



**EARLY MARRIAGE OF TEENAGERS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL LIVED EXPERIENCED**

by:

Frederick W Gomez, PhD

Dean – College of Education

gomez_072364@yahoo.com

Josie M Sardido, PhD

Chairman – Social Studies

josiesardido4@gmail.com

Mark Vincent A. Arendain

Social Studies Researcher

Markvincentarendain7@gmail.com

Prences Joyche Maestrado

Social Studies Researcher

Maestrado18prencesjoyche@gmail.com

Cesar Ian B. Ragandang, Jr

Social Studies Researcher

ragandangcesarian@gmail.com

Abstract

Early Marriage of teenager is a marriage of one man and one woman who do not meet the age of majority [18 years old]. Early marriage of teenagers is a global issue that reaches the socially divides multicultural societies worldwide. The causes and effects of Early Marriage of Teenager in Siloo Malitbog Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines may become an eye-opener. Ethnographic & anecdotal methods aided by the thematic approach were utilized during the conversation, interview and FGD of the ten (10) early marriage teenager participants (5 girls and 5 boys) within eighteen (18) months. Siloo was chosen as peculiar locale were age-group; educational challenges; geographic landscape; economic and financial challenges; parenting and responsible parenthood which reflect the socially divides community. Inform results may help community awareness programs, economic support and culturally challenged. Findings revealed very high on geographically and socio-culturally embedded and constructed norms and practices. And, very high need for social and government support system.

Keywords: *Early Marriage_ Teenagers*

Introduction

Early Marriage of teenagers is a marriage of one man and one woman who do not meet the age of majority [18 years old]. Early marriage of teenagers is a global issue that reaches the socially engaged multicultural societies worldwide. Particular of this geographic regions where the culturally divides and socioeconomically disadvantage intersecting both practiced and theory (Fordjour, 2020; Gomez, 2023 & 2025). Early marriage to teenagers happens due to different reasons and circumstance. It can be due to culturally accepted norms; traditions; lack of education; economic condition of the family and lifestyle of the family. Young people commit early marriage due to their social expectations; family pressures; limited access to education; economic opportunities; and cultural traditions that prioritize marriage at a young age (Abera, 2020; Gomez, 2023; 2025).

Early marriage by teenagers is a threat to the future generation. It may eventually put them in a difficult financial situation and reduce their chances of moving up the social ladder (Psaki,2021; Gomez, 2024). Early marriage of teenagers prevented to allow the normal growth and development both physical, intellectual, spiritual and social well-being. The continuing education and focus on their goals vision, mission, philosophy, goals, objective and strategy in life is prevented on the ground of reasons and circumstances. Preventing early marriages, may ensure teenagers follow their dreams and educational

career path and objectives ending the cycle of poverty. Therefore, education is a critical venue out of poverty. (Diamondstein, 2022; Gomez, 2023 & 2025).

Early marriage with malice is abuse of human rights. Teenage and forced marriages violate child protection and human rights, harming children's development and limiting their opportunities as a human person (Remble, 2021). Early marriage has a negative impact for both young female and male. The consequences of early marriage on female and male are numerous and far-reaching, directly causing grave harm, including the denial of education, perpetuation of poverty, and increased likelihood and risks of early pregnancy, childbirth, maternal mortality, and sexual violence (Diamondstein, 2022; Gomez, 2024). In the context of early marriage among teenagers in Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines, consequences are particularly pronounced in their cultural norms and income in the family. Early marriage denies adolescents access to education and also perpetuates poverty within the community (Wodon, 2020). [c1]

Furthermore, early marriage increases likelihood of early pregnancy, childbirth, maternal mortality, and exposes adolescents to a higher risk of sexual violence (Ajayi, 2020; Gomez, 2023 & 2025). These issues underscore the urgent need to address and mitigate the impact of early marriage on the lives of the teenagers particularly in Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines. It has been seen in the island mainland of Mindanao the normative behaviour of their people as socially engaged inhabitants on growth and development. The multicultural sectoral indigenous minority as a community in the culturally divides society became the counterpart partner of the national government to development (Gomez, 2023 & 2025).

Thorough investigation on the effects of early marriage to the teenagers in Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines and its underlying causes as well as the incidence of early marriage how this affects the *educational ambitions* on participation, survival and retention rate of the adolescents in schooling. Additionally, the study intends to delve into the *socio-cultural dynamics* and *community responses* on the surrounding early marriage, providing a deeper understanding of its implications for adolescent education in the local context (Seta, 2023).

