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# Probing the Dominant Lived-Experiences of Married College Students Valuing the Resiliency Theory

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**Abstract**---Life for married college students can indeed be very tedious and challenging. But with perseverance, good support system, and proper motivation these students will be able to cope well with the issues they face at present. This study elucidates the dominant lived-experiences of married college students valuing the resiliency theory. Qualitative study was employed, back up with triangulation to substantiate the theory used in the study. The study is deemed to denude the lived-experiences of married students while they are studying in a private or public universities in Region 02. To assess resiliency, the tool Connor- Davidson Resilience Scale was also made use to measure the strength of these students while taking a risk in their lives. In this study, it revealed that married students are even stronger while they are facing tribulations in their respective lives. They even gamble their future but still optimistic enough to face whatever future may give them. Married students were able to exhibit compassion and empathy, resourceful and flexible and they show concern to everyone. One great thing that had been uncovered was that married students were problem solvers and critical thinkers. Private and public schools may give importance to these married students for they may be an assets of their respective universities.

**Keywords**---academic performance, cognitive factors, dominant lived-experiences, married college students, multicultural, resiliency theory, traditional students.

## Introduction

Undergraduate years are traditionally regarded of as a time of self-discovery, adventure, and freedom. What happens, though, when the students marry? Because of unforeseen circumstances such as an undesired pregnancy, not all students who attend tertiary education can complete their studies. As a result, many teenagers, particularly girls, are forced to drop out of school. Married

students were shown to have considerable difficulties transitioning to college, particularly in areas such as getting involved with other students on campus and feeling connected or loyal to the institution (Negy, 2003). Married college students, in comparison to traditional students, have a variety of duties, including family responsibilities. They frequently have various roles in addition to being students, such as parents, spouses, employees, and so on. Married students may face difficulties and challenges as a result of their dual responsibilities, which may affect their academic performance. These pressures may increase the chance of married students failing in school. As a result, they must be motivated in order to complete their studies and get good academic results (Parsons et al., 2015).

While investigating the environmental variables that may influence academic success for all students is vital as a college instructor, it is critical to address the personal traits that encourage academic accomplishment and educational needs of married college students. The topic of whether marriage is a benefit or a liability, particularly for male and female undergraduates, has yet to be adequately answered. The goal of this study is to see how non-cognitive characteristics like self-efficacy, hope, and resilience affect the academic performance of married college students in Tuguegarao City's private institutions. It also wanted to learn about the experiences and obstacles that married college students confront (Qaiser et al., 2013; Richter & Mlambo, 2005).

Bernard (2004), developed the resiliency theory, which emphasizes the strengths of at-risk individuals who adapt to their settings and flourish in the face of adversity. Bernard's resiliency theory has four components:

- Social competency.
- Problem-solving.
- Autonomy.
- Sense of purpose.

The ability to communicate is referred to as social competence (Bernard et al., 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2007). This theoretical idea refers to the ability to exhibit compassion and empathy, as well as the ability to convey concern and care for others and the ability to forgive others. Mentors, instructors, friends, and coworkers have a favorable impact on an individual's ability to be resilient in the face of oppression, according to this concept. Problem resolution reflects a person's ability to be resilient, as seen by their critical thinking and planning skills. When faced with hardship, issue solving also refers to flexibility and resourcefulness. Autonomy refers to a person's ability to be self-reliant and aggressive. One's ability to have faith in oneself and a sense of control over one's life and surroundings (Bernard et al., 2003; Howell, 2003). When faced with problems, one's ability to find meaning in what they're doing is referred to as a sense of purpose. Another trait is having a sense of direction. When confronted with difficulties, for example, having the ability to find meaning in one's work (Omeri & Atkins, 2002; Merryfield, 2000).

### **Research problem**

- What is the respondents' level of resiliency?

- What are the most dominant lived experiences of the married college students?

