

Uncovering the causes of high incidence of parental separation: A case in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte

Jonathan P. Dagami, Mae Joyce O. Cadano, Arian Joy M. Arceño, Mark Jesse P.
Atay, Angelie T. Dosal, Charie Ann C. Padullo

1905945@lnu.edu.ph

Tacloban City, Leyte 6500, Philippines

Abstract

Marriage is a legal and lifetime union of two individuals. Unfortunately, some couples failed to fulfil their promises which resulted to separation. In the locality of Santa Fe, Leyte, the total cases of parental separation are two-hundred and twelve (212). Among its barangays, Zone II has the highest incidence. With this, the researchers agreed to uncover the causes of high incidence of parental separation in this barangay. The participants were five separated couples and were selected using purposeful sampling. Further, the study employed qualitative research specifically explanatory case study. The data were obtained thru semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using the thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte are irresponsible behaviors, infidelity, crime-related activities, and change of feelings. Hence, the researchers recommended the local government to formulate programs with the aim of building healthy marriages. Parents must reflect with their actions and value more their marriage. Children with separated parents should read this study to be informed with the causes of parental separation. And the future researchers should utilize this as a basis of identifying the known and still unknown in relation to parental separation.

Keywords: causes; high incidence; marriage; parental separation; parent; uncovering

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is the process by which two persons make their relationship official, public, and permanent. It is supposed to be a lifetime commitment, but some marriages end in parental separation (Crossman, 2019).

Parental separation has negative effects such as perceived guilt, blame, stressors, and diminished resources for the children (United Nations, 2018). Globally, it is common in countries with divorce law. Schofer and Wang (2019) discovered that between 1970 and 2008, the global rate of parental separation has more than doubled — from 2.6% for every one-thousand married couples to 5.5%. This social issue not just affect the couples but also their children (Kiesewetter, 2020).

In the Philippines, there is no divorce law. Fortunately, there are available separation processes including the declaration of nullity, annulment, and legal separation. However, only few couples resort to these remedies. The outcome is uncertain, costs are high, and the legal procedures are long and complex. Hence, most Filipino couples who are in a serious conflict separate in informal way. Based on the data of the Office of Solicitor-General (OSG), the number of filed nullity and annulment has raised from 4,520 in 2001 to 11,135 in year 2014. The incidence of informal separation is excluded in this data.

In Santa Fe, Leyte, the total incidence of parental separation is two-hundred and twelve (212). Among its twenty barangays, Zone II has the highest incidence of parental separation with a total of twenty-two (22). The majority of these couples separated informally (Sta. Fe MSWDO, 2021). With the high

incidence of parental separation in this locality, there are certain causes behind it.

In the Philippines, there is only one available research which studied the causes of parental separation. It identified four major causes of separation. On the other hand, all foreign studies in relation to the causes of parental separation excluded the incidence of informal separation. Hence, with the high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte, the researchers of this study uncovered its causes. Further, there was an inclusion of couples who separated informally.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to uncover the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. Why there is a high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte?
2. How do marital conflicts affect the relationship of the couple?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study about the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte was supported and guided by the following frameworks. These theoretical frameworks provided conceptual underpinnings for the literatures on the causes of parental separation. A closer look to these theories provided a greater understanding of the subsequent literatures.

Marital Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is an idea by Karl Marx. It explains that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to the competition for limited resources (Hayes, 2020). Conflict theory emphasized the role of power in the family and contends that family is not perfect but also experiences struggles, disputes and conflict. Pearce (2020) asserted that couples experience day-by-day interaction in marriage that led to marital conflict. For instance, one spouse may have interest in specific gender roles within the marriage where they set expectations. The other partner may not be interested in the inequality that these roles represent, creating the marital strife that follows the beats of conflict theory. The unsatisfied spouse is seeking more than what expectations and roles offer, creating conflict and emotional unbalance.