Inform results aims to generate evidence-based recommendations for targeted interventions and policies to promote educational opportunities and empowerment for the teenagers (Unif, 2020). Affected early marriage teenager participant in Malitbog, Bukidnon Philippines were phenomenologically recorded assessed and evaluated. Seeking advance knowledge, advocacy efforts and foresighted intervention on early marriage occurrences. Information required to determine the reasons for early marriage in terms of their *age group, economic status, geographic landscape, economic and financial challenge, parenting and responsible parenthood and educational challenge* at Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines was done for the fiscal year, 2023-2025 including the revisitation of the literature review, data collection, analysis, and report writing. Adhering the schedule, provide time challenges affecting early marriage on geographic regions, facilitating the formulation of effective interventions and policies, to support their well-being.

Methods

Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines was revisited regarding on the early marriage of the teenagers. Ethnographic and anecdotal recording were done to get the detailed reasons and circumstances. The ten (10) participants were purposively selected according to their geographic location by ridges, valley, hills and mountain. To get the representation of the participants anthropological and archaeological selection of the locale were done and five (5) girls and five (5) boys were

phenomenologically studied within eighteen (18) months. The researchers observed the general rule of research and everything complied for safety and security purposes.

During the period of eighteen (18) months intrinsic and extrinsic validity and reliability were oftenly revisited to get the truth and veracity of the facts. Discussions and discourses of the facts taken were oftenly discussed by the team for revalidation. The concern participations were oftenly revisited, contacted and observed for the spans of eighteen (18) months. The ethnographic and anecdotal recording were aided by the thematic approached to factually monitored and easily identified the recurrent occurrences of events, action and interaction being observed in the area of the locale.

Results and Discussions

This portion depicting the phenomenologically observed gathered and collected data on field within eighteen (18) months of observation and fielding the resources in getting the valid and reliable information and the following data mined on field are to wit:

The profile of the participants. Early marriage in the study means that the union of one man and one woman complied the requirements of legitimate union and communion. If not married before the institution of the church but at least to the civil institution. Thus, they have at least met the legal age (18 years old). And, the delimitation of the participants is only ten (10) for others are only in cohabitation state. Thus, below:

Age – group. The early marriage on teenagers in Siloo, Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines, the age-group distribution of the participants is six (6) or 60% fall within the 13 years old to 18 years old of age, indicating a concerning prevalence of early marriages on adolescent stage. Meanwhile, 4 or 40% belong to the age-group of 18-year-old to 21 years old of age, highlighting a significant demographic early marriage too. At this juncture early marriage was already clear enough to tell the whole scenarios of the family life they have given through the geographic landscape.

Although the 18 years old to 21 years of age is already in their legal age to got married but considering their ability to response the need in the making of the family life it's too young for them to face the reality of life. Living the quality of life and to live life to the fullest is impossible.

The researcher does not discriminate the opportunity of the individual to pursue in their pursuit of happiness but only to pre-empt the consequences may have happened according to the language of the quantitative and qualitative data being gathered and collected. During the phenomenological study the participant stressed and to wit:

Ang tinuud nganong sayo ako naminyo tungud kay daan naman ko gi takda sa among mga ginikanan dinhi sa Siloo tungud kay kun dili namo sundun ang among na andan masuku and babaye sa Siloo nga suba ug mo balos kanamo. Mao man kana among batasan dinhi sa bukid aron nga ang among mga kaliwatan dili ma hanaw. Ug usa sab nga hinungdan tungud kay nakit-an man kami nga nag uban sa pag bagtas gikan sa ubos paduong sa itaas dinhi sa amoa nga dapit.

[the truth why I was married early because I was already arranged by our parents to their son / daughter. That is our customs and tradition in Siloo because if we don't follow that tradition the woman in the Siloo river will go against us. That is also our tradition in the mountain in order that our "race" / "tribe" will not perished. And, the other reason because we are caught together by my husband now walking down the lowland going upland to our place]

It is happy and sad to note that until this Alpha and Beta generation still these tradition, customs and practices exists. It is not bad to preserved the cultural heritage of our ancestry but the acceptable one to the time must continue to thrive. The arranged marriage is good for the preservation of our cultural heritage but it must wait to the proper and legate "time and space." No customary laws and other existing

laws of the state be violated. In other words, all of the two must conduit or parallel to their existence. Age really will not be the obstacle or hindrance but many review of related literature and studies revealed the immaturity to decide allowing the heart to reason which it could not be because only the mind to think and reason for decision-making. The lack of emotional intelligence is very high. And, the direction of living is always dictated by the heart because of the continuing growth of the emotion tampered by experience. Family feud and broken home will be the equation to come-up a troubled society where peace and order will be disturbing because of the predicaments on early marriage.

