observed to have a psychological effect on these families' children (D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019).

When parents separated and decided to live apart, a child felt as if their world had been flipped upside down or turned on a completely different path. The child may have felt upset, and its level can vary depending on how their parents separated, their age during the separation, how much they understood, and the support they got from parents, family, and friends after the separation (Lee & Bax, 2000; Anderson, 2014). Nonetheless, emotional and behavioral problems are more or less expected when parental separation occurs, especially when they start to feel insecure in society, and they cannot cope well (Lee & Bax,

¹ Graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University

² Laurence L. Garcia, DScN, MN, RN, Professor of the College of Nursing of Cebu Normal University; Corresponding author; Email: garcial@cnu.edu.ph

2000; D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019). Younger children tend to regress, and teenagers most likely show distress by misbehaving or withdrawing (Al Odhayani, Watson, & Watson, 2013).

This study explores the possible effects of parental separation on children's psychological health. The researchers believed children's well-being may be severed due to an internal conflict. Therefore, as nurses, nursing care should not only cater to the needs of the individual but the family as a whole, especially about their mental health and stability. In separation, however, though parental presence is expected and may still play a crucial role in the development of the children, the support system is inevitably enervated. It is, therefore, the goal of this study to unveil the lived experiences of individuals whose parents have decided on the dissolution of marriage, which can, in turn, provide a basis for nurses to come up with interventions for caring for these children in the community setting and to help in the preparation of nurses for this type of caring needs.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was grounded on Martin Heidegger's phenomenology and used as a methodological guide for qualitative researchers to explicate the lived experience of study participants, such as individuals who experienced parental separation.

Research Locale

The study was conducted on residents of a highly urbanized city, transient or permanent. The locale depended on the availability of the respondents who met the set of criteria.

Research Instrument

The researchers were the instrument, ensuring that they were reliable and competent enough to conduct the study. They used

bracketing to erase prior knowledge and biases regarding the trend being studied, including the researcher's prior experiences with the phenomenon. The researchers conducted practice interviews before the actual interviews and used their observations to enhance the content of the questions and the manner of questioning. Furthermore, to gather the necessary information, the researchers utilized a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers, which allowed flexibility for both the interviewer and the person being interviewed. It is composed of 3 phases: the introduction phase, the working phase, and the follow-up phase. In the introduction phase, the researchers established trust and rapport with the participants, in which the purpose of the study was explained, and the participants' demographic data were obtained. The focus of the working phase was to answer the main question on the study. Finally, the third part of the interview was allotted for the follow-up questions to explore the lived experiences of the respondents, facilitate validation, entertain additional information, and consequently end the interview.

Sampling Technique

This study utilized a purposive sampling method. In addition, Snowball Sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling, was used.

Key Informants

The proponents have set criteria based on respective interests; thus, these criteria were set as a parameter for selecting key informants (Patton, 1990). The criteria were as follows: (1) Have parents who have decided on the dissolution of marriage (whether or not they have decided to get annulled or just an informal separation) as long as they have decided to live separately; (2) 18 years of age and above; (3) must be residents of Central Visayas; permanent or transient in Cebu City and; (4) able to understand and express ideas in Cebuano dialect or English language. The participants' identities are disclosed using a codename respectively:

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Age upon separation of Parents
Winter	36 years old	female	Cebuano	13 years old
Autumn	23 years old	male	Chabakano	Five years old
Summer	19 years old	female	Cebuano	Three years old
Fall	21 years old	male	Cebuano	separated even before he was born
Rain	52 years old	female	Waray	11 days old
Ray	46 years old	female	Cebuano	first-year high school
Light	21 years old	male	Cebuano	separated even before he was born
Grey	19 years old	female	Cebuano	Six years old
Storm	23 years old	male	Cebuano	separated informally during his elementary years and legally separated after he finished his studies
Breeze	19 years old	male	Cebuano	during college

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers were subjected to bracketing to eradicate prejudices and biases before collecting data. The researchers also conducted practice interviews to enhance the crafted questions. Subsequently, scouting for the qualified informants was initiated. The voluntary participation of the informant was made through informed consent. Furthermore, it was sought after a thorough explanation of the agreement to acquire permission to conduct the research process. Appropriateness of the research locale through an evaluation procedure was done before the interview. During the interview, the location and time were mutually accorded by the researchers and the respondents. The participants were also informed about the interview duration, which took approximately an hour, and that a psychologist accompanied the researchers in performing a debriefing after the interview to ensure the respondents' mental and emotional integrity. The interview guide and an audio recorder were utilized during the interview process. Probed open and close-ended questions were raised subsequently. Small jot-down notebooks were used in addition to documenting non-verbal cues displayed by the respondents during the interview. To ensure confidentiality, the protocol was stored in a secure folder, warranting that only the researchers can access the files with the participants' initials. Once the information was transcribed, the recordings were deleted immediately after ensuring no data had been omitted.