In relation to the study, marital conflict was used to explain the gender roles in marriage and the unbalance powers of both spouses. This explained that conflict is inevitable in marriage as there are a lot of things that can be considered as a source of conflict including gender roles, rules inside the household, and others. Basically, the power between partners can employ conflict theory. Further, since conflicts are usual in marriage, some of it remain unsolved which may eventually lead to parental separation.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is a major theory of social interaction in social sciences. The original theories of social exchanged were developed by Homans, Blau and Emerson (Cook, 2015). Social exchange theory proposes that a social behavior is a result of an exchange process, in which most relationships are created to have the amount of give-and-take, but it doesn't mean that there should always be an equality because social exchange suggests that it is valuing of the benefits and costs of each relationship are determinants if it should still be continued (Cherry, 2020).

This theory was used in this study because the researchers aimed to uncover the real causes of high incidence parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte. In relation to the study, social exchange is quite similar to the main root of all the causes that were identified in the review of literature. This theory explained that in relationship, if one of the partners is not receiving an equal amount in all aspects such as

resources, love, communication, and attention, it will lead for a sudden change of relationship. This sudden change may result for a conflict between couple. Consequently, parental separation happens.

1.4 Scope and Delimitation

This study entitled “Uncovering the Causes of High Incidence of Parental Separation: A Case Study in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte” was conducted in the school year 2021-2022 with the aim of identifying the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte.

The participants and locale of this study was delimited to the separated parents of Barangay Zone II as it has the highest incidence of parental separation in Santa Fe, Leyte (Sta. Fe MSWDO, 2021).

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is indeed that this study about uncovering the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte will be a great help for the people concerning the variables of this research.

The findings of this study will redound to the following:

Parents. This study will serve as an eye-opener for the couples to reflect with their actions and value more their marriage.

Children with Separated Parents. The results of this study will be a great help for children with separated parents as it will inform them with the causes of parental separation. Even if the causes are not similar in all cases, it will still widen the children's perception especially if their questions about their parents' separation were left unanswered.

Local Government of Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte. This study will serve as a reference for the local government to formulate programs with the aim of building healthy marriages.

Future Researchers. This research will serve as a basis for future researchers who will be working for a study in relation to parental separation on what is already known and still unknown.

1.6 Definition of Terms

To provide the readers with clarity and better understanding, the following terms were conceptually and operationally defined.

Causes. Cause is an event, thing, or person that makes something happen (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). In this study, it refers to the reasons why there is a high incidence of parental separation.

High Incidence. High incidence is defined as the rate of occurrence that exceed the level or usual interpretation of occurrence (Anderson, 2021). In this study, it refers to the rate or number of parental separation.

Marriage. Marriage is a formal union and social legal contract between two individuals that unites their lives legally, economically, and emotionally (Stritof, 2021). In this study, it refers to the legal union of two individuals in church or civil.

Parental Separation. Parental separation is a major adverse childhood experience and the end of marital relationship (Xerxa et.al, 2020). In this study, parental separation means the split of married couples legally or informally.

Parent. Parent is a caregiver of the offspring in their own species (DBpedia, n.d). In this study, it refers to individuals who are separated with their spouse.

Uncovering. Uncovering means to make something known (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d). In this study, uncovering is the way of revealing the causes of parental separation.

2. Review of Literature

This chapter identified the gaps on different literatures and studies in relation to parental separation. There were already several foreign studies that explored the topic. However, it is also important to examine the local studies concerning the main variables. The researchers argued that there are causes of high incidence of parental separation which are still uncovered in the local scene. This review began with the global and local incidence of parental separation followed by the global and local causes of parental separation.

Global Incidence of Parental Separation

Globally, parental separation is rampant in countries where divorce is legal. Schofer and Wang (2019) analyzed nearly four decades of divorce data from eighty-four (84) countries around the globe. In their published report on December 2018, they stated that within nearly four decades between 1970 and 2008, the divorce rate has more than doubled—from 2.6% divorces for every one-thousand married people to 5.5%. United Nations (2020) gave the list of countries with the highest parental separation rate in the world. At the first spot is Maldives with 10.97% divorces per 1,000 couples per year followed by Belarus with 4.63%, United States with 4.34%, Cuba with 3.72%, Estonia with 3.65%, Panama with 3.61%, Puerto Rico with 3.61%, Ukraine with 3.56%, Russia with 3.42%, and 3.40% for Antigua and Barbuda. In this global data, only legal separation is counted. On the other hand, in the study entitled *Uncovering the Causes of High Incidence of Parental Separation: A Case Study in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte*, both legal and informal separation were included.