Gender. Gender in the study refers to boys (male) and girls (female). From the data above, at the age of 13 years old to 18 years old of age six (6) of them were girls and two (2) were boys and for the 18 years old to 21 years of age were one (1) is boys and one (1) is girls. And, notice their age-group distribution it becoming younger than the threshold data given by the national government. This is an alarming situation when happened not in the countryside where many considerations attributed to the early marriage.

As the researcher listen and chatting down the ethnographic lived experienced of the early marriage participants they have found out that girls really has a challenging experiences that deserve to be remembered specially when they told the researcher that:

Kami mga babae sa Siloo sa among pagdako ug pagka tigulang nia ra gyud kami dinhi sa Siloo. Wala man kami paingnan gawas sa pag atiman sa among mga bata ug bata sa among bata. Dili sab kami maka adtu sa sagayad tungud kay sampaw man kaayo. Ug unsa man usab ang among buhaton didto. Ingon sila ang kinabuhi kunu didto sa sampaw puno kunu sa kalipay. Unsa diay and inyong dapit? Busa maulaw kami ninyo kay ang mga babaye didto sa inyo mga anyag ug ang mga lalaki kunu daw dili mga kislum ug dagway.

[we the girls in Siloo as we grow alder we are only here in Siloo. We do not go where to go except only to rear our children and children of our children. We cannot go in the lowland because it is far away. And, what are we going to do there? And they told us that life in the far away is full of happiness. What is your please really? That is why I am ashamed because girls in your place are beautiful and you boys there are also handsome]

Listening and reflecting the ethnographic field notes recorded during the research one will feel pity to the girls of Siloo. As if they don't have any other place known to this earth. However, observing the straight line in latitude and longitude distance with a transectorize direction will brings you to 60 kms to 75 kms hazards and trek on the walkway and encounters the valleys, hills, mountains, slopes, ridges and rivers of Siloo will be watching us. This inhabitant has a feeling of fear that might Siloo will take them to death.

Income. In the study income means as a source of survival. In the mountain money bills has no value. Money for them those that produced bludgeoning sound are valuable. This would mean "coins." So, coins for them has the value specially during night time. The sound that are being produced nocturnal animals will get away from them. There, they cannot see the value of money because no store nor grocery establishment that money serves as medium of exchange.

However, looking at the distribution of the participants in terms of their income indicating that 7 or 70% had a P1,500 to P3,000 incomes per month, while 3 or 30% manage and income of P3,000 to P5,000 per month. This illustrates the difficult realities of poverty which made early marriage a social problem (Misic, 2022). This income does not even meet the minimum wage earner in the lowland and to the national government. The economic stability is significantly impacted to financial hardship. It acts as a moving reminder of the pressing need for actions to improve their life and elevate their community (Deane, 2021). Although this experienced found in the countryside especially on the isolated geographic places.

Geographic Landscape and its implication to early marriage. The area constituted of 581.8kms with an elevation of 1, 168 feet above sea level with a sloppy area of 102 meters from the Malitbog-Impasug-ong ridge of 846 meters above sea level. With the Bagyangon, Patac, Alangan, Boklod and Sampiano ridges with the by-pass of Siloo rivers down the straits rivers on the by-pass of Sabangan, Lingion, Tagoloan heads straits from Dalirig, Manolo Fortich Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines. Stretching the twenty-seven (27) kilometres breath latitude and longitude lines using the drone from the rivers of Siloo the ten (10) participants' teenager were phenomenologically observed and studied within the spans of eighteen (18) months. And, given this landscape the summative theme came-out: 1) tradition and practices; 2) distance to travel; 3) no government infrastructure such as bridges, roads, school building, public- multi-purpose centres; 4) human and natural hazards-trip to treks; 5) safety and security.

In the landscape that the locale can provide has an imaginable terrain or topography. Natural and man-made hazard are always present which anytime may happen. Record revealed that government infrastructure for now still on the mind for legislation. Geographic factor in the area made the inhabitants distributed. The neighbourhood has an average distance of 1000 meters away. From kaingin shifting to farming, quarry and mining will be the main source of income of the area. Inhabitants are in sedentary livelihood which sometime chartering in labour force cash for work will be the main source of income.

Economic and Financial Challenges towards education. Additionally, this financial burden deeply affects their economic stability, serving as a strong reminder of the immediate need for interventions to better their situation and uplift their entire community. Young people who marry early typically have less access to economic and educational possibilities, which feeds the cycle of poverty. This affects not just their financial security but also the socioeconomic well-being of the community.