Data Analysis

This study utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis van Manen's six-step interpretive phenomenological approach to dig into how respondents personally and socially made sense of and stressed the effects of parental separation on their psychological well-being. This followed the idiographic step-by-step approach to analysis, beginning with particular examples and only slowly working up to more general categorization or claims. The transcript is read several times to determine what was interesting or significant about what the respondent said. It is important to read and reread the transcript closely to become familiar with the account. Each reading had the potential to throw up new insights. This process was continued until the document contained emerging theme titles; initial notes were transformed into concise phrases that aimed to capture the essential quality of what was found in the text. The themes moved the response to a slightly higher level of abstraction and invoked a more psychological terminology. The emergent themes were listed on a sheet of paper, and one looked for connections between them. The next stage involved a more analytical or theoretical ordering as the researchers tried to make sense of the connections between themes that were emerging. Some of the themes clustered together, and some emerged as superordinate concepts. This was followed by producing a table of the themes, ordered coherently. Thus, the above process has identified some clusters of themes that most strongly captured the respondent's concerns on this topic. The final section was concerned with moving from the final

themes to a write-up and final statement outlining the meanings inherent in the participants' experience; this stage was concerned with translating the themes into a narrative account.

Role of Investigators

The researchers' primary role was to be the conductors of the study. They acted a part as the initiator, recorders, and transcribers. The interview initiator facilitated the participant's expression of experience objectively, being careful not to taint or influence the participant's response. The interview recorder noted important events and details that transpired within the interview, including the participant's non-verbal cues and feelings. In contrast, the interview was ongoing to elaborate further on the participant's responses to gain a more in-depth understanding of their experienced reality. The transcriber was responsible for digitally encoding the recorder's notes and data gathered.

Method of Data Verification

Member check was used to aid in the enhancement and assurance of the research study's accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability. Member checking was utilized during the question-and-answer process to increase the credibility and validity of the study, particularly statistics.

Ethical Consideration of the Study

Clearance from the ethics committee with a CNU REC code of 029/2018-08- Quijote was obtained before gathering data from the key informants. Maintaining the respect and dignity of the child of the separated parents is our utmost priority. Thus, the researchers respected the respondents' knowledge, insight, and experience, as well as their individual, cultural, and role differences. The respondents signed a clear, unambiguous, informed consent before the interview. The researchers also respected the privacy of individuals. They ensured that they were not personally identifiable or that data collected about individuals were appropriately anonymized and could not be traced back to them, even if the participants were not troubled by a potential loss of confidentiality.

Rigor of the Study

To ensure validity in the data synthesis, the researchers used various criteria in the study. The researchers took field notes to record unstructured observations and ensured that the data gathered were believable and confident. This was applied by actively observing the non-verbal cues of the respondent during the interview. Researchers also ensured that no data was omitted during transcription and data verification was done. The researchers also faithfully and fairly described the participants' experiences for authenticity. Data was analyzed accordingly, and themes were created based on formulated meanings from the

respondent's verbatims. They spent sufficient time with the participants to ensure data stability in different contexts and conditions. Researchers ensured rapport was established by disclosing all relevant information regarding the study and explained that the data gathered would be kept private and confidential. The researchers were objective about the data and agreed to review the findings for accuracy and meaning. Data verification was made by consulting the respondents regarding the interpretation of the findings made by the researchers. Lastly, the researchers must consider the participants' rights strictly. This was done by ensuring that the respondents voluntarily participated in the study and that their emotional integrity was kept intact by having a psychologist accompany the researchers during the interview to perform debriefing.

Findings

A total of two hundred twenty-four (224) significant statements were depicted from the client's journey, and an equivalent of fifty-one (51) formulated meanings were then classified into different themes and clustered themes.

Being able to contextualize the different significant statements from the retrieved transcriptions, six (6) subthemes were identified, which were formulated from the three (3) major themes:

The formulated themes were further elaborated through supporting statements and clippings from the actual transcription from the client to stress the important key points.

Theme 1: Into the Tunnel

Just like approaching a dark tunnel, motion and pace change. With confusion, it will seem as if everything will slow down; if not, it will fall apart. To them, parental separation has been linked with the observation that the cause and the progression of the separation have a marked effect on their formation. The happenings before the separation is the slowing of the motion and pace; thus, it makes an impact for the rest of their lives.

Subtheme 1.1: A glimpse of the darkness: Etiology of Separation

Just as the sunset reminds them of the darkness to come, seeing conflict arise from their parents warned them of dark times ahead, and the same warning comes to them as they see the separation unfold before their eyes. First, it might be a petty fight because of jealousy, one violent hit, or simply their parents starting to get indifferent.

This theme explains the different causes of parental separation among the respondents. This is evident in the ten (10) cases presented, in which the individuals claim various reasons for the dissolution of their parents' marriage.