### Literature cited

Interrupted schooling, according to [Dlamini et al. \(2005\)](#), has a negative impact on adolescent mothers' expectations for their own future. Teenage motherhood, or caring for and rearing children, takes up time and energy that may be spent on schoolwork, work, or leisure activities ([Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001](#)). A young woman's first child is harmful since it causes her to complete less schooling than her childless peers. [Mangino \(2008\)](#), agrees with [Hofferth et al. \(2001\)](#), who claim that moms who have their first child before the age of 18 are twice as likely to drop out before graduating from high school. Early motherhood, according to the former source, reduces a young mother's chances of completing the schooling required for a well-paying career.

Only 32% of teen mothers who start their families before the age of 18 finish high school. According to [Bryant \(2006\)](#), adolescent childbearing reduces the chances of graduating from high school by 23% in the United States, implying that teenage motherhood has a detrimental impact on educational achievement. Without family support, a teenage mother is obliged to drop out of school, accounting for 31% of all school dropout instances among girls ([Mulama; 2011](#)). It now appears to be conclusive that teen pregnancy makes it harder for teenage moms to successfully attend to school problems, lowering their chances of graduating from high school ([Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001](#)).

Attested by [Mengo \(2009\)](#), despite financial assistance, many teenage moms drop out of school because it is difficult for them to balance their studies with the responsibilities of becoming a parent. She also says that being a mom and a student is challenging since it is easy to lose focus, especially when the baby is sick and you are at school. Pointed to the issue of dual responsibility when he stated that teenage women confronted the task of motherhood and learning at the same time. Affirmed by [Zeck et al. \(2007\)](#), some adolescent moms continue their education and attain a higher level of education 2,5 to 5 years after the birth of their child. This demonstrates that, despite the challenges that adolescent moms face, some are able to balance the two roles or obligations. The number of teenagers who leave their children with their own parents has increased, indicating that the presence of the adolescent's parents facilitates independence, academic advancement, and job placement. According to [Zeck et al. \(2007\)](#), the number of employed adolescent mothers nearly doubled within the same time period.

Propounded by [Hofferth et al. \(2001\)](#), even if early childbearing has an impact on young women's schooling, it is less powerful than previously thought. According to [Mkhwanazi \(2006\)](#), the assumption that young pregnancy causes disruption in schooling and puts teenage mothers at risk of unemployment was not and still is not accepted in South Africa. This simply states that if teenage mothers are to achieve their educational aspirations, they require assistance, which may include housing, better child care, and advice. In terms of time and environment, the impact of adolescent motherhood on education appears to have shifted. Teenage

motherhood appears to be a concern in poor countries compared to industrialized countries, according to the data.

### **Resilience and academic performance**

Stressors, obstacles, and hazards can all contribute to a married student's scholastic failure. The pressure to achieve academically or in an extracurricular activity causes stress for the majority of them, as does the worry about how to deal with a demanding instructor or a tough peer, not to mention the numerous challenges they confront at home. Married students are at risk of academic failure as a result of all of these variables. Risk refers to the likelihood of a future event arising, or the potential that an issue would be “created, perpetuated, or exacerbated” [Terzian & Fraser \(2005\)](#), under particular circumstances. Being at-risk for an issue means that a person belongs to a group with comparable traits that is more likely to acquire the problem than the general population. Children from low-income families, for example, are frequently regarded as having a higher chance of poor academic performance. Poverty does not explain why there is an elevated risk; rather, it acts as a marker for a variety of characteristics that typically accompany poverty, such as a lack of financial means, poor schooling, more dangerous neighborhoods, and a lack of social support ([Zeb et al., 2020](#); [Shilbury et al., 2013](#)).

A risk factor's importance might vary depending on an individual's qualities (such as personality traits), unique life experience (such as early pregnancy), and contextual circumstances (such as neighborhood crime). Risk factors rarely appear on their own. At-risk children are more likely to be exposed to several risk factors. As a result, the impacts of risk factors compound, and disparities in outcomes are more commonly related to the aggregation of risks than to a single component. While accumulating risk frequently has a detrimental impact on academic performance, this is not always the case. Additional risk factors make people more vulnerable, but “thresholds vary as to ‘how much is too much’ in terms of damage or harm.” According to several experts, the strongest predictor of whether a student will face future academic challenges is a pattern of difficulty in numerous areas rather than a single negative indication throughout time ([Doll et al., 2011](#); [Maseleno et al., 2021](#)). Moreover, even though the student is exposed to danger, competence in one area may position the student for future success under certain circumstances.