On the other hand, 5 or 50% of the participants attained elementary education before early marriage, indicating limited education has also limited social opportunities. This means that in the Beta generation education has an impact in one social well-being. And conversely, 3 or 30% not completed high school and only 2 or 20% completed high school before marriage, reflecting a smaller but notable segment with higher educational attainment. They can be a gem in the indigenous community. A couple of few members in the community becomes an asset only if they do not get marry early. The findings strongly emphasize how education influences the timing of marriage, revealing that lower educational levels often lead to early unions and communion. This insight highlights the pressing need to enhance educational opportunities, particularly in the geographic regions where early marriage is prevalent (Ebabu.2024; Gomez, 2023).

Prioritizing education for young girls and boys in the communities can effectively delay marriage, empowering individuals to make informed choices and pursue avenues for economic independence and social progress. Furthermore, by addressing the root reasons for early marriage, educational programs can contribute to ending the cycle of poverty and inequality and open the door to have a just, orderly, humane society and sustainable development (Sen, 2023; Gomez, 2023). Opening different government initiatives, programs and activities such as AKAP [Ayuda, Kapus ang Kita Program]; TUPAD [Tulong Pang Hanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantage]; AICS [Assistance to Individual in Crises Situation] are only few of the many government initiative helping the economically disadvantage citizens. If only this can use properly and emplace intelligently by our beneficiaries this can be one of a very intelligent intervention for early marriage.

Parenting and Responsible Parenthood. In the study parenting and responsible parenthood is the process of raising children and providing them with protection and care to ensure their healthy development into adulthood parents play an irreplaceable role in the lives of their children. Children belongs first to God. And therefore, we have the natural right to rear them according to the teaching of the civil society. Parenting is a critical component of a child's development and well-being. "Children's

relationships with their families are critical to their growth” (Popa, 2022). As for the Teenagers in Siloo Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines the ten (10) participants said and to wit:

Naminyo ko og Sayo kay gatoo akuang ginikanan nga ang pagminyog sayo makatabang sa kahitang saakung kinabuhi nga mamaayo ang kahintang sa akong kinabuhi kay ingon nila dili nila mahatag sa akoo ang kinabuhi nga maayo kay galisod sila pagpangita ug mga panginahanglanun sa akoo aron lamang ma haw-as kami sa kawad-on

[I got married early because I and my parents believed that getting married early would help us improve the situation in our life and life would become better. As they said to me that they couldn't provide me with a good life because they were having a hard time meeting my needs and emancipating us from misery].

And continue to tell us their miserable life and said:

Busa kung gi unsa kami pagpadaku sa among ginikanan mao lang usab gihapon ang among kinabuhi karon. Ania ako karon ni puyu uban lang gihapon kang mama ug papa. Ang among bata ra gyud maoy nakita namo nga kabag-uhan bisan unsaon mo kaun kami ka isa ra sa usa ka adlaw. Mo kaon lamang kami sa luya ug bangong ug kalipay na namo dinhi sa Siloo.

[that is why? how we've reared by our parents is the same thing that we've now. I am still living with my parent. And, you can see the difference we've children now as my parent grandchildren. And we only eat ones a day. We eat taro and feel happy in Siloo]

As mentioned above, early marriage to teenager happens due to parent's beliefs which can be influenced by social, cultural, and religious factors. Parents' beliefs about gender roles, family honour, and the need to conform to social norms can lead them to arrange or encourage early marriages for their daughters/sons, despite the negative consequences as a social taboo (Bhan, et al., 2021). Now, listening and transcribing the ethnographic notes collected by the field researcher and said:

Akong ginikanan dili jud mo sugot sa akuang gipili nga sayo og pag minyo kay gusto man nila nga makahuman ako pag eskwela apan wala namay mahimo akung ginikanan kay naburosan naman ko nga mao ang rason ngano naminyo ako. Ang tinuud nga hinungdan niini gumikan kay mo baklay kami sa layong buntud tabuk sa bukid ug suba aron lang maka eskwla. Dili pud ako maka lakaw nga mag inusara kay hadluk kaayo ang dalan nga awa-aw.

[My parents don't agree with my decision to get married early because they want me to finish my studies. But, I can't do anything about it because I'm already pregnant, and that's the reason why I got married. The truth of matter is that the distance to travel crossing the mountain and rivers for schooling. I cannot walk alone because I am afraid to the road or trek].

As mentioned above, early marriage happens due to the early pregnancy of the child. This means that early marriage to teenager is often a precursor to early pregnancy, which poses a host of health risks to girls whose bodies may not yet be mature enough for motherhood” (UNFPA, 2022). Likewise, for boys whose body may not yet ready for fatherhood, one can see their body is covered by the emotional scars. By reason and circumstances, they were victims for early marriage teenager. And, they revealed to say:

Wala koy mahimo apan pili-on ko ang pag minyo og sayo tungod kay dili nako kayang supportahan pa sa akuang ginikanan. Ug usa pa, dili nako ma antos ang kaulaw kay ga kuyog-kuyogan naman ako sa akong nubyo kay naa akoy kahadlok kung unsa ang akong mahitabo.