Incidence of Parental Separation in the Philippines

Around the world, the Philippines together with Vatican City are the only remaining countries with the absence of divorce. However, there is exclusion for Filipino couples who are married to foreigners as they could seek divorce abroad. Moreover, married Muslims in the Philippines are also excluded since they are governed by different marriage laws. In the national scale, the number of nullity and annulment filed at the Office of the Solicitor-General (OSG) raised from 4,520 in 2001 to 11,135 in 2014. Despite the availability of declaration of nullity, annulment, and legal separation, it is evident that only a small fraction resort to these remedies. The outcome is uncertain, costs are high (usually not less than three months of average labour earnings, and sometimes much more), grounds are lacking and the legal procedures are long and complex. With this, there is a growing segment of Filipino population who is becoming more receptive to the idea of divorce. Between March 25-28, 2017 and December 8-16, 2017, the Social Weather Station (SWS) conducted a survey in relation to the level of agreement of Filipinos on legalizing divorce. The result showed that 30% of the participants “strongly agreed” while 23% “somewhat agreed” with the proposal to legalize divorce for irreconcilable marital differences and conflicts resulting in the total breakdown of the marriage despite the efforts of both spouses. It is evident in the national data that only legal separations are recorded. However in this paper, there was an inclusion of parents who separated in both legal and informal way.

Global Causes of Parental Separation

With the presence of divorce in almost all countries around the world, there are several conducted foreign studies in relation to the causes of parental separation. Reviewing the recent foreign studies including the textbook of Hock (2015) entitled *Human Sexuality*, Top 5 Reasons for Divorce by Hickey (2017), Why Divorce Rate in US is High by Vertucci (2019), Most Common Reasons for Divorce by Lauriello (2020), Why Parents Break Up by Young (2021), and What Causes Divorce by Gjelten (2021), the common reasons for parental separation abroad include broken promises, power imbalance, excessive jealousy, ineffective communication, control issues, abusive physical behavior, criticism, maternal age, financial stress, child care and partner support, young age, less education, less income, premarital cohabitation, premarital childbearing, parents' divorce, divorce is more accessible, lack of commitment, extramarital affairs, substance abuse,

domestic abuse, and lack of love. The results of the mentioned studies are only limited to the parents who separated through divorce. With the absence of divorce in the Philippines, this study included informal separation and also sought to uncover the causes behind it.

Causes of Parental Separation in the Philippines

With all the available local studies and literatures in relation to parental separation, it is evident that most of these provide emphasis on the effects of parental separation to the well-being and academic performance of children. In contrast to the number of foreign studies focusing on the causes of parental separation, the Philippines has only one study about it. This study is entitled *Coping from the pains of a broken family* by Galang (2015). It identified four causes of parental separation including financial problems, lack of communication, infidelity, and domestic violence. Since there is only one local study about the causes of parental separation, the researchers finished this paper in order to add data. Further, this study uncovered other causes of parental separation in the local scene.

The level of exploration on the causes of parental separation in the foreign and local scale is quite different. Globally, there are a lot of studies about the causes of parental separation. However, in the Philippines there is only one study which identified four major causes of parental separation. Moreover, both the reviewed foreign and local studies excluded the incidence of informal separation. Hence, the researchers of this study uncovered the causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte to identify other causes. Further, the couples who separated in informal way were included in the participants.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study was explanatory case study. Explanatory case study is used to do causal investigations. Researchers are interested in looking at the factors that may have actually caused certain things to occur. It aims to answer 'why' or 'how' questions. Moreover, this type of case study focuses on phenomena within the contexts of real-life situations (Capraro, 2016).

Since this study aimed to uncover the causes of the high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte, explanatory case study was utilized.