Winter, staring blankly into space and fidgeting, recalls,

"Sa karon nga dako nako, nakasabot nako nga ilang sige ug awayan kay usahay kwarta, usahay ako papa abogho-an sa akong mama." (At this age, I now understand that they kept on fighting about financial problems and sometimes jealousy of my father to my mother.) (Ss39)

Summer answered,

"Kato nga time until now, naa naman laing family ako papa. Akong papa karon kay wala nako kahibaw, wala naman mi contact." (My father had a new family since then, and we were not able to have any news about him nor any means of communication.) (Ss22)

Rain responded,

"Akong papa wala pa siya nagmature at that time. Wala jud ko naghandom niya kay wa man ko naanad nga naa koy tatay. Kay akong tatay ako mang lolo. Sige pa siyag barkada-barkada. "Makatawa rako kay iya ko i deny nga original nga anak" (It seems like my father wasn't

Table 2. Summary of Themes

Themes	Subthemes
Into the Tunnel	A glimpse of the darkness: Etiology of Separation
The Darkness in the Tunnel	Into the Limelight: Emotional, Psychological, and Academic Effect of Separation on Children
	The Yesterday I'm From, The Tomorrow I Become: Concern About Parental Figure
The Light After the Tunnel	The Rainbow After the Rain: Attitude of Child Towards Relationships
	The Blossom of Summer: Attitude of Child Towards Separation
	A Glimpse of Dawn: Attitude of Parents Towards Separation and Conflict

matured enough that time. I was not used to having him around. I always recognize my grandfather as my father. He had his circle of friends and vices at that time. I find it silly that he denies me as his legal daughter.) (SS44, SS45, Ss46)

Meanwhile, Ray answered,

"Nagseparate sila tungod kay nasakpan siya, nasakpan akong tatay na naa siya'y babay unya kahuman kay I don't know kung akong nanay nashock lang siya or what kay mao to nagseparate lang dayun sila ug iyang gipapauli akong tatay sa ilang balay" (They separated because my mother caught my father having an affair with another woman and I didn't know how my mother felt at that time. She has decided to let my father go back to his parents' house.) (Ss49)

Having an affair outside the marriage is a great risk for dissolution. Light retorted,

"Ang nahitabo ato kay ni ana ako papa na single daw sya then mao to, ni tuo ako mama, then it turns out na naa diay sya anak and family sa Davao." (He lied and said he was single, my mom believed him but it turned out that he actually had a family in Davao.) (Ss50)

Grey explained that,

"Ako papa kay mangulata ug babaero. Nya ako papa ni ingon sya na ako mama kay nay lain nya kana ganing wala koy ganahan tuohan nila ba kay both sila nay sala." (My dad battered my mom and had other women. My mom said that my dad had other women and my dad said that my mom had another guy and I didn't want to believe in any of them because both of them were at fault. (SS51, SS52, Ss53)

Storm narrated,

"Ahh, basically third party siya sa both sides." (Basically, it was third party on both sides) (Ss54)

Lastly, Breeze shared,

"My parents separated because my father had another girl in the family, I mean he had an affair with one of our close family friends" (My parents separated because my father had an affair with one of our close family friends). (Ss55)

As presented from the transcriptions above, it is evident that the etiology of some parental separation may be caused by a third party, financial problems, immaturity, jealousy, and violence against others all of which the respondents were able to witness.

Theme 2: The Darkness in the Tunnel

Being inside the tunnel where there is no light, feeling encapsulated, subbed in a new environment, and adjusting to the

different horizons experienced during the separation. This theme elaborates on the effects of the dissolution on the informants that have caused a certain degree of alteration in their emotional, psychological, and academic status. These aftermaths greatly affect their performance not only as an individual but also as a friend, a parent, a partner, and an individual with an outlook on life. The effects of parental separation differ based on the etiology of marriage dissolution and would alter the individuals' different coping strategies. In line with this, it highlights the various parental concerns that may be due to the loss of parental figures and other factors concerned about separation.

This theme is strengthened by two (2) other subthemes: (2.1) Into the limelight: Emotional, Psychological, and Academic effect of separation on children; (2.2) The Yesterday I'm from, the Tomorrow I Become: Concerns about the parental figure.

Subtheme 2.1: Into the limelight: Emotional, Psychological, and Academic effect of separation on children

This subtheme explains the different effects of parental separation among the respondents. This is evident in the ten (10) cases presented, the individuals claim various concerns affecting emotional, psychological, and academic status to the dissolution of parents' marriage. Parental figures play an important role in an individual's development, whatever they may experience affects their children, whether negatively or positively.

Winter once said,

"Oo nakaapekto jud kay wala man jud ko nakahuman ug skwela unya imbis kay akong mga pangandoy sauna wala na natuman karon. Napariwara jud mi mag-igsuon, nag rebelde nami. Wala najud tumong amoang kinabuhi ato." (Yes, it did affect me since I was not able to finish my studies and I was not able to reach my aspirations in life. My siblings and I were misled to the wrong path and we became rebellious. It seemed like our life was leading nowhere.) (Ss74)

Summer added,

"Pag last year, kay 2nd sem grade 12. Kana ganing di nako ganahan musud. Kay kapoy gani kayo kay feel nako daghan kaykog huna-hunaon. Basta grabe najud asta akong grades na affected na. Wala najud koy gana muskwela, ganahan rajud ko mag sige ug mukmok. While growing up kanang di man jud na ma avoid mag sige ko ug pangitag father figure kay akong mama ni larga man kay para maka provide sa amoa so bata pami gibilin nami sa akong lola unya while growing up mag sige kog kasuya makakita man kog daghan nga complete na families unya naa gyud ang mama ug papa unya ako kay like lain gani kaayo sa akong feeling nga wala na gani si mama kay nagwork sa layo, wala pajud koy papa kay gibiyaan mi.." (Last year, on my 2nd

semester in grade 12, I felt I did not want go to school because there were a lot of things going through my mind and I felt tired. I was not motivated to study and my grades got affected. I just want to stay in my room all day. I cannot avoid looking for a father figure since my mother went overseas to provide for us so we were left with our grandmother. I always felt jealous when I see complete families with their mother and father and I felt bad because my mother had to work far then my father is not here because he left us.) (Ss77)