[I have no choice but to choose to get married early because my parents can't support me. And the other one, I cannot take the shame because I am always accompanying my boyfriend because I am afraid what happened to me]

As mentioned above, early marriage occurs because some parents are unable to adequately support their children, especially when it comes to their needs. According to the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), "early marriage often occurs because parent has the difficulty to response the financial burden of supporting their children, particularly in situations where they struggle to meet the basic needs" (UNICEF, 2022).

Revisiting the ethnographic notes there are lines of statements mentioned on the early marriage that revealing on the girl insecurity. The safety and security of girls is always an issue in Siloo considering their geographic locations where valleys, hills, mountains, gorges, ridges and divides

Educational Challenges and its implication. The educational challenges in Siloo is the culturally embedded tradition and practices. If the beliefs system that are socio-culturally constructed because of their environment this should be align to the body of knowledge by the school as a system. The problem because of the difficulty to get the participation, survival and retention of the schooling due to the distance to travel, hazards in crossing valleys, hills, slopes, mountains and rivers which develop the culturally embedded beliefs system through the given environment (UNESCO, 2022; Gomez, 2023). Ask for the Teenagers in Siloo, they said and to wit:

"Naminyo ko og sayo kay tungod man sa among naandan sa amo dinhi og mao sad ni ang naka takda sa akoo nga magminyo og sayo kay sa amo dinhi, ang pagminyo og sayo isa kani ka maayo nga pamaagi sa usa ka babaye aron makaangkon ang babaye og pag-amping gikan sa laing lalaki.

[I got married early because of the tradition here and that's what influenced me to get married early too. Here, getting married early is considered a good way for a woman to gain protection from a man.]

And they added to say and said:

"Naminyo ko og sayo kay sa naandan namo dinhi, ang pagminyo og sayo isa kani ka maayo nga pamaagi sa usa ka lalaki aron makaangkon og kadunganan og pagkalalaki ang usa ka batan-on og para pud naa sad kami kauban sa among kinabuhi.

[I got married early because in our tradition here, getting married early is considered a good way for a young man to gain honour and masculinity so that we have companions in our life]

As mentioned above, early marriage happens not by love but to exists as it may. And, if this should be taught in the school as early marriage often perpetuated by deep-rooted by geographical, cultural and religious norms that prioritize female virginity and a woman's role as a wife for her protection for another man and as a mother. And, for a man honour and masculinity over personal development and autonomy when got married (Passaniti, 2021; Gomez, 2023). And, if this should be taught by the school with a sense of sympathy and apathy we live a better place for us to live.

Companionship for the teenagers is not a feeling of enjoyment of having someone in a person's life. Companionship for them is fundamental human need that provides a sense of belonging, support, and enjoyment in one's life (APA, 2022). Ask for the Teenagers in Siloo they said:

"Nagminyo ko og sayo kay gusto pud nako nga naa koy kauban sa akong kinabuhi nga mutabang sa ako labaw na kung naa koy problema nga ga atubangon og mao man sad kaning giingon sa akong ginikanan sa akoo para naa ako'y kauban sa akong kinabuhi nga magtinabanga pag atubang sa mga problema sa kinabuhi og para makahimo gyud og pamilya

[I also got married at an early age because I wanted to have a companion in my life, especially when I was facing problems. And, that's also what my parents told me, that I should get married so I would have a partner to face the problems in life with, and to be able to have a family]

As mentioned above, early marriage happens due to companionship facing challenges in lives. Ethnographic records revealed that the need for a partner to share experiences and help navigate problems that lead individuals, especially those from disadvantaged. To enter marriage at a young age,

even before they may be emotionally or financially ready is not an issue for the teenager (UNFPA, 2023). And they said:

Naminyo ko og sayo dili tungod kay gusto ko, dili! aron naa koy kauban, naburuan man gud ko sa akong uyab mao gisala ako kauban sa akong uyab nga magpakasal kay nakabuhat man kami og sala kay gatuog man gud mi og masala nga naa kami nabuhat nga dautan o dili maayo, magabaan kami mao gisala kami para makalikay mi og among pamilya.