3.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted in Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte. The locale was chosen by the researchers as it has the highest incidence of parental separation among the twenty (20) barangays of Sta. Fe, Leyte (Sta. Fe MSWDO, 2021). Since the goal of this study is to uncover the causes of high incidence of parental separation, this locale was preferable.

3.3 Participants of the Study

To select participants, the researchers utilized purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a technique used to recruit participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas, 2016). Hence, the participants of this study were the five (5) separated couples of Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte. These couples separated legally or informally, above 18 years old, and do not perform any impaired mental capacity.

To confirm and ensure the validity of collected data from the primary participants, there were secondary participants. These secondary participants are the children, siblings, and other first-hand witnesses

related to the separated couples.

3.4 Data Collection Method

To gather data, the researchers utilized semi-structured interview. Here, the interviewer and participants engaged in a formal interview. The interviewer developed an interview guide or a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order. The interview guide of this paper has been validated by Mrs. Marivica Velasco. She is a Social Studies educator and Master Teacher II in Sta. Fe National High School, Sta. Fe, Leyte. In the interview process, the interviewer followed the guide and also followed topical trajectories in the conversation that strayed from the guide. In the collection of data, when there was no new information discovered, this redundancy signaled the researchers to cease the data collection. In other words, the data saturation point has been met, hence the researchers stopped the interview process. Memos was used to capture and take down any research thoughts and after each interview. Moreover, the interviews were recorded electronically with more than one smartphone to ensure that there will be back-up recordings if technical problems occur.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The researchers ensured that ethics will remain a top priority throughout the study. Hence, following the methods outlined in this chapter was paramount in ensuring validity, reliability, honesty and integrity.

First, the permission letter was sent to the office of the barangay officials. Next, the informed consent letter was read to each participant prior to the interview. The informed consent form followed the research of University of Oxford, in which two distinct stages were followed: (1) giving information and (2) obtaining consent.

The risk to human subjects associated to this study were minimal. All participants are above 18 years old, separated to their marital partners, and did not perform any impaired mental capacity during the interview. Qualifying on these criteria made them participants in this study. Moreover, all of their responses during the interview remained confidential.

3.6 Research Reflexivity

In conducting research, inclusivity and equality should be considered. Through this study, the researchers anticipated in giving the participants an avenue to express their thoughts, implementation and experiences. It is also notable that two of the researchers' parents also experienced parental separation which could influence the treatment of gathered data. However, to avoid biases, the researchers verified more data sources, checked for alternative explanations, reviewed findings with peers, and conducted member checking. Moreover, in interpreting the results, interview scripts were transcribed verbatimly and was sent back to the participants for accuracy and cross-checking.

3.7 Data Analysis

To transform the qualitative data collected into a form of explanation or interpretation of the subject under investigation, the researchers followed thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a quantitative method of analyzing data. It is commonly applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts (Caulfield, 2019). The researchers closely examined the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. The following are the six steps of thematic approach developed by Braun and Clarke:

1. Familiarize the data. Here, the researchers listened to the recordings and transcribed it.

2. Generate initial codes to the data to describe the content. When there was an interesting comment or section of the recording, the researchers created a descriptor code for it—e.g., “comparing products”.
3. Search for themes or patterns in the codes across the different interviews. Here, the researchers moved codes around multiple times to form different themes.
4. Review and refine the themes. The researchers read through all the interview extracts in each theme and considered if there was clear coherence inside each one, and also a clear difference between themes. They combined themes they find too similar and split up themes that do not cohere meaningfully.
5. Define and name themes. The researchers looked at each theme and defined what it is about. The themes have been named appropriately.
6. Produce report. Here, the researchers tested the theory and explained the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the conducted semi-structured interviews were presented in the following sections. It tested the theoretical frameworks and answered the statement of the problem. The analysis produced seven themes.