Ray responded that she did not care, yet it has greatly affected her siblings emotionally on the other hand, Light said,

"Kay wla naman nmu gi huna huna gud nga, para nako wala nako gi huna huna sya na maka effect sya nko. Naa syay kinabuh, naa sad mi amu kinabuh. Di na sya ganahan makig kita nako or makigcommunicate okay. If dili, okay sad." (It hasn't affected that also because we didn't really mind him anymore. I didn't think that it could affect me at all. He had a life of his own and so did we. He didn't want to see of communicate with me then fine. (Ss81)

Storm aforesaid that it did not affect him emotionally and academically yet validates the person's real intentions. Lastly, Breeze mentioned,

"Para nako kay na strengthen ko kay murag nidako ko ba na murag independent ko nya kay labi na ako mama mag work, sauna kay akong mama may mutuon nako, karon kay ako nalang jud mutuon and stuff nya manglimpyo sa balay nya akoy mag take care sa akong duha ka igsoon" (For me, I am strengthened by this since it made me more independent especially that my mom was working. So when I was little, I had to study on my own and I also clean the house and I take care of my two siblings). (SS85,SS86)

As presented from the transcriptions above, it is evident that the effects of some parental separation emotionally, psychologically, and academically may be caused by financial problems, and jealousy, all of which the respondents were able to witness in different responses whether they took it in positively or negatively.

Subtheme 2.2: The Yesterday I'm from, the Tomorrow I Become: Concerns about parental figure

This subtheme elaborates on the different concerns regarding parental separation and the outlook of a parental figure among the respondents and in the future. This is evident in the ten (10) cases presented, the individuals claim various concerns affecting growth and the act of longing for a mother or father.

Fall expressed,

"Niserve man sad na mama ug papa akong mama maong wala ko nangita ug papa maong okay ra akong childhood." (My mother served as the mother and father figure to me that is why I didn't yearn for my father's presence throughout my childhood.) (SS21). *"Daghan man sad kog mga papa papa, mga igsoon ni mama. Sila ang ni fill in sa akong papa."* (I didn't look for a father figure since my uncles were there.) (Ss60)

In contrast to Fall's paternal absence, Ray shows concern about her mother saying,

"Nakasabot ra pud ko nganong naa juy potential si tatay nga mambabay, although naa siya'y wife, absent man emotionally ug physically." (I understood why my father had the potential to have an affair although he has a wife, she is physically and emotionally absent.) (SS68) *"Si nanay jud kay wa man gud ko nakafeel nga anak ko. Ang ako di ganahan kay mudemand siya ug kung unsa ang wa niya nahatag."* (I hated my mother at some point since I didn't feel that she treated me as her own. I didn't want that she demands on what she was not able to give in return.) (SS122, SS123, SS124) *"Feeling lang niya nga entitled siya kay siya man ang mama which is dili man gud siya, biologically oo, but emotionally, psychologically wala jud na niya nadevelop kay absent mother man siya."* (She brought me into this world yet emotionally and psychologically, she failed to develop the relationship since she is an absent mother) (SS124, Ss125)

Light supported the 4th informant's concern by responding,

"Naa man ako mga uncle maoy everyday naa sa amoa so murag sila nay ni stand as a father namu sila nay ni guide. Murag kung unsay kuwang niya ila sad gi fill in." (My uncle stood as a father figure and he was there to guide us and fill in whatever my dad was lacking.) (Ss70)

In the beginning, the children look up and improve as they base their insights on their parents including other family members or people who could provide care to them.

Breeze said,

"Naglagot jud ko sa akong papa kay wala bitaw sya naghunahuna na naghimohimo bitaw siyag pamilya nya di sya kabarog sa iyang kaugalingong pamilya." (I was angry at my father because he wasn't thinking of us and he couldn't stand for us.) (Ss133)

As presented from the transcripts above, it is evident that some informants became neutral. But most of them were distant and felt withdrawn from their focal parent with whom they felt conflict with. It is furthermore evident that what has happened in the past has brought a different perspective and outlook on the children of their separated parents. What their parents were: treatment, personality, and rearing have greatly affected the being of their children.

Theme 3: The Light After the Tunnel

After the tunnel is a light awaiting amidst the darkness and emptiness within, separation greatly affects these individuals holistically and these effects differ depending on the individual's coping strategies.

Furthermore, this theme is grounded with three (3) subthemes: (3.1) The Rainbow after the Rain: Attitude of a child towards relationships (3.2) The Blossom of Summer: Attitude of a child towards the Separation (3.3) A Glimpse of dawn: Attitude of a parent towards separation and conflict.