Humans are born with a natural capacity for resilience, which manifests itself when they respond to risk with appropriately functioning adaptive systems. The ability to successfully cope with risk evolves with time (especially in young people going through developmental changes), and is aided by protective and promotive elements in the environment and within the person. People can adapt and cope properly as long as the balance between hazards and protective variables is tolerable. Counteracting elements must be strengthened at the individual, family, and community levels to ensure the chance of positive adaptation ([Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009](#)). Resilience is an intangible ability that permits certain people to be struck down by life and rise stronger than before. Rather than allowing failure to crush their spirit, they find a way to rise from the ashes. Some of the elements that make someone resilient have been discovered by psychologists,

including an optimistic attitude, optimism, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to regard failure as a kind of useful feedback. Resilient people are blessed with a viewpoint that allows them to shift direction and persevere in the face of adversity (Isgro & Castañeda, 2015; McCabe et al., 2007).

Academic resilience, especially in the face of hardship, has been shown to have a substantial impact on youth's school and life outcomes, including academic performance. These abilities can also be learned, tested, and have a long-term impact on academic performance. Resilience, on the other hand, was not found to be a significant predictor of academic success. The findings back up research which sought to demonstrate a link between academic resilience and academic achievement among secondary school pupils. The results of the evaluation of the relationship between academic resilience and academic accomplishment revealed that there was no significant relationship between the two (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982; Wang et al., 2018).

The relationship between resiliency and academic success among Bermuda foster children was investigated by Zuill (2016), of Walden University. The results revealed no statistically significant link between resiliency and GPA ( $r = 0.058$ ,  $p = .68$ ). In other words, the study's findings revealed that GPA had no bearing on the relationship. Resilience is made up of four main ingredients:

- Awareness – being aware of what is going on around you and inside your head.
- Thinking – being able to rationally evaluate what is going on.
- Reaching out – how we enlist the assistance of others to meet our challenges, because resilience also entails knowing when to seek assistance.
- Fitness – our mental and physical abilities to cope with the obstacles without becoming ill.

Albert Ellis, the creator of rational emotive behavioral therapy, believed that most people are their own worst enemies, with illogical expectations playing a large role. If you expect yourself to be perfect, that expectation can skew your perspective, leading to unnecessary irritation. Believe that you should constantly be prepared for the unexpected, and I can almost guarantee that you will experience excessive stress on a daily basis. If you find yourself in the expectation trap, consider establishing a softer, more flexible, preferable perspective. Teach yourself to think preferentially instead of expecting life to be the way you want it to be. The tone of "I prefer to do well" is more realistic than "I must do well." Preferential thinking leads to cognitive flexibility, which is a crucial component of resiliency. Accepting oneself, others, and life unconditionally does not imply ignoring the annoyances of daily existence. Instead, if you're free of secondary distresses, you'll be better able to deal with what annoys you, overcome your disadvantages, and combat what's emotionally toxic. You'll probably feel more at ease taking reasonable chances and making helpful discoveries (Dearing, 2008).

## Method

To investigate the nature and strength of the relationship between non cognitive factors and academic performance among married college students in different

private universities and colleges in Tuguegarao City, the researcher used a descriptive correlational design and interview methods of research. The qualitative portion of the study, on the other hand, focused on the lived experiences of married college students. The study takes place in Tuguegarao City, at the University of Saint Louis, St. Paul University Philippines, F.L. Vargas College, and the University of Cagayan Valley (Dunn, 2018; Peniro & Cyntas, 2019).

Among the region's higher education institutes (HEI), these schools are private universities. The University of Saint Louis and St. Paul University, the other two schools, are both Catholic universities. The study's participants are married college students enrolled in various programs during the 2016-2017 school year. Method of sampling with a specific purpose was utilized to choose the study's respondents in order to obtain the required data.