Table 1: Theme Clusters Divided into Two Groups

Group A: Reasons Behind the High Incidence of Parental Separation in Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte	
Theme 1: Irresponsible behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physically absent - Staying with friends - Laziness - No work
Theme 2: Infidelity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Found another partner - Untruthfulness - Extramarital affairs
Theme 3: Crime related-activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stealing issue - Gambling issue - Barangay complaints
Theme 4: Change of feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of love - Unhappiness - Annoyance
Group B: Effects of Marital Conflicts on the Relationship of the Couples	
Theme 5: Irreconcilable differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endless fight - Uncontrollable behavior - Filled with anger - No understanding
Theme 6: Dissimilar feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of interest - Contrasting feelings - Faded love
Theme 7: Relationship ended	

4.1 Why there is a high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Sta. Fe, Leyte?

Theme 1: Irresponsible behaviors

Marriage is a mutual agreement between two people who decided to spend their lives together, while supporting each other's requirements and decisions. They should recognize their roles and have to work together to manage everyday responsibilities. However, the findings of this study revealed that some couples separated due to irresponsible behaviors (e.g. physically absent, staying with friends, laziness, and no work).

Wife 3 stated:

Pirmi na hiya waray ha balay. Nadadara na hiyan iya barkada. (He was always not at home. He was influenced by his circle of friends).

Husband 3 said:

Deri nak nakakauli ha balay. Nagbabarkada ako. (I was not able to go back home. I go with my friends)

Wife 4 stated:

Kay aguy kay hubya man etun na akun asawa, biskan nala pag-alog akun nala nga tanan. Deri hiya nagpapakabuhi. (My husband is lazy. I do the fetching of water and all other household chores. He does not work).

Husband 4 said:

Nagbulag kami kay may pagkahubya kais ako. Derik danay nabulig han mga trabahoun. Naluluntugan ako permi ngade ha balay. (We decided to separate because of my laziness. Sometimes I don't help my wife to finish the household chores. I am always sleepy at home).

Irresponsible parents put themselves first. They often risk their children's well-being and failed to set a proper example. Coconi (2017) cited at Cornell University Cooperative Extension that irresponsible parents tend to be self-centered and neglectful. They failed to take responsibility of the child's rearing as well as to be a good spouse to their partners. Based on the responses of participants, some husbands often failed to fulfill their responsibilities — committed irresponsible behaviors. One husband admitted that he was not able to go back home, instead he go with his friends. The other husband said that they separate due to his laziness. Jagyasi (n.d.) found the same observation. He said that a husband tends to contribute less to the relationship or being irresponsible towards it. In cases where husbands tend to be disorganized or irresponsible, wives generally take charge of things in their hands. This makes the situation even worse for both of them. While a wife works more, she gets frustrated and the husband starts taking her for granted. This leads to very unpleasant clashes or conflicts between them. These findings approved the theory of marital conflict of Karl Marx wherein unfair gender roles and household rules resulted to a conflict between couples. Further, this is true to the social exchange theory of Homans, Blau and Emerson. If a partner is not receiving an equal amount in all aspects such as resources and assistance, it will lead for a sudden change of relationship or even parental separation which is true to the responses of some participants.

Theme 2: Infidelity

Couples in marriage should be faithful to one another and keep their promises made during their wedding vows. Hence, in order for their marriage to survive and last, couples must maintain a healthy relationship and intimacy. However, the findings revealed that some couples separated due to infidelity (e.g. found another partner, untruthfulness, extramarital affairs).

Wife 1 stated:

Nagbiling hiyan iba. (He looks for another partner).

Husband 1 said:

Nakabiling man akon iba. (I found another partner).

Wife 5 stated:

Kay nagpipinan-nguwat na hiya. Waray naman gana tungod han iya panbabaye. (He started

to fool me. I have lost my interest as he had an affair with other women).

Husband 5 said:

Habang mag-asawa kami nagkamay-ada relasyon ak ha iba. (While we are still together, I had a relationship with others).

