



**Paper 164 – Social Sciences**

**STILL A TEEN, ALREADY A MOTHER: UNDERSTANDING THE TEEN MOTHERHOOD PHENOMENON THROUGH PHOTOVOICE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Teen pregnancy and motherhood is a growing phenomenon in the Philippines. Among Filipino women ages 15-19, one in 10 is already a mother or pregnant with her first child (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2014). Using phenomenology as the research philosophical framework and photovoice as the methodology, this study aimed to give voice to teen mothers so that stories of their past and present struggles and their hopes for the future for themselves and for their child or children could be heard. Through the nominations of the rural health unit officers of selected barangays of one town in North Philippines, the research team contacted possible participants. Four participants continued diligent involvement throughout the photovoice process: (a) orientation, (b) photography training, (c) taking of pictures, (d) interpreting the pictures using the SHOWed framework, (e) in-depth interviews, (f) photo essay, and (g) photo exhibit with responsible government officials and other interested parties so that awareness on the condition of teen mothers can be heightened. The themes that emerged from the data were the following: (a) regret and confusion, (b) seeds of hope, (c) sacrifice and hard work, (d) joys of motherhood, (e) dreams for the future with the following sub-themes: going back to school and graduation, financial freedom, and bright future for their children. The data revealed that teen mothers had the ability to rise above their past and present struggles and to nurture their dreams for a bright future for themselves and their child or children.