Table 1  
Sampling with a specific purpose

School	Frequency	Percentage
University of Saint Louis	9	11.70
St. Paul University Philippines	16	20.80
University of Cagayan Valley	36	46.80
FL Vargas College	16	20.80
Total	77	100

The following instruments were used to collect the required information: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale is a tool for assessing resilience. It has 25 items, each with a 5-point response range: not at all (0), seldom true

- Sometimes true.
- Often true .
- True nearly all of the time .
- The scale is based on the subject's mood throughout the previous month.

The overall score runs from 0 to 100, with higher numbers indicating greater tenacity. The CD-RISC has been examined in both the general population and clinical samples, and it has shown to have high psychometric features, including internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The administration of the University of Saint Louis, St. Paul University Philippines, F.L. Vargas College, and University of Cagayan Valley were issued a letter of approval to allow the researcher to perform the study. The method of obtaining respondents was based on individual inventory forms filled out by students at the school's guidance center or forms in the registrar's office.

In order to answer the problems of this study, the following statistical tools were utilized: Frequency and Percentage Distribution was used to analyze the profile of the respondents. For resilience scale:

Table 2  
Resilience scale

Range	Value Description
80 – 100	Very High resilience
60 – 79	High resilience
40 – 59	Moderate resilience
20 – 39	Low resilience
0 – 19	Very low resilience

## Results and Discussions

Resiliency is a big thing among Filipinos, they could live as long as they have the attitude. They could endure the hardships in life. The level of resiliency among married students are in with a great importance in determining how could they endure difficulties in multi-tasking.

Table 3  
Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' level of resilience

Level of Resilience	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	37	48.10
High	26	33.80
Moderate	12	15.60
Low	2	2.60
Total	77	100
Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
75.86	16.120	High resilience

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' level of resilience. As gleaned from the table, there are thirty-seven (48.10%) respondents who have very high level of resilience, twenty-six (33.80%) who have high level of resilience, twelve (15.60%) respondents who have moderate level of resilience and two (2.60%) respondents with low level of resilience. Most of the respondents are highly resilient with a mean of 75.86 and a standard deviation of 16.120. Human beings are born with an instinctive capacity for resilience and that result when they respond to risk with properly functioning adaptation systems. The capacity to cope with risk successfully changes over time (particularly in young people who are experiencing developmental changes), and is enhanced by protective and promotive factors within the environment and the person. In the case of the married students, though they had negative experiences in the past, they strive to do well in life because they already have a child who rely on them.

- “Hindi man ako handa kasi nabuntis ako ng maaga ngunit nung nakita ko yung baby ko kakaiba yung naramdaman ko,.. halo halo, lahat ng difficulties ko noon parang nawala. At naisip ko na kaya kong gawin lahat para sa anak ko”.

Married college students may have negative experiences in the past and were knocked down by life but they come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes. Their family and friends including God become their strength and inspiration to move on despite and inspite of what happened in the past.

- “Eighteen years old ako ng nabuntis, nung nalaman kong buntis ako...binalak ko pong ipalaglag..natakot ako kasi papatayin ako ng magulang ko lalo na panganay ako sa amin. Kaya lang naglakas loob akong aminin sa kanila.
- Hindi ko inasahan na matatanggap nila yung sitwasyon ko.....I feel blessed kasi sila nagging magulang ko, siguro pag iba na yun baka tinakwil na nila ako.. kaya ako nag aaral ng mabuti, para sa kanila.

They are able to overcome the stresses and pressures in life. They think of themselves as strong persons- who can handle challenges, who can deal with whatever comes and who are not easily discouraged by failure. Moreover, married college students feel pride in their own achievements. They believe that they have a purpose in life, and that no matter what happens, they will not give up on life.

### **Dominant lived experiences of married students**

There were eleven married college students who participated in the study. The participants in the Focus Group Discussion came from the different schools namely University of Saint Louis, St. Paul University Philippines, University of Cagayan Valley and FL Vargas College. The responses of the participants were thematically analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results revealed themes related to how the participants balance motherhood and schooling, adversities on the multiple roles they play, financial difficulties, support system, reliance on God, time management and their learning insight from the experience.