Subtheme 3.1: The rainbow after the rain: Attitude of Child towards relationships

The experience of the respondents is likened to a rainbow. Just as this spectrum of colors is caused by reflection, refraction, and dispersion of light in water droplets from rain, so are the respondents' attitudes toward relationships after their parent's separation. The colorful spectrum reflected represents the different kinds of attitude of the child towards relationships since each respondent have a unique reaction from the rest while the rain represents the parent's separation which is the medium where the individuals' attitude was reflected or molded to form a unique idea of relationships.

Winter verbalized how her parents' separation has not affected her view of relationships at all. She stated,

"Wala raman, kay lahi-lahi man ang tawo ug unsaon nila pag handle sa relationship." (It did not affect me, every person is different in handling relationships.) (Ss102)

Summer said,

"Oo naka apekto pud sa akua, for example kung naa koy akong family nga akua di jud nako himuon ang gihimo sa akong papa." (It did affect me, if I will have a family of my own, I will not do what my father did.) (Ss103)

Fall further added,

"Ni ana rajud ko sa akong self nga ako in the future, if naa nakoy family kay ganahan rajud ko nga dili ko mapareha sa akong parents kay di ko ganahan makafeel akong future nga anak ug inani gani. Kanang

lain kaayo nga feeling nga masuya nalang." (I told myself that if I have a family of my own, it will not be the same as what happened to my parents because I do not want my children to feel the way I did; most especially jealousy.) (Ss104)

Rain expressed his neutrality for this situation by saying,

"Depende raman jud na sa taw, kung kahibaw ka murespeto ug understanding pud ka. Patience pud. Paglantaw nako ani kay neutral naman, wala ra nako gigenalize." (It basically depends on how people manage, one knows how to respect and understand. Patience is also important. I see relationships as neutral since I don't generalize them.) (Ss105)

Grey said,

"Oo, mas nakaingon ko na kung ganahan ko mag minyo puhon kay ganahan kog di laki na pareho sa ako papa na mangabuso ug babaye. Di ko ganahan magpa under." (I tell myself that when I get married, I want a man different from my father, a guy who doesn't abuse women. I don't want to be dominated.) (Ss110, Ss111)

Although separation has affected various relationships, the informants envision that history does not necessarily repeat itself and that most relationships do not have a tragic end. Despite what their parents went through, they did not generalize individuals.

Subtheme 3.2: The blossom of summer: Attitude of a child towards the separation

Undoubtedly, individuals are being affected by the sudden change in their familial environment and by additional influences that accompany the separation process. As with any other situation, one would have unique attitudes on dealing with it. This subtheme focuses on how individuals cope and react to these changes around them.

Summer retorted,

"There are times pud nga muhilak ra gyud ko nga tungod sa ka miss, what if diay wala nalang sila gabuwag unsa kahay life nako ron." (There are times wherein I cried because I miss my mother, and asked myself what my life would be like right now if they did not separate.) (Ss94)

Fall stated,

"Naa nakoy buot, wala nako'y papa so murag okay raman siya kay wala man nako siya nakit an ug saktong raman ang pagpadako sa akong mama so murag

niserve man sad na mama ug papa akong mama maong wala ko nangita ug papa maong okay ra akong childhood." (As I grew up, my father was not with me and I am contented with how my mother raised me. She served as the mother and father figure to me that is why I didn't yearn for my father's presence throughout my childhood.) (Ss106)

Rain expressed her feelings of dissent for her mother, saying

"Naghate ko at some point, gusto ko lang siya awayon." (I hated her at some point and even wanted to fight with her.) (Ss217)

Ray shared,

"Feeling nako kay naa koy feeling of betrayal kay abi man gud nako na bisan wala ko nagtubo sa among balay kay naghuna- huna man gud nako nga kung maminyo ka, di jud mo magbuwag unya wala ko karealize nga naa diay siya'y circumstances nga kanang pwede jud magbuwag ang manag tiayon." (I had the feeling of betrayal since I didn't grow up with them and I have thought that whenever you get married, the couple shall not separate and I failed to realize that it has circumstances that enable them to separate.) (SS63, SS64, Ss65)

Breeze added,

"At first confused jud ko kanang, ngano nahitabo ni, nganong kami pa man jud sa tanan tanang pamilya, pero at the same time, I was angry at my father, kay nganong nabuhat na niya na my mother was very good." (At first, I got confused about why it happened and why our family but at the same time I was angry at my father and why he's done it because my mother was a very good wife and mother. (Ss38)

In every cycle, there is always a summer. A time when new branches of leaves start to grow on trees. A season of hope and renewal.

Subtheme 3.3: A Glimpse of dawn: Attitude of Parents towards Separation and Conflict

The world is not as black and white as we would all like it to be. There are no good guys, there are no bad guys either. Perspective is everything, and whether someone is "good or bad" is relative to an individual's values. This makes it all harder for an individual to be willing to see things from the parent's perspective and try to understand why things are the way they are. In this subtheme, the parent's attitude towards separation and conflict was explored through their children's perspective.