(I got married at an early age not because I like it, no! in order to have a companion, but because I got pregnant by my boyfriend. My boyfriend told me to get married because we had sinned, as we believed that if we didn't get married after doing something wrong, we would be cursed. That's why we were told to get married, so that we and our family could avoid any misfortune)

As mentioned above, early marriage happens due to teenage pregnancy. Early marriage is often a consequence of teenage pregnancy, as young girls who become pregnant may feel pressured to marry to legitimize the pregnancy (Ayele, 2021; Gomez, 2023). This would mean farther that even without preparation they get into the responsibility without the ability to respond to the immediate concern along the way of their marital life. The lack of foresight ahead on the consequential predicament of building the family life would have a hard time and space to cope the unanticipated obligations.

Due to the consequential predicament on early marriage poverty comes to meet the essential needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Thus, this will lead to encompass a lack of access to essential services, resources, and opportunities that allow people to live with dignity and respect their full potential, including inadequate housing, limited access to healthcare and education, and insufficient nutrition (World Bank, 2022).

And, these are the educational challenges that the teenagers of Siloo may ponder and reflect. However, listening from them they said and to wit:

“Tungod sa Kapubrihon, napugos ko nga magminyo og sayo kay dili kaayo makahatag ang akong ginikanan sa akong mga panginahanglanon pareha sa pagkaon og uban pang mga panginahanglanon, mao naminyo ako og sayo para dili na sila maglisod sa akoo”

[Due to poverty, I was forced to get married at a young age because my parents not be able to provide for my basic needs such as food and other necessities. I got married early so that they would not have to struggle in supporting me]

As mentioned above, early marriage happens due to poverty issues. According to the World Bank, poverty is a major driver of early marriage, as families facing financial hardship may view early marriage as a way to alleviate economic burdens (World Bank, 2023; UNFPA, 2022).

Lastly, as the school trying to thrive and penetrate the socio-culturally constructed cleansing in the context of early marriage in Siloo wherein ritual for purification practices is necessary to protect children from evil spirits or impurities. This practice is often rooted in cultural and religious norms, where parents feel compelled to marry off their daughters at a young age to ensure their spiritual protection and maintain family honour (Ouis, 2022). Ask for the Teenagers in Siloo, they said:

Naminyo ako og sayo kay gatuog akong ginikanan nga ang pagpakasal mao ang pinakamaayong paagi aron makalikay ako sa dautan nga mga espirito nga nagpuyo dinhi sa Siloo og para pud mapanalipdan ako sa dautan, kay kung dili man gud mi magpakasal labaw na gyud kung makasala kami, gatuog gyud mi nga daghang mga dili maayo mapaingon sa amoa pareha sa mahatagan kami og dili maayo sama sa mga sakit, madamay among pamilya, mangamatay ang among gipanghuhi nga mga mananap daghan mga dautang espuritu mangduol sa amoa mao gisala ako sa pagpakasal.

[I got married at an early age because my parents believed that marriage was the best way for me to avoid the evil spirits living here in Siloo with us and to protect me from evil. Because if we didn't get married, especially if we sinned, we believed that many bad things would come to us like we would be

given bad illnesses, our family would be affected, the animals we raise would die, and many evil spirits would approach us. That's why I was told to get married]

As mentioned above, cleansing also one of the reason to early marriage in Siloo. The practices and beliefs to prevent and protect their kids from evil spirits. Several review of related literature and studies identified belief in cleansing rituals and protection to children from evil spirits as driver to early marriage (Asnake, 2022). These are the challenge of the school as an institution that brings education towards parenting a family where culture plays a pivotal role in shaping decisions about early marriage, reflecting a blend of parental influence, economic pressures, and cultural norms. Parents view early marriage as a viable and feasible solution to improve their children's circumstances, believing it by providing stability and support (Chaudhuri, 2024). However, others reluctantly accept early marriages due to unexpected situations like pregnancy, illustrating the complex dynamics within Filipino families (Jabbari, 2023; Gomez, 2023).

The school as an institution in their own backyard shall instil cultural traditions, beliefs and customs associate to early marriage with positive outcomes such as bringing good fortune or fulfilling societal expectations (Clifford, 2021). These norms instil a sense of duty among young people to honour and uphold cultural practices, including early marriage, as a means of preserving family heritage and unity (Bria-Admi, 2023; Mutembedza, 2020).

Early marriage participants frequently cited financial struggles and the inability of their families to adequately support them as compelling reasons to opt for early marriage (Brooks, 2022; Baraka, 2022). This reflects a stark reality where limited educational and employment opportunities drive young Filipinos towards early marriage as a means of achieving financial stability (Mehra, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of sufficient financial support from their families leaves young people on economic burdens. In such circumstances, marriage is viewed not only as a personal choice but also as a practical solution to address immediate financial needs and responsibilities.