Table 4  
Analyzed using the interpretative phenomenological analysis

Theme	Responses
Difficulty in Balancing Motherhood and Schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mahirap pagsabayin ang pag-aaral at pag aalaga sa anak. (<i>It's very difficult to do two things at the same time, studying and nurturing a child</i>)</li> <li>• I have difficulty juggling my time between my studies and taking care of my kids.</li> </ul>
Difficulty Managing Multiple Roles at a Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have difficulty balancing my role as a mom and as a student. Sometimes I do not attend to my classes because my daughter needs me.</li> <li>• Hindi ako nag aaral o ng rereview kasi I have to do my responsibility as a mother”. “It is not easy when you have a baby, when sometimes I want to do school work. I don't have time, it is so hard to find time. I have to do the house chores. It is also</li> </ul>



	<p>hard for me to do my homework at night but during the day I am busy with the household chores and the baby. I cannot study at home because I don't have time and space, but I also get tired by night, sometimes I do not have time to do my homework, sometimes the baby always wants to be with me so I ignore the school work because I can't do homework when I am with the baby.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papasok po ako ng 7:30 AM at ang last class ko ay 7:30 din. Pagdating ko sa bahay tulog na ang anak at asawa ko.</li> </ul>
Financial Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I also experience less allowance, can't buy the things I want.</li> <li>• Kelangan ko din mag part time ng trabaho minsan tulad ng pag mamasage para magkaroon ako ng pera na ibigay sa mama ko pambili ng mga diaper at gatas ng baby ko, pag may nagpapamasahe sa akin, minsan hindi na ako papasok, kasi kelangan ko magpada ng pera.</li> </ul>
Support System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syempre nahiihiya ako sa kanila kasi nabuntis ako ng maaga at nagkaroon ng anak, pero gagawin ko yung best ko para maka graduate at masuklian ko din yung tulong na binibigay nila sa amin ng asawa ko ngayon.</li> <li>• Ako naman, nahiihiya din ako pero ngpapasalamat ako kasi pinag aral parin nila ako kahit nadisaappoint ko sila.</li> </ul>
Reliant on God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is always there for us.</li> <li>• There was a point in my life that I decided to give up my studies because of the negative things I heard from my classmates. Perhaps it was a God's plan to keep on fighting those criticisms. Every time students would look at me in a different way, I always pray to God to continue pouring me enough strength to face this challenge in my life.</li> <li>• Madalas nagdadasal ako, para gabayan Niya ako at tulungan". "Hindi naman madali yung pinagdadaanan naming ngayon, mga pagsubok eto sa buhay, pero kumakapit talaga ako kay God kasi alam ko na hindi nya ako pababayaan.</li> </ul>
Positive Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think positive. I don't give up whatever it takes.</li> <li>• I see my studies as a challenge- that someday I can buy the things that I want and need especially for my child's future.</li> <li>• Kahit gusto ko ng sumuko, kapag umuuwi ako at nakikita ko ang anak ko at asawa ko napapawi lahat ng pagod. They are my strength. Para sa</li> </ul>