Autumn stated,

"Di na niya kaya mag stand-up by his own, mas laban pako sa akong mama kay maskin usa lang siya na kaya niya nga buhayin kami tulo. Duda man ko sa iyaha kay murag bayot man siya." (He was not able to stand-up by his own. I empathize with my mother more because she was able to provide for us alone without any help from our relatives. I feel like my father is gay) (SS116, Ss117)

Fall expressed,

"Wala jud na naka supporta akong papa nako bisag gamay." (My father was not able to support me at all.) (Ss23)

Rain retorted,

"Di pa mature akong papa". (My father was not mature enough.) (Ss68)

Ray shared,

"Mutravel siya unya mahibilin akong tatay nga mura bag 'Diha lang sa ka ha, kung mahinumduman tika kay balikon tika'." (It seems that she'll only remember him when she has time.) (Ss67)

There are always two sides to a story. In this case, one is how the child reacts to their parents' separation and the other is how the parents react to their own conflict. The verbalizations of the respondents were about how their parent's attitudes affected them and the separation. The highlights were the parent's dependence, orientation, immaturity, and lack of presence. For the informants, the attitude towards conflict is vital in a relationship, because it determines how problems can be solved. These sentiments expressed by the individuals are both a gloomy notion and a light of hope for it can be a lesson for them not to imitate; thus, the theme is a glimpse of dawn.

The lived experience of individuals with separated parents enabled the researchers to create an interpretation that focuses on the important characteristics the informants have shared and is reflected in the themes generated and supported by the different subthemes. The poem is constructed in the pattern of Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance which are the strong points highlighted in the different monologues. It is entitled *The Memoirs of Yesterday* because it depicts the journey these informants have been through and how they have adapted to the changes and developed strategies to cope.

MEMOIRS OF YESTERDAY

I don't know how it started or when it all began
As far as I could, meeting the rays of sun to which I ran
And then in the mid of day the clouds became gray

I was confused, nowhere to hide and nothing more left to say

I had this person, the one I could hold on to
With just one call away, and "Yes" was all the need to get
through

But I thought was wrong, so wrong
That I called several times but there was no answer to belong

I thought it was okay, that time was at bay
Or it was me who still chose to stay
A secluded and shadowed place left me in drift
That led to a sudden and catastrophic shift

Into the tunnel I see no light
I screamed to be heard yet I was out of sight
I questioned, "Why me?"
Yet the deafening silence engulfed me

If only I could turn back time and find my way out
To correct my mistakes but sadly there is no whereabout
He could have stayed and tucked me to sleep
Into the brightest dreams that now are dark and steep

I once questioned my existence to what sound
That if only I wasn't around
Then it would have been easier and right
To reach the awaiting light

In the end I realized that not all vows are kept
But amidst all misery can still be swept
And everything may not come to a perfect array
After all, everything will just be memoirs of yesterday

A negative past does not necessarily mean a catastrophic future. Most of the children of separated parents find the beacon of hope within themselves and the support they have amidst all. It may have had a significant effect on them but most were able to cope and endure the kaleidoscopic change and emit light rays to others through not giving up from the dark tunnels of the past. Remembering the previous experiences may not mean the darkness of yesterday. However, it is to look for the light that somehow shed clarity and enabled them to envision changes these participants wanted to make to avoid repetitions of the sad reality. This entitles them to look forward to whatever is prepared beforehand, motivating them to surpass these trials.

Discussion

Separation has quite an impact on an individual, thus emotional and behavioral problems are more or less expected when parental separation occurs especially when they start to feel insecure in society and they cannot cope well. This study aids the chosen population group in effective coping methods and promotes emotional maturity and mental stability in dealing with

interpersonal relationships at present and in the future. There is various news that the separation front is getting increasingly rampant. Parents give various explanations for ending their commitment to each other, and by default, their commitment to an intact family. Various statistics reflect the growing number of commitment dissolutions but still, the statistics cannot reflect the devastation that takes place for children of separation (D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019).

The first few years of marriage have been observed to be the state wherein romance and excitement slack off as the couple gets to know each other more. This might be a normal effect, yet there is an increased risk that these individuals will ignore each other's presence. Sometimes, the party feels neglected and unsatisfied (Walcot, 1987). In marriage, even if they truly are having a happy relationship, they still are reported to have misunderstandings. There is a period of adapting to changes, which is difficult as situations constantly alter. The dilemma is not the argument itself but the way they reason out (Vyain et al., 2016). In some studies, the males tend to be more immature than the females. Going out and vicing what some of them do, which does not include their partners, promotes loss of trust with the other party. Another risk for separation is forming an unseen world wherein your other half is not involved, leading to the fancy of the other person, a third party (Riverwood, 2021).

Nobody would want to result in a fight and would want to be the reason for conflict. These separate individuals do not look into the future, and they have known since then, which could be a reason for misunderstanding. When both partners decide on a marriage, there is an increased tendency to fight over it again. Not all experience this with their partner, but having this kind of interest every day would take a lot of time (Wrench et al., n.d.).

Parents play the biggest role in their child's development; they help in every step of life (Ceka & Murati, 2016). The father and mother rear the mental, physical, social, financial, and career development (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). The separation of parents has a great effect on a child's life. The quality of care at home and the civil status of the parents are vital to the outcomes of a child's life. A broken home has been seen as a risk of formulating a social dilemma, and decreasing academic status among secondary students (Aliko & Edosa, 2012).