Infidelity or cheating has been one of the causes to strain and ruin relationship in marriage. In fact, according to Warren (2021) extramarital affairs are one of the most frequent causes of parental separation. Extramarital affairs are liable for 20-40% of marriages breaking down and ending in divorce. Meanwhile, Thompson & O'Sullivan (2016) explained that the fallout from infidelity may have devastating results for each contributors of the couple in relationships, inclusive of emotions of discontent, depression, blame, and frustration. According to the participants' responses, some husbands had extramarital affairs, with two of them admitting to having a relationship with another woman. Further, the two wives confirmed that their partners had been meeting another woman during their marriage. Also, one of the two wives revealed that her partner had lied to her. In connection to this, Weiss (2021) stated that cheaters on the verge of being caught sometimes dig deeper with more lies and deceit in order to avoid being caught. They frequently use denial and gaslighting tactics to further damage the relationship. Moreover, in the investigation of Lewandowski (2021) which includes 495 people as participants, they all admitted to cheating in their relationships (87.9% of whom identified as heterosexual) and answered the question at the heart of the mystery: Why did you do it? An examination revealed eight major factors: anger, low self-esteem, lack of love, low commitment, a desire for diverse array, neglect, sexual desire, and situation or circumstance are their common answers. In relation to Karl Marx's marital conflict theory, having disagreements and conflict within the household is unavoidable. In this case, infidelity caused a great deal of conflict between the couple, leading to their separation, since one of the husbands had already been lying to his partner, causing conflict. Furthermore, this can also be associated to social exchange theory, if one of the couple receives unequal love and intimacy, this could lead to a rapid change in the relationship and could cause a partner to end up losing interest in marriage.

Theme 3: Crime-related activities

Married couples should uphold integrity and avoid being involved in any unlawful acts. They should strive to strengthen and protect their relationship. However, the findings disclosed that some couples separated because of crime-related activities (e.g. stealing and gambling issues and barangay complaints).

Wife 2 stated:

Nadamay han pangawat. Upod hiya han suspek. (He was involved in stealing. He is one of the suspects).

Husband 2 declared:

Kay inin na preso man ako hin duwa katuig ngade ha kauswagan agi hin pangawat. (I was imprisoned for two years due to stealing).

Wife 3 said:

Naghihinuygo hiya. Pirmi na hiya nababarangay. (He engages in gambling. He always faces barangay complaints).

Husband 3 proclaimed:

Kay permi ako naghihinuygo. Permi ako nababarangay kay permi-permi ak may kaaway. (I always participate in gambling. I always receive barangay complaints as I always have enemies).

Shouse (2017) stated that people in a relationship try to live up to their partner's positive expectations. Married people frequently expect their spouses to hold down a legitimate job, contribute income, support the household, and avoid activities that might threaten the family's economic stability. However, Skardhamar et al. (2014) found out that continuous involvement in crime may jeopardize such an investment. Based on the participants' responses, some husbands had been involved in crime-related activities, which led to their separation. One husband stated that he was imprisoned for about two years due to stealing. The other

husband said that he had always receive barangay complaints. In connection to social exchange theory, couples are expected to do give and take in all areas of their marriage. As derived from the responses, some husbands failed to have a noble job and good reputation which led to parental separation.

Theme 4: Change of feelings

True love is about commitment and being there through sickness and in health. As married, couples are expected to have unchanged feelings toward each other. However, the collected data identified that some couples separated due to the change of feelings which includes the absence of love, unhappiness, and annoyance.

Wife 5 stated:

Nawarayan na nak gugma para ha iya. (I have lost my love for him).

Husband 1 said:

Deri nak malipayun haiya. (I am not happy with her anymore).

Husband 4 stated:

Ginsumhan ada hiya haakon. (Maybe she felt annoyed with me).

Husband 5 said:

Naguyab-uyab ako. Amo adto nawarayan hiyan gugma haakon. (I had an affair with others. With that, she lost her love for me).

Couples who felt changes on their feelings are most likely to end their relationship. One of the reasons why love can fade over time is that it is hard to keep that dopamine buzz going. Dopamine gets us interested in each other, but it responds only to things that are new or that are possible rather than real (Lieberman, 2018). Previous studies have found that attraction is a crucial condition for the development of romantic love (Cutler et al., 1998; Braxton-Davis, 2010; Miller and Maner, 2010). Absence of love, unhappiness, and annoyance, within the context of a romantic relationship, arises mainly from a relational betrayal. These was evidently viewed on some of the participants responses that the moment they felt unloved, unhappy, and annoyed it eventually caused a sudden change of relationship. This can be connected to social exchange theory wherein couples are expected to have healthy feelings toward each other. However, when a give and take relationship would not be met by the couples, it would cause confusion and in the long run may result to parental separation.