The cultural practice of "sala," where marriage is viewed as a form of moral cleansing, further influences responses to early marriage within Filipino communities (APA, 2020). This cultural belief reinforces the notion that early marriage can resolve perceived moral dilemmas and uphold family honor, especially in the contexts where societal norms play a significant role (Sala, 2020). Recognizing the cultural significance attached to early marriage as a form of moral purification, interventions, and support systems can be tailored to respect and engage with these traditional beliefs while promoting alternative pathways for personal growth and fulfillment. This approach acknowledges the diversity of cultural practices within Filipino society and seeks to empower individuals to make informed decisions that align with their values and aspirations beyond traditional expectations.

EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSIONS

Early marriage in Siloo, Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines need for the government and non-government organization to intervene the geographic, economic, socio-cultural practices and tradition to the locale in the dynamics, just and orderly society. It is said far from the centre of growth and development, where the early marriage participant be liberated to their tradition and customs; if not, be understood. This is the time that their cultural heritage may be promoted, protected and preserved and therefore they deserve to be the prioritize on the AKAP, AICS and TUPAD services. If these scaffolding will be properly implemented this will be one of the gate guard on the liberation to those teenagers who jump – off to early marriage.

Conclusions

Early marriage in Siloo, Malitbog, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines has influenced multitude factors, including economics, limited educational opportunities, and cultural pressures. The prevalence of early marriage underscores the needed targeted interventions to address the root causes and mitigate its adverse effects on individuals and communities. Early marriage, develop strategies that empower individuals informed choices about their futures. Initiatives in liberating poverty threshold, expanding access to education, and challenging social norms are crucial in addressing the underlying factors that contribute to early marriage. Furthermore, promoting dialogue and awareness about the consequences of early marriage can help individuals recognize alternative pathways to adulthood that prioritize personal growth and well-being. Collaborating efforts and community engagement can work creating a supportive environment where individuals are equipped with the resources and opportunities needed to pursue their aspirations and lead fulfilling lives.

REFERENCES

- Abera, M., Nega, A., Tefera, Y., & Gelagay, A. A. (2020c). Early marriage and women's empowerment: the case of child-brides in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia, *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-020-00249-5>/accessed/02/16/2024
- Ajayi, A. (2020). Adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality: A global perspective. *Journal of Global Health*, 8(11), e013268. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2023-013268>/accessed/02/27/2024
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7thed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165000>/accessed/04/17/2024/accessed/07/03/2024
- Asnake, M., Eshetu, F., Demissie, M., Tsegaye, B., & Abera, M. (2022). The case of child-brides in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 22(1), 1-12/accessed/07/05/2024
- Ayele, W. M. (2021). Differentials of early teenage pregnancy in Ethiopia, 2000, and 2005. *PLoS One*, 16(9), e0229236. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229236>/accessed/07/04/2024
- Baraka, J., Lawson, D. W., Schaffnit, S. B., Wamoyi, J., & Urassa. M. (2022). Why marry early? Parental influence, agency and gendered conflict in Tanzanian marriages. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1017/chs.2022.46>/accessed/04/26/2024
- Bhan, N., Gautsch, L., McDougal. L., Lapsansky, L., Obregon, C., & Raj. A. (2021). Effects of parent child relationships on child marriage of girls in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam: Evidence from a prospective cohort. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 65(6), S16-S24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.03.012> /accessed/07/08/2024
- Brooks, D. (2022, February 11). David Brooks: The nuclear family was a mistake. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/03/the-nuclear-family-was-a-mistake/605536/>accessed/05/02/2024
- Clifford, B. (2021, February 15). What role does culture play in shaping children's school experiences? *OUPblog*. <https://blog.oup.com/2021/02/what-role-does-culture-play-in-shaping-childrens-school-experiences/>accessed/03/21/2024
- Deane, A. (2021). Moving reminders: The need for community action. *Journal of Community Development*, 12(3), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jcd.2021.003>/accessed/05/04/2024