Separation and divorce for many children represent the collapse of a vital, archetypal structure in their world and in their experience of who they are. For many, separation brings substantial complexity. Children recognize and react to their parents' distress and overt conflict between their parents. Divorce or separation is one of the most stressful times in a person's life. When marriage separation occurs, it signifies the breakdown of a relationship that may have existed for years. It

does not matter who initiated the separation; there will be a roller coaster of emotions (Lee & Bax, 2000).

Raising a child can be tough when your partner cannot share responsibilities. Unfortunately, some parents are not focused on their children's experiences, and the relationship might be altered (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). Having a single parent is seen to be common nowadays, and the people around are breaking the barrier called stigma. In some literature, children with separated parents tend to be like other children with a complete family, both enjoying and contented in life. In promoting a better relationship with the parent, these children are happy and free from the violence they once received. These children who are products of parental separation can love without being hunted by the guilt they once had (Lee & Bax, 2000). People tend to forgive the mistreated parent when they attain the clarity they need and understand such treatment. There is a need to visualize that something done can be undone: that these parents who oppress children have also been hurt. This is then an endless cycle if self-assurance and regaining courage to acquire security are not met (Thompson, 2001).

Most of us long to have true happiness through a complete family. Some may have envisioned the love they did not have in other families, who also wished to have the same of their own (Izzo, Baiocco, & Pistella, 2022). Parents usually embrace rearing; unfortunately, some are overcome with the fear of being unable to provide enough ability to care for a child. In some cases, certain people will be a part of the child's life who could eventually bring out the good and are more capable of upbringing (Gadsden, Ford, & Breiner, 2016). There is a significant difference whenever one carries prolonged feelings of hatred towards the separation of parents. It affects the child's parental relationship as well as their future relationships with the partner they would encounter and their children (Anderson, 2014).

Parents primarily teach their children how to show their emotions. It has been found that how parents interact with each other affects a child's emotional and social development. Marital conflict contributes to a child's development in these areas (Craft, Perry-Jenkins, & Newkirk, 2021). Attesting emotions and views is a big help; it is important and an initial step in recovering from a formidable early stage of life. Knowing how to adjust from self-guilt and anger towards the parents is another right process (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007).

Sadly, a few of the children whose parents separated are not led to show affection and appreciation. Separated parents tend to negatively impress children's emotion towards the other parent such that hatred arises, and they are taught to criticize and further unfold ill feelings. Hatred can originate through the

parent and the new partner (Jin, Xiang, & Lei, 2017). One should focus on the arising emotions to recover from parental separation. One might start to ask and belittle oneself of the feelings of being deserving of affection and nurturing despite the fact of the dear who flipped the tables around (Millings, Hirst, Sirois, & Houlston, 2020).

Security is important in children because they seek efficient assurance to enable them to venture out, discover, and develop as beings. The parental separation formulates doubt, which hinders their growth in discovering what the world has to offer (Lee & Bax, 2000). People's interests play a vital role in having skills to engage and be determined as a parent. Raising a child alone might be outwearing, yet pure, happy memories are created as a being. One might experience difficulties performing the roles of a mother and a father, yet you attain the rewards all for yourself (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

Strengths and Limitations of the study

This study gathered data from individuals who are mature enough to grasp the meaning of the phenomenon they experienced. However, the duration of the experience may have caused them to forget some important details of the experience.

Implications and Conclusion

The nurse plays a vital role in the client and in the family's involvement in rendering care. It is inferred that a respondent's experience has brought them difficulties. However, despite challenges, the journeys of the individuals with separated parents produce distinct morals that still enable them to face life with optimism and ardor. The parental separation formulates doubt, which hinders their growth in discovering what the world has to offer. Most of the children of separated parents find the beacon of hope within themselves and the support they have amidst all. It may have had a significant effect on them, but most were able to cope and endure the kaleidoscopic change and emit light rays to others through not giving up from the dark tunnels of the past. Remembering the previous experiences enabled them to envision changes they wanted to make to avoid repetitions of the sad reality. This entitles them to look forward to whatever is prepared beforehand, motivating them to surpass these trials.

There is no need for further interventions, but there are small things that one can do as a nurse that would be meaningful for the clients. Therefore, the researchers reinforce that a good nurse-client relationship should be established through therapeutic communication. Participants must be encouraged to have a positive outlook and a strong faith, indulge in

psychological therapeutic regimens, and establish a strong support system.

Nurses must also understand the importance of family during a patient's progress since they serve as the strongest support systems for better management and outcomes. It should be emphasized that the family may opt for counseling and must be encouraged to give their supportive presence amidst challenges. Knowing the experience of individuals whose parents have parted ways is a medium for nurses to comprehend further behaviors, characteristics, concerns, and other turmoil clients embody and allows nurses to apply interventions appropriately, know what to anticipate, and promote well-being. This study implies that nurses should have a holistic understanding of the client- psychological, emotional, and physiological- because often, the patient's problems are more on what lies beyond their illnesses.