	<p>kanila din yung gagawin ko, basta magkakasama kami alam ko everything will be okay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hindi man ako handa kasi nabuntis ako ng maaga ngunit nung nakita ko yung baby ko kakaiba yung naramdaman ko, halo halo, lahat ng difficulties ko noon parang nawala. At naisip ko na kaya kong gawin lahat para sa anak ko.</li> </ul>
Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management lang po yan, kapag vacant ko pumupunta ako ng library para gawin mga assignments ko. Para pagdating ko ng bahay aalagaan ko nalang ang anak ko.</li> <li>• Nakakatulong yung magkaroon ng notebook kung saan pwede mo ilagay yung mga gagawin mo sa bawat araw.</li> <li>• Sa akin naman nilalagay ko sa cell phone ko (reminders app) para madali kong maalala.</li> </ul>
Learning Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life must go on. Entering married life is seriously difficult. I have to finish my studies for my family-to prepare the future of my own.</li> <li>• This is the future of my daughter- keep fighting, never give up!</li> <li>• Bilang isang ina na ikinasal at studyante pa ay mahirap pero para sa akin ito ay pagsubok lang at ito ay malalampasan ko rin. <i>(Being a wedded mother and a student at the same time is a difficult but I still believe that this is just a challenge to me and I will soon overpass this)</i></li> <li>• You will not only think about yourself. When it comes to decision making, you need to also think about your child.</li> <li>• Kahit naman nabuntis ako ng maaga, masaya ako kasi my baby ako. Blessing yun. <i>(Even if I got pregnant too early, I am still happy because I have a baby. It is a blessing)</i></li> <li>• Despite the sacrifices, I feel blessed because God gave me a husband who is very responsible and honest. I always pray to God, for strength and endurance. Na sana kakayanin naming lahat ng pagsubok kahit bata pa kami. <i>(Despite the sacrifices, I feel blessed because God gave me a husband who is very responsible and honest. I always pray to God, for strength and endurance. I hope we will overcome this even though we are too early to get married)</i></li> </ul>

### Difficulty in balancing motherhood and schooling

College life is often lived at a hectic pace, with students balancing many things at once. Some students can balance married life with their daily responsibilities at

school. Others however, have difficulty doing it. The current study explicate that married college students have a problem coping with the two responsibilities- that is being a mother and a student at the same time. Among all the respondents, most of them mentioned that they experience problems such as having to take care of the baby and complete school work or going school at the same time, more especially so when the baby is ill. This confirmed the hardship of taking care of the baby and schooling by quoting one teenage mother respondent saying, “Mahirap pagsabayin ang pag-aaral at pag aalaga sa anak ”. Another respondent also said “I have difficulty juggling my time between my studies and taking care of my kids”. While studying is of utmost important to these respondents, they still prioritize their children especially if the baby has no caretaker or is not feeling well. Another problem they face at present is the time they have in reviewing their lessons especially before exams. To solve this problem, some respondents said that they let their babies sleep first at night before they read or review their lessons. This study habit makes it more difficult for them to cope with their subjects. Although these married students find their situation very challenging, all of the respondents agreed that they will do everything to finish their studies because they believe that what they are doing now will be for their children’s future.

### **Difficulty managing multiple roles at a time**

Out of 11 respondents, four agreed that to manage multiple roles at a time is a major challenge they face at present. These roles include being a father/mother, husband/wife, son/daughter, student and a friend. These married students claimed that they do not have sufficient time for personal activities due to school obligations and family responsibilities. Teenage mothers face a strong battle when rearing their children as well as fulfilling their roles as a student/friend/spouse. As one respondent admitted, “I have difficulty balancing my role as a mom and as a student. Sometimes I do not attend to my classes because my daughter needs me.” Among all the roles they perform at present, being a mother/parent is still the role they prioritize in life. In fact, a respondent bluntly said that, “Hindi ako nag aaral o ng rereview kasi I have to do my responsibility as a mother”. “It is not easy when you have a baby, when sometimes I want to do school work. I don’t have time, it is so hard to find time. I have to do the house chores. It is also hard for me to do my homework at night but during the day I am busy with the household chores and the baby. I cannot study at home because I don’t have time and space but I also get tired by night, sometimes I do not have time to do my homework sometimes the baby always wants to be with me so I ignore the school work because I can’t do homework when I am with the baby”. Furthermore, there was one respondent, who just got married for a year admitted that they are experiencing problem with their marriage because the husband feels that she (married student) no longer fulfill her responsibility as a wife. According to her, “Papasok po ako ng 7:30 AM at ang last class ko ay 7:30 din. Pagdating ko sa bahay tulog na ang anak at asawa ko”. On the other hand, some respondents still find themselves lucky because they have their mothers to take care of their children.