- Diamondstein, M. (2022, February 22). Victory for Children's Rights: Ending child marriage in the Philippines. Center for Reproductive Rights. <https://reproductiverights.org/philippinescriminalizes-childmarriage,maternal::text-The%20consequences%20of%20child%20marriage%20mortality%2C%20and%20sexual%20violence/accessed/02/16/2024>
- Ebabu, K. W., Workie, D. L... Woya, A. A., & Sisha, T. A. (2024). Spatially-Informed Insights into Early Marriage and School Dropout: An Advanced Bivariate Binary Multilevel Model for Understanding Ethiopia's Context. *Heliyon*, e32005. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e32005/accessed/05/08/2024>
- Fordjour, E. A. S. (n.d.) (2020). The psychological effects of early marriage: what I learnt from some Ghanaian girls. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/the-psychological-effects-of-carly-marriage-what-i-learnt-from-some-ghanaian-girls-135069/accessed/02/16/2024>
- Gomez, PhD Frederick W. (2023). *The Greater Plateau of Southern Philippines: A Phenomenological Lived Experienced*. Cagayan de Oro City: FZP Publishing
- Gomez, Frederick W. (2025). *ABC of Research Methods*. https://www.academia.edu/37423416/ABC_of_Research_Methods_/accessed/02/23/2025
- Gomez, Frederick W. (2025). *Research Methods – IG*. https://www.academia.edu/37423410/Research_Methods_IG_pdf
- Jabbari, B., Schoo, C., & Rouster, A. S. (2023b, September 16). Family dynamics. *StatPearls-NCBI Bookshelf*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK560487/> accessed/04/25/2024
- Mehra, D., Sarkar, A. Sreenath, P. Behera, J., & Mehra, S. (2019). Effectiveness of a community-based intervention to delay early marriage, early pregnancy and improves school retention among adolescents in India. *BMC Public Health*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5586-3/accessed/04/29/2024>
- Misic, L. (2022, June 21). How early marriage is negatively impacting maternal health during teenage pregnancies worldwide – Humanium. *Humanium*. <https://www.humanium.org/en/how-carly-marriage-is-negatively-impacting-maternal-health-during-teenage-pregnancies-worldwide/accessed/05/04/2024>
- Mutembedza, T. E., & Kessi, S. (n.d.). Experiences of women in early marriages in rural Zimbabwe. [https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=\\$1015-60462020000200003/accessed/05/02/2024](https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=$1015-60462020000200003/accessed/05/02/2024)
- Passaniti, A. (2021). Social and cultural factors perpetuating early marriage in rural Gambia. *BMC International Health and Human Rights*, 21(1), 1- 12/accessed/07/04/2024
- Popa, D. (2022). Impact of Parenting Style on Early Childhood Learning. *Frontiers I Psychology*, 13.928629. [https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.928629\[1\]/accessed/07/08/2024](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.928629[1]/accessed/07/08/2024)
- Psaki, S., Melnikas, A. J., Haque, E., Saul, G., Misunas, C., Patel, S. K., Ngó, T. D., & Amin, S. (2021). What are the drivers of child marriage? A conceptual framework to guide policies and programs. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(6), S13-S22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.09.001/accessed/02/16/2024>

- Remble (2020) Child and forced marriage as violation of women's rights, and responses by member states in Southern African Development Community on JSTOR. (n.d.-b). www.jstor.org.<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41321401>/accessed/02/16/2024
- Sala, M. (2020). Child marriage: Parents' lived experience of decision-making in Hausa-Fulanic communities in Nigeria. Walden University ScholarWorks, 1742. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1742&context=fac_pubs/accessed/05/03/2024.
- Sen, S. (2023, April 1). Primary causes and impact of child marriage. Rights of Equality. <https://www.rightsofequality.com/primary-causes-and-impact-of-child-marriage/>accessed/02/16/2024
- Seta, R. (2023). Child marriage and its impact on health: a study of perceptions and attitudes in Nepal. Journal of Global Health Reports, 7. <https://doi.org/10.29392/001c.88951>/accessed/02/16/2024
- Wodon, Q. (2020, June 29). Child marriage and education: impacts, costs, and benefits. Global Partnership for Education. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/child-marriage-and-impacts-costs-and-benefits/>accessed/02/16/2024
- UNESCO. (2022). Intangible Cultural Heritage <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists/>accessed/07/05/2024
- UNFPA. (2022). Motherhood in childhood: Facing the challenge of adolescent pregnancy. United Nations Population Fund. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pubpdf/UNFPA_PUB_2022_EN_Motherhood_Childhood.pdf/accessed/07/08/2024
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (2023). Worlds Apart: Reproductive health and rights in an age of inequality. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pubpdf/UNFPA_PUB_2023_EN_Worlds_Apart.pdf/ accessed/07/04/2024
- UNICEF. (2022). Child marriage: A global challenge. United Nations Children's Fund. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/child-marriage-global-challenge/>accessed/07/08/2024
- UNIF, (2020), Empowering Maranao girls against child marriage Philippines. (2019, October 13). Reliefs Web. <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/empowering-girls-against-child-marriage/>accessed/02/16/2024
- World Bank. (2023). Global Girlhood Report 2023: Girls at the Centre of the Storm – Her planet, her future, her solutions, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-girlhood-report-2023-girls-centre-storm-her-planet-her-future-her-solutions/>accessed/07/03/2024
- WorldBank.(2022).Poverty:Overview.<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview/>accessed/07/08/2024

oOo