Based on the research findings, the researchers recommend that the community accept the need to seek guidance and counseling, especially regarding mental and emotional concerns. The government should consider separation as a timely and relevant issue in society. Thus, create more programs on awareness and counseling for families, especially children. Furthermore, this study recommends producing an efficient program addressing the concerns and will focus on the influence of separation. Nurses have to play a lead role in these advocacies. Lastly, studies on various age groups shall be conducted since the researchers encountered limited time and a limited number of participants to explore the generation of new knowledge and integration of the research continuum.

References

- Abalos, J. (2017, May 9). *Divorce and separation in the Philippines: Trends and correlates*. Demographic Research. <https://www.demographic-research.org/articles/volume/36/50>
- Al Odhayani, A., Watson, W. J., & Watson, L. (2013). Behavioral consequences of child abuse. *Canadian family physician Medecin de famille canadien*, 59(8), 831–836.
- Anderson J. (2014). The impact of family structure on the health of children: Effects of divorce. *The Linacre quarterly*, 81(4), 378–387. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0024363914Z.00000000087>
- Alika, H. I., & Edosa, O. S. (2012). Relationship between broken homes and academic achievement of secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. *College Student Journal*, 46(2), 256+. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A297135944/AONE?u=anon~d8c71e9d&sid=googleScholar&xid=2ef29f3b>
- Ceka, A., & Murati, R. (2016). The Role of Parents in the Education of Children. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(5).
- Craft, A. L., Perry-Jenkins, M., & Newkirk, K. (2021). The Implications of Early Marital Conflict for Children's Development. *Journal of child and family studies*, 30(1), 292–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-020-01871-6>
- D'Onofrio, B., & Emery, R. (2019). Parental divorce or separation and children's mental health. *World psychiatry : official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)*, 18(1), 100–101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20590>
- Gadsden, V. L., Ford, M., & Breiner, H. (2016). *Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8*. Retrieved from The National Academies Press: <https://www.nap.edu/read/21868/chapter/3>
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). 2015. Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>
- Izzo, F., Baiocco, R., & Pistella, J. (2022). Children's and Adolescents' Happiness and Family Functioning: A Systematic Literature Review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(24), 16593. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416593>
- Jin W, Xiang Y and Lei M. (2017). The Deeper the Love, the Deeper the Hate. *Front. Psychol.* 8:1940. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01940
- Kahambing, J. G., Deguma, J. J., & Deguma, M. C. (2019). Marrying, loving, and dreaming: A case study of the developmental tasks of lasting marriages in the Philippines. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2019-0021>
- Lee, C. M., & Bax, K. A. (2000). Children's reactions to parental separation and divorce. *Paediatrics & child health*, 5(4), 217–218. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/5.4.217>
- Millings, A., Hirst, S. L., Sirois, F., & Houlston, C. (2020). Emotional adaptation to relationship dissolution in parents and non-parents: A new conceptual model and measure. *PloS one*, 15(10), e0239712. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0239712>
- Nomaguchi, K., & Milkie, M. A. (2020). Parenthood and Well-Being: A Decade in Review. *Journal of marriage and the family*, 82(1), 198–223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12646>
- Riverwood, R. S. (2021). Divine Narcissism: Raising a secure middle-aged adult. <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds>
- Tangney, J. P., Stuewig, J., & Mashek, D. J. (2007). Moral emotions and moral behavior. *Annual review of psychology*, 58, 345–372. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070145>
- Thompson, J. (2001). Historical Injustice and Reparation: Justifying Claims of Descendants. *Ethics*, 112(1), 114–135. <https://doi.org/10.1086/339139>
- Vyain, S., Scaramuzzo, G., Cody-Rydzewski, S., Griffiths, H., Strayer, E., Keirns, N., McGivern, R., & Little, W. (2016, October 5). *Chapter 14. marriage and family*. Introduction to Sociology 2nd Canadian Edition. <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology2ndedition/chapter/chapter-14-marriage-and-family/>

- Walcot, P. (1987). Romantic Love and True Love: Greek Attitudes to Marriage. *Ancient Society*, pp. 18, 5–33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44034969>
- Wrench, J. S., Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., & Thweatt, K. S. (n.d.). *Chapter 9: Conflict in relationships*. Interpersonal Communication. <https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/interpersonalcommunication/chapter/9/>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Zahro Vevien S. Quijote, RN, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University currently working as a staff nurse. Her research works are centered on mental health.



Bernadette May P. Jamora, RN, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University currently working as a staff nurse. Her research works are centered on mental health and continuous quality assurance.



Cher Lynn B. Lauglaug, RN, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University currently pursuing another medical degree. Her research works are centered on mental health and continuous quality assurance.



Mary Nathalie T. Flores, RN, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Cebu Normal University, currently working as a staff nurse. Her research works are centered on mental health and nursing service management.



Laurence L. Garcia, DScN, MN, RN, Professor of the College of Nursing of Cebu Normal University. He graduated with his Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master in Nursing major in Mental Health Psychiatric Nursing, and a Doctor of Science in Nursing major in Gerontology Nursing from the same university. His works centered on mental health and care of older persons.

“When a person
decides to
become a nurse,
they make the most
important decision
of their lives.
They choose
to dedicate
themselves to the
care of others.”

– Margaret Harvey