## Financial issues

The problem of adequate financial support is obvious for many young married couples. Three of the married college students admitted to have some financial problems. They have difficulty budgeting their money in raising their children. While some financial problems are to be expected in almost any new marriage, it is important to take time to think sensibly, so that such problems will not destroy what could otherwise be a beautiful relationship. An early marriage still means you can live with your parents like all of the respondents who participated in the focus group discussion do. And living with parents would also mean that they are still under the care and custody of their mother and father. Since they are married students, they are given less allowance by their parents- who support them in their studies. Because of that, they cannot buy the things that they want with one participant from the group saying, "I also experience less allowance, can't buy the things I want". It may be true that money is an issue for them since they do not have work yet, there was one respondent who still try to meet both ends meet by doing some part-time jobs while studying. "...Kelangan ko din mag part time ng trabaho minsan tulad ng pag mamasage para magkaroon ako ng pera na ibigay sa mama ko pambili ng mga diaper at gatas ng baby ko ...pag may nagpapamasahe sa akin, minsan hindi na ako papasok, kasi kelangan ko magpada ng pera".

## Support system

Married college students receive sufficient financial support from their family particularly their parents. Only a few mentioned that their spouse also help them financially in their studies. For some, half of the expenses are spent by their own parents and the other half by their husbands if the husband is working. For example, the parents are in charge of the tuition fees while the husband is in charge of the daily allowance. But for others whose husbands are also studying, all expenses are paid by the parents of the married college student. When asked how they feel about it, most of the respondents said that they feel ashamed because their parents are still supporting them and their own child/ren when supposedly, that is their responsibility.

- "Syempre nahihiya ako sa kanila kasi nabuntis ako ng maaga at nagkaroon ng anak..pero gagawin ko yung best ko para maka graduate at masuklian ko din yung tulong na binibigay nila sa amin ng asawa ko ngayon".
- Another respondent said, "Ako naman,nahihiya din ako pero ngpapasalamat ako kasi pinag aral parin nila ako kahit nadisaappoint ko sila".

Considering the fact that married college students are living a very busy life, spending more time on family responsibilities, they usually spend less time on their academic work. These students need to make strategies to cope with the demands in school. Below are the ways on how married college students cope with their studies.

### **Reliant on God**

The most preferred coping mechanism of married college students is reliance on prayer and deep faith in God. They all agree that "God is always there for us". With so many frustrations, concerns, difficulties, and appalling conditions, the married student can just give up her studies. "There was a point in my life that I decided to give up my studies because of the negative things I heard from my classmates. Perhaps it was a God's plan to keep on fighting those criticisms. Every time students would look at me in a different way, I always pray to God to continue pouring me enough strength to face this challenge in my life". Yet, a smile, a friendly word, a reassuring gesture can make a difference. All these behaviors, they believe, are acts from God giving them the assurance that everything will be okay. The respondents all mentioned that they pray to God when they experience challenges and difficulties in life. "Madalas nagdadasal ako, para gabayan Niya ako at tulungan ". "Hindi naman madali yung pinagdadaanan naming ngayon, mga pagsubok eto sa buhay, said one teenage mother, "pero kumakapit talaga ako kay God kasi alam ko na hindi nya ako pababayaan.

### **Positive attitude**

To overcome their problems, most of the respondents said that they have to change their mentality. "I think positive. I don't give up whatever it takes". A positive attitude helps these students cope more easily with the daily affairs of life. It brings optimism into their life, and makes it easier for them to avoid worries and negative thinking. If positive thinking is adopted as a way of life, it would bring constructive changes into one's life, and makes them happier, brighter and more successful. "I see my studies as a challenge- that someday I can buy the things that I want and need especially for my child's future." With a positive attitude, the married students see the bright side of life, become optimistic, and expect the best to happen. "Kahit gusto ko ng sumuko, kapag umuuwi ako at nakikita ko ang anak ko at asawa ko napapawi lahat ng pagod. They are my strength. Para sa kanila din yung gagawin ko, basta magkakasama kami alam ko everything will be okay". It is certainly a state of mind that is well worth developing. "Hindi man ako handa kasi nabuntis ako ng maaga ngunit nung nakita ko yung baby ko kakaiba yung naramdaman ko, halo halo, lahat ng difficulties ko noon parang nawala. At naisip ko na kaya kong gawin lahat para sa anak ko".