4.2 How do marital conflicts affect the relationship of the couple?

Theme 5: Irreconcilable differences

When it comes to marital relationships, conflict is inevitable. But it doesn't have to be emotionally distressing and irreconcilable. Couples can disagree and fight while still showing respect and compassion for each other. However, the collected data revealed that due to marital conflicts some of the interviewed separated couples experienced irreconcilable differences (e.g. endless fight, uncontrollable behavior, filled with anger, and no understanding).

Wife 1:

Nagsamok an amon kaukoy, pirmi nala kami nag iinaway. (Our status has been complicated. We always argue).

Wife 3:

Diri naman maupay it iya binubuhay ngan diri naman hiya nasasaway. (His behaviors are unhealthy and he never stop on doing it).

Husband 1:

Waray na kami magkaintindihay na duwa. (We failed to understand each other).

Husband 3:

Baga permi man adto hiya nag-iinisog amo nag-aaway kami. (It seems like she was always

angry, it is the reason why we fight with each other).

Husband 4:

Amo ngani adto iya ak gin-iinaway. (Just like what I have stated, she always wants a fight with me).

Every person has certain habits, upbringings, opinions, and different personalities that contribute to who we are—all of which can eventually lead to a failure of marriage. Irreconcilable differences basically mean that a couple cannot get along with one another enough to keep the marriage alive and healthy. This lack of getting along can cause a whole array of other issues in the marital relationship. Kaur (2020) stated that the most frequent topics of conflict in marital relationships include finances, communication, children, sex, housework, jealousy, and in-laws. Sometimes what appears on the surface to be a simple conflict can reflect deeper relational struggles about intimacy and power (e.g., disagreements about how much time to spend together versus with others). Looking at the data collected, two participants admitted that due to marital conflicts they face endless fight with their spouses. One wife stated that she was unable to control her husband. Further, one husband said that there is no understanding in their marital relationship. Another husband admitted that his wife is always angry. These findings approved the social exchange theory of Homans, Blau and Emerson. If a partner is not receiving an equal amount in all aspects such as peace and respect, it will lead for a sudden change of relationship.

Theme 6: Dissimilar feelings

Mutual feeling means that the love and treatment of two individuals toward each other is the same. This mutuality gives them more energy to stay together. However, the data revealed that due to marital conflicts some of the interviewed separated couples experienced dissimilar feelings (e.g. loss of interest, contrasting feelings, and faded love).

Wife 2:

Inen бага hin waray na upay an am pagkuan kay na chichismis na kami. (*It's like there is no interest anymore since we became a topic of other people*).

Wife 5:

Hin dire na maupay nam panimalay kay dire naman kami nagpaparehas han inaabat. (Living together is not healthy anymore since our feelings are no longer mutual).

Husband 5:

Waray naman hiya gugma. (She lost her love).

Relationships naturally change as they develop and grow. Dealing with changes starts with understanding your spouse and learning ways to manage and understand differences. However, not all couples are capable of handling and retaining their feelings especially if they had marital conflicts. Aycock (2014) stated that feelings do change—couples may have dissimilar feelings. Feelings change for many reasons including infidelity, child care, financial issues and more. One wife admitted that she lost her interest for her husband and their relationship due to marital conflicts. Another wife said that their feelings toward each are no longer mutual. Further, one husband stated that her wife lost her love for him. This can be associated to social exchange theory wherein couples are expected to have the same feelings with each other. However, due to marital conflicts, separated couples' feelings toward each other became dissimilar.

Theme 7: Relationship Ended

Marriage is a union of partners, also known as spouses, and a bond between two individuals who have agreed to live together and carry out their plans as a couple. To be successful, marriage requires effort, dedication, respect, and love. The law also acknowledges this. However, the data revealed that some couples' relationship ended due to marital conflicts including irresponsible behavior, infidelity, criminal activity, and a change in feelings.

Wife 1:

Nag desisyon nala kami nga magbulag kami nga duha. (We mutually decided to separate).

Wife 4:

Naka-apekto etun kay inen dire naman hiya nabulig tapos mayda naman namun anak. Puro nala akun amo etun nga nakigbulag nala ak. (It affects us in a way that he does not help anymore even though we have a child. I do all the responsibilities and it pushed me to separate with him).

Husband 2:

Dumiri na hiya. Nayakan hiya han urhi nam na pag-istorya inin nadadamay daw hiyan ak kapresuhan. (She does not want to live with me anymore. She told me on our last conversation that she was affected by the crime I committed).

Couples who consistently fulfill their responsibilities and commitments have a better chance of having a successful marriage. Contrastingly, failure to fulfill these responsibilities and commitments will result to failure of marriage or parental separation. According to expert named Dr. Dani Moye, PhD, "A long-lasting marriage embodies a pattern of consistency," He also added that, "Each individual devotes time, energy, and continuous effort into growing together and not apart." Based on the responses of some participants, a wife just chose to end their marriage. Another participant who is also a wife stated that she decided to separate from her husband because of his irrational behavior. Similarly, one of the participants, a husband, stated that his partner had decided to divorce him due to his criminal activities. The Psychology Today (n.d.) explained that for some failed relationships, partners experience a gradual loss of connection, intimacy, and adoration, whereas in others, one or both partners can pinpoint a specific moment when they realized the relationship was over. Furnier (2021) stated that personality clashes, a lack of time spent together, infidelity, a lack of positive interactions between the couple, low sexual satisfaction, and low overall relationship satisfaction are all common reasons for breakups. Furthermore, according to Karl Marx's conflict theory, conflict is common among partners as a result of daily interaction. In the collected data, the separated couples' conflict was not resolved, it worsened—forgiveness and communication were no longer effective. As a consequence, the couples' relationship came to an end. In social exchange theory, however, because the husbands failed to fulfill their commitments and responsibilities, their partners made the decision to end their relationship.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions based on the data analysis, and recommendations.

This study was conducted in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte. The participants were the five (5) separated couples. They were selected using purposeful sampling. Further, the study employed qualitative research specifically explanatory case study. The data were obtained thru semi-structured interviews and were analyzed through the use of thematic analysis.

5.1 Summary

The findings of the study were summarized according to the statement of the problems stated in Chapter 1.

1. The causes of high incidence of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte include:
 - Irresponsible behaviors (e.g. physically absent, staying with friends, laziness, and no work).
 - Infidelity (e.g. found another partner, untruthfulness, and extramarital affairs).
 - Crime-related activities (e.g. stealing, gambling, and barangay complaints).

- Change of feelings (e.g. absence of love, unhappiness, and annoyance).
- 2. The effects of marital conflict/s to the relationship of couples in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte include:
 - Irreconcilable differences (e.g. endless fight, uncontrollable behavior, filled with anger, and no understanding).
 - Dissimilar feelings (e.g. loss of interest, contrasting feelings, and faded love).
 - Relationship ended

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the indicated findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the couples separated due to irresponsible behaviors. They failed to recognize their roles and work together to manage everyday responsibilities.
2. The most common effect of marital conflict/s toward the couples' relationship was irreconcilable differences. There was no mutual understanding and reconciliation.
3. Crime-related activities and change of feelings were added to the studied and identified causes of parental separation in the Philippines.
4. The study agreed and accepted its theoretical frameworks— marital conflict and social exchange theory.

5.3 Recommendations

This study revealed the causes of high of parental separation in Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Parents must reflect with their actions and value more their marriage.
2. Children with separated parents should read this study to be informed with the causes of parental separation. This will widen their ideas and understanding especially if their questions about their parents' separation were left unanswered.
3. The local government of Barangay Zone II, Santa Fe, Leyte should formulate programs with the aim of building healthy marriages.
4. The future researchers should utilize this study as a basis of identifying the known and still unknown in relation to parental separation.

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