### **Time management**

Married college students struggle to find out proper solution to deal with their academic works even though they are very eager to finish it all perfectly. But being a responsible mom and at the same time a dedicated student is not that easy. Respondents found that time management is the answer to the problem. As a married student, you have to deal with various demands on your time. One way on how respondents manage their time is using all of the spare time that they have. For example, one respondent said that during her vacant time, she goes to the library and review or make her assignments so that she can focus on the baby when she gets home. "Time management lang po yan, kapag vacant ko pumupunta ako ng library para gawin mga assignments ko. Para pagdating ko ng

bahay aalagaan ko nalang ang anak ko”. Setting daily goals is another good way to ensure that the most important tasks are completed. Respondents agreed that they must have a to do list- prioritizing things that are most important to the least important. In that way, they can still meet deadlines despite the busy life they have. This was verified by two of the married students. “Nakakatulong yung magkaroon ng notebook kung saan pwede mo ilagay yung mga gagawin mo sa bawat araw”, one said...“sa akin naman nilalagay ko sa cell phone ko (reminders app) para madali kong maalala”.

### **Learning insights**

In general, married college students find a hard time being a student and a parent all at once. Being a parent at an early age taught them many lessons. Their experiences made them stronger and braver to face the challenges that parenthood could bring. “Life must go on. Entering married life is seriously difficult. I have to finish my studies for my family- to prepare the future of my own”, a respondent said. A teenage mom exclaimed “This is the future of my daughter- keep fighting, never give up!”. Another married student also stated that being married must not stop someone from pursuing his/her goals. Despite the difficulties they encountered in the past, they were able to move on and start anew again. It only goes to show how resilient these married college students are. “Bilang isang ina na ikinasal at studyante pa ay mahirap pero para sa akin ito ay pagsubok lang at ito ay malalampasan ko rin” said a 19 year old respondent. Experience also taught them how to be mature at an early age. They start to think not only about themselves but other people they dearly love as well. “You will not only think about yourself. When it comes to decision making, you need to also think about your child”.

Married college students learn the value of life. With God as the center of their lives, they believe that everything will be alright. Furthermore, the respondents learn to appreciate the blessings that they have, regardless or not, was done by accident with one respondent saying, “kahit naman nabuntis ako ng maaga, masaya ako kasi my baby ako. Blessing yun”.Being optimistic is something they acquire from all the challenges and difficulties they experience. In spite of falling from the ground and being broken, these married college students slowly stand up, put all the pieces together back and be whole again. Everything would not be done definitely without the help of their family, relatives, friends and above all with God, to whom is the source of their strength. “Despite the sacrifices, I feel blessed because God gave me a husband who is very responsible and honest.. I always pray to God, for strength and endurance. Na sana kakayanin naming lahat ng pagsubok kahit bata pa kami”. A female married student also said that though life is hard, she still find it enjoyable because she has partner to help her in her studies. Life for married college students can indeed be very tedious and challenging. But with perseverance, good support system, and proper motivation these students will be able to cope well with the issues they face at present.

### **Conclusion**

With all the atrocities in life, married students are stronger. They were able to overcome the stresses and pressures in life, have to be strong to handle

challenges and deal with whatever comes and are not easily discouraged by failure because they are now in situation different from their single life. They learned from their experience and make the best out of it not only for themselves but for their children. Their motivation to perform in their academics and to cope with the challenges is the family that they are starting to build now. They believed that they have a purpose in life, and that no matter what happens, they will not give up on life.

## Recommendations

- Even if there is no significant relationship between non cognitive factors and academic performance in this research, there is significant relationship in age, socioeconomic status and occupation of parents and academic performance so, further researchers need to focus on identifying those factors that brought this relationship.
- Further studies may also be done to identify other non-cognitive factors that affect academic performance of married students.